

Improved soybean variety released in Malawi

This week, the Malawi Agricultural Technology Clearing Committee (ATCC) officially approved the release of a high-yielding, early-maturing soybean variety developed by IITA in collaboration with the Department of Agricultural Research Services (DARS) for widespread cultivation in the major soybean-producing areas of central Malawi. Dubbed TGx 1740-2F, it outperformed the popular varieties being grown in the country during both on-station and on-farm trials.

According to Hailu Tefera, IITA's soybean breeder based in Malawi, TGx 1740-2F has proven to be a promising variety, giving a high grain yield in multiple locations under on-station and on-farm trials. It also has the capacity to nodulate under natural field conditions and matures early.

During the two-year multilocation on-station trials conducted in Malawi, the promiscuous variety gave the highest mean grain yield of 2.4 t/ha. It exceeded the yield of two checks: grain variety *Nasoko* by 10% and the widely grown promiscuous variety *Magoye* by 32%.

The variety performed equally well during on-farm participatory variety selection in four districts of central



New improved soybean variety, TGx 1740-2E on the field

Malawi. In the 2009/10 season, it out-yielded all the new types of soybean varieties under testing by giving 2.2 t/ha. It also surpassed *Nasoko* and *Magoye* by 15% and 38%, respectively.

"Farmers love the variety because it matures early, has more pods per plant up to the top of the plant, performs well under poor and erratic rainfall, and has

better lodging resistance," says Tefera.

He adds that this is a big milestone as this is the first time that an IITA-developed promiscuous variety--able to nodulate effectively with diverse indigenous rhizobia in the soil--has been released in Malawi.

The study was funded by the Tropical Legumes II project.

IITA appoints van Asten, Tripathi as Country Representatives

IITA management has announced the appointment of Piet van Asten and Leena Tripathi as Country Representatives with immediate effect: van Asten will take charge of IITA-Uganda while Tripathi will head IITA-Kenya.

As Country Representatives, they will represent IITA to external organizations within the respective countries; facilitate collaboration and partnership between IITA and local national agricultural research systems (NARS), universities, national development agencies, private sector, nongovernmental organizations (NGO), and community based organizations (CBOs). They will also assist in the formalization of agreements between IITA and local research institutions, NGOs/CBOs;



Tripathi



van Asten

promote IITA's work and image in the respective countries that include:

- Provide backstopping and oversight to station administrators, and researchers within the country in consultation with the Director and the Regional Administrator;
- Facilitate communication among IITA scientists within their respective countries;

- Coordinate location planning and reporting to the Director,
 - Report to the Director on location needs or issues as needed,
 - Supervise and approve handover for scientists and other staff at the end of contract,
 - Mentor scientists in the country, as requested by the Director, and
 - Report to the Director as assigned.
- Paula Bramel, Deputy Director General (Research-for-Development), urged staff to support and cooperate with the new Country Representatives.

Vacancies

If you are interested in working for us, please visit: <http://www.iita.org/careers>

Rays of hope on IITA finances in 2011



Sholola speaks on IITA finances during the 2010 R4D Week

The numerous messages in 2010 regarding changes in the CGIAR have fueled a lot of speculation about the future. As a transition year, 2011 will be challenging for IITA's finances with the oncoming CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs) and the need to operate with minimal disruption to our research efforts and service delivery.

While change comes with anxiety, we must turn our emotions into positive energy. There is some light at the end of the tunnel! The challenge we all have is to continue to innovate ingenious ways of generating more income, operate more efficiently with the available resources, and remain cost

conscious. This is healthy and will make IITA a stronger institution.

Through the hard work of all IITA staff and the good management of the Institute's finances, we have accumulated reserves over the years. While we do not anticipate that there might be a need to draw on these reserves, they can be used if it becomes necessary. This is one among our several options.

Several plans are in place to bridge the "funding gap", and to address the "clouds in the sky" that Hartmann refers to. Hopefully, we will balance the 2011 budget as we have in the past several years! Everyone's effort and contribution will be required to make this happen.

Other paths the Finance Office will take in 2011 include:

- creating effective instruments (software deployment, staff empowerment, systems improvement) on special projects to capture and recuperate costs, and overhead;
- increasing accuracy of accounts posting, minimizing manual data input of transactions across all stations;
- timely reporting of transactions to aid budget monitoring and to assist budget officers make informed decisions; and
- making the accounting tools and systems simpler and more user-friendly, etc.

We implore you to share your concerns about our service delivery so that we can better serve you and respond promptly to your inquiries and needs.

The "clouds in the sky" definitely have a silver lining with rays of hope!

On behalf of all staff members of Finance Office, I wish you a productive year. Please watch out for the next FO release!

- Chief Financial Officer Shalewa Sholola

IITA bids Sartie, Yam Molecular Geneticist, farewell

On Wednesday this week, IITA bid Alieu Sartie, Yam Molecular Geneticist based in Ibadan, farewell in a send-off party.

Sartie worked with colleagues on yam improvement at IITA-Ibadan as a postdoc in the last three years.

Paula Bramel, Deputy Director General (Research-for-Development), said the Institute benefited from Sartie's work. She said the institute would continue to work on the opportunities left behind by Sartie.

Lakshmi Menon, DDG (Support) also commended the Sarties. She said their presence on the campus was enriching.

In his response, Sartie thanked IITA for the opportunity to serve. He said working for IITA was a 'dream come true' as he had, as a student, longed to join organizations involved in fighting hunger and poverty in Africa.

Recalling his humble beginning, the Sierra Leone-born scientist said,



The Sarties pose with IITA staff during the send-off party

"I was born in poverty, grew up in poverty, and I understand poverty. When the opportunity came to join IITA, I felt it was time to help in the fight against poverty."

He described IITA's work in Africa as wonderful, stressing that the Institute had done a lot in addressing

most of the food challenges faced by the continent.

Help conserve electricity!

Before leaving the workplace at day's end, 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.

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).