

IITA-UPoCA conducts two training courses in Nigeria

The IITA-Unleashing the Power of Cassava in Africa (UPoCA) project has completed two courses on training of trainers (TOT) for farmers, processors, Women in Agriculture of ADPs, NGOs, and other private business firms on cassava processing and utilization; and products packaging and labeling. The TOT on cassava processing and utilization was held on 23-26 February while that on products packaging was conducted 1-3 March. Both training were held at the IITA substation located in Kubwa, Abuja.

The training was opened by Richardson Okechukwu, IITA-UPoCA Deputy Project Manager, who is also Nigeria's country coordinator. He said the training aims to empower participants who are trainers in their respective organizations by providing them with adequate knowledge on cassava products development for value addition, and also skills in packaging that would increase better patronage of new cassava products.

In Nigeria, the USAID-funded project is being implemented in seven states, including Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, Kogi, Nasarawa, and Benue. The project aims to increase cassava production and processing, thereby ensuring food security for Nigerians and neighboring northern countries such as Niger and Chad.

It also seeks to provide more roots for the large-scale cassava industries.

During the cassava processing course in Abuja, participants were trained on how to process 21 different products: gari, soy-fortified gari, starch, tapioca granules, soy milk, high quality cassava flour (HQCF), 10% HQCF composite bread and cassava, and *chin-chin*, among others. The product packaging and labeling course exposed participants to aspects including the functions of packaging, techniques for securing cassava roots, and communication.



Top: Hands-on training during the cassava processing course in Abuja. Bottom: A group photo of participants and resource persons during the cassava processing and product development course organized by IITA-UPoCA.

The training, which was 90% hands-on, was rated by participants as excellent. One participant said, "Now I can process different kinds of products from cassava flour. I am

grateful for this training because it is a lifetime experience which one can use to become self employed".



An IITA staff taking stock of official equipment in Ibadan

May is Housekeeping Month in IITA-Ibadan

May has been designated as Housekeeping Month. During this month, members of the Facilities Management Service, the Computer Unit, and the Assets Unit will visit labs/offices, check equipment, and help in discarding obsolete items and those not needed by the units.

The exercise is aimed at improving efficiencies in cost and energy utilization, creating a better working environment and reallocating resources to units where such equipment are most needed.

A schedule will be drawn up and a certain week will be set aside for each building (e.g.,

one week for Building 400, another week for Building 401, etc.). The team will also visit rooms at the basement.

In preparation for this exercise, Yusuf of the Asset Unit will send to each budget officer a list of assets in his/her name.

The budget officers are reminded that they are responsible for the assets in their possession and it is in their interest to see that the Asset list is accurate and up-to-date. Budget officers are expected to equally use this opportunity to check current assets in their possession against this list and, then in the month of May, dispose those not needed.

IITA-Ibadan organizes statistics training course



Participants to the statistical training course

IITA organized a one-week training course on Statistics and Data Management with SAS software for graduate research fellows and associates on 8– 12 March at its headquarters. About 26 participants attended the training, including participants from the AfricaRice Center.

Jorge Franco (Head, Biometrics Unit), Sam

Korie (course coordinator), Sam Ofodile, and Yemi Oluwasoga from the Biometrics Unit conducted the training. The course was specifically designed for postgraduate students and research associates who are at the beginning of their research or career at the Institute. The objective is to introduce them to field experimentation, relevant

statistical methods and software for data collection, management, and analysis. It also aims to enable participants to acquire skills in experimental and survey designs in agriculture, data management, statistical analysis, and the interpretation of research results at the start of their research programs.

At the end of the course, the participants remarked that they found the training relevant and timely because it “filled in gaps in statistical knowledge.”

Earlier, Robert Asiedu, IITA Director, urged participants to take the course seriously and make good use of the opportunity offered by the course because statistics was the “backbone of any scientific research.”

Franco told participants that any good agricultural experimentation must ‘join’ the biological aspect, the experimental aspect, and the statistical aspect in accordance with the design objective. He also encouraged the participants to keep abreast with developments in the field through statistical textbooks and journals to consolidate and advance the knowledge they acquired during the course.

CRS and IITA brainstorm on new options to make cassava profitable



Peters making a presentation on the achievements of the GLCI project so far

The Catholic Relief Services has held discussions with IITA scientists on solutions that will make cassava more profitable to farmers in the Great Lakes region.

New areas of interest include the development of varieties with high leaf production potential and the development of easy transportation system that would assist farmers in transporting cassava roots from the hinterland to the market thereby reducing drudgery.

Dai Peters, Project Director, Great Lakes Cassava Initiative (GLCI) at CRS, said these areas were important because farmers in that region had to travel long distances without any means of transportation and that in the DRC,

for instance, farmers were keener on cassava leaves for their diet than the roots.

Peters who made presentations in Ibadan on 1 March, commended IITA and its partners on their work on cassava disease surveillance in the region, especially the control of cassava mosaic disease (CMD) and cassava brown streak disease (CBSD).

She also lauded the development and deployment of clean cassava planting materials with resistance to CMD and tolerance to CBSD to farmers.

The GLCI project, which aims to distribute improved cassava varieties to about 1.15 million farmers, has so far reached 300,000 people.

Announcements

World Cowpea Conference 2010



IITA, in cooperation with partners – Pulse-CRSP, Purdue University, and the ISRA, Senegal – is organizing the 5th World Cowpea Research

Conference to be held on 27 September - 1 October 2010 in Dakar, Senegal. Global cowpea experts will tackle research issues related to enhancing the profile of cowpea as a viable income-generating and food security crop. For more details and to submit papers, please visit the conference Web site at <http://cowpea2010.iita.org>.

Submission of abstracts: 15 April
2010 Abstracts approval and contact with presenters: 16 May 2010
Full paper submission: 30 September 2010
Early registration: 16 July 2010

ISTRC-AB to hold 11th symposium

The International Society for Tropical Root Crops- Africa Branch (ISTRC-AB) will hold its 11th symposium with the theme “Root Crops and the Challenges of Globalization and Climate” in Kinshasa, DR Congo, 4-8 October 2010. Submission of abstracts: 30 April 2010
Submission of full papers: 30 July 2010

Help conserve electricity!

Before leaving your workplace at the end of the day, make sure that you have:

- (1) Powered off all unnecessary electrical office/lab equipment;
- (2) Turned off air conditioners; and
- (3) Switched off all lights.