



Repositioning Nigeria's soybean sector: opening new market opportunities for farmers

Nigeria-based Karma Foods Limited is establishing a US\$20 million factory that will take delivery of locally produced soybeans at the end of this year's harvest, and open up new marketing opportunities for Nigerian soybean farmers. To meet the company's predicted high soybean demand, Karma Foods and IITA researchers under the Tropical Legumes II project and the University of Agriculture Makurdi will be backstopping farmers in Benue state with best practices in soybean production.

The factory with 75,000 metric tons processing capacity and located near Abuja International Airport close to Gwagwalada—about 30 minutes drive from Nigeria's capital city of Abuja—will create additional stable and sustainable demand for soybean in one of Africa's major producers.

Karma Foods plans to source 100% of its soybean demand locally, says Dipak Mirchandani, Chairman of the firm, ahead of a stakeholder conference on soybean in Makurdi on 12 July.

"We hope that this investment will help reposition soybean production in

Nigeria, and more importantly, it will profit the Nigerian soybean farmer because he now not only has options to sell his products, but also can plant with a sense of security and the assurance that his produce has a committed buyer," he adds.

"We see Benue farmers as key stakeholders in this project because the state plays a leading role in soybean production," says Mirchandani.

The company, the biggest soybean factory in sub-Saharan Africa outside of South Africa, will be creating tens of thousands of jobs along the soybean value chain, which will help reduce the level of unemployment in Nigeria in line with President Goodluck Jonathan's transformational agenda.

Alpha Kamara, IITA Systems Agronomist, says the emergence of Karma Foods will go a long way in increasing soybean production in northern Nigeria with a resultant increase in farmers' income.

He explains that IITA and partners are already promoting soybean production through the provision of high yielding improved varieties, creating awareness,

promoting sustainable seed production systems (community seed schemes) and strengthening the capacities of seed companies to package and sell improved seeds.

Described as a 'miracle bean' or 'golden bean' because of its cheap protein-rich grain, soybean production in Nigeria has been stymied by unfavorable market which often times results to cyclical gluts.

Lucky Omoigui, Molecular Geneticist/Plant Breeder at the University of Agriculture Makurdi, says the new partnership between research and industry will create sustainable demand and supply for the commodity, and make the farmers proud hence they now have a very large and committed buyer who is reaching out to them.

Over the years, IITA has made substantial strides to improve the productivity of the crop by developing high yielding, early maturing varieties capable of nodulating in association with local rhizobia, and possessing other good agronomic traits. The institute has also developed and released rust resistant soybean varieties.



Participants of the Karma Food Industries multi-stakeholders soybean conference in Makurdi, Benue state, Nigeria.

IITA welcomes new regional coordinators for aflasafe™ project



Two new regional coordinators for IITA's aflasafe™ commercialization project - Charity Mutegi and Joseph Atehnkeng - has joined IITA's ranks. Mutegi will serve as the project's Kenya Country Coordinator, while Atehnkeng will be the Country Coordinator for Nigeria.

Mutegi, a Kenyan national, graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Food science and Postharvest Technology from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in Juja, Kenya in 1998; obtained a Masters degree in Food Science and Technology from the University of Nairobi, Kenya in 2002 and bagged her PhD in Food Security in 2010.

She has been working as a Senior Research officer with the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) from 2001 to 2011. She also doubled up as a Co-Principal Investigator and Project Director (Kenya activities) in the Peanut CRSP Project that seeks to improve the health and livelihoods of people in East Africa by addressing aflatoxin and gender-related constraints in peanut production, processing and marketing. She also held the post of National Post-Harvest Consultant – Kenya Aflatoxin Intervention Program at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) from 2004 – 2005. In 2000, she was a Research Assistant with the Food Research Project, funded by the European Union, University of Nairobi, Kenya and taught Food Microbiology on a part time basis at The Kenya Polytechnic, Nairobi, Kenya from 1999 – 2000, while pursuing her MSc.

Atehnkeng, on the other hand, was an international consultant with the Pathology Laboratory, IITA-Ibadan prior to his present appointment. He was a Research Fellow in the Tissue Culture Laboratory from 1999 to 2000 for his MSc, and again in 2003-2008 in the Pathology Unit, working under a BMZ-funded project.

He obtained his BSc in Agriculture (Plant Science) degree from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State, Nigeria in 1998; a Master of Science degree in Agronomy from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria in 2000, and PhD in Phytopathology from the same University in 2008. His doctorate thesis was on "Biocontrol of Aflatoxin in Maize (*Zea mays*) using atoxigenic strains of *Aspergillus flavus* in Nigeria".

Atehnkeng is a Cameroonian. He is married to Prodigia Atemafac and they are blessed with children. His office is at Room 15C, Building 400 and his telephone extension no. is 2594. He resides in the IITA-Ibadan campus at Apartment 1A, Tropical Crescent, ext 2576.



(Top) Charity Mutegi; (bottom) Joseph Atehnkeng.

GIS training in Malawi

IITA scientists and research staff based in Lilongwe, Malawi underwent a short course on the use of ArcGIS and GPS during the last week of June.

Ten participants attended the course, including Therese Gondwe of the IITA-Zambia office. This brief but intense exposure to the

use of the tool and technology gave the participants greater confidence in using and applying them in their work. The motivation and enthusiasm exhibited by the participants has been exemplary. It is hoped that similar training for other stations and staff will broaden the GIS/GPS user base within IITA.



Participants of the GIS training held at IITA-Malawi office in Lilongwe. Subash Marcus (leftmost), IITA Geospatial Services Manager, served as the training facilitator and resource person.

Announcements



IITA Flickr page hits 150k mark!

Images in our Flickr page have registered more than 151,000

views! This milestone is proof that more and more people are turning to our pictures for their communication needs. More importantly, more people are literally seeing what we are doing to realize a hunger- and poverty-free Africa.

Change in name

The Personnel Unit informs all concerned that former Miss Helen Princess Matthias of IITA-Kano station is married and wishes to be addressed as Mrs. Princess Helen Ifeanyi O. Nnadi, henceforth.

The IITA Bulletin is produced by the Communication Office. For comments and/or contributions, please email: Jeffrey T. Oliver (o.jeffrey@cgiar.org), Godwin Atser (g.atser@cgiar.org), or Catherine Njuguna (c.njuguna@cgiar.org).