

# Ghana gets quality maize varieties to boost production

Ghana has released four Quality Protein Maize (QPM) varieties tolerant of drought and resistant to *Striga hermontica* to farmers to boost maize production in the drought-prone and *Striga* endemic areas of the country.

The varieties which are early and extra-early maturing were released by the Ghanaian Crops Research Institute (CRI) in collaboration with the Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI) of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) of Ghana.

Of the four varieties, three were developed by IITA in the Earlies Program and have the IITA designation, EV DT-W 99 STR QPM Co; TZE-W Pop STR QPM C0; and TZEE-W Pop STR QPM C0 ( an extra-early maturing variety).

The fourth, an intermediate maturing drought-tolerant QPM hybrid, was developed in the National Maize Program of Ghana.

The IITA varieties were developed through the funding support of the Nippon Foundation QPM Project during the period 2003-2006 and were extensively tested in on-station and on-farm trials in Ghana by

the SARI and the CRI between 2008 and 2009 through the funding support of the Drought-Tolerant Maize for Africa (DTMA Project).

Besides resistance to *Striga* and tolerance to drought, the varieties also have high levels of lysine and tryptophan.

“With the release of these varieties, farmers in Ghana now have options not only in terms of maturity, grain color and type but also varieties which can tolerate the two major stresses which prevent increased maize production and productivity in the sub-region,” says Dr. Baffour Badu-Apraku, IITA Maize Breeder.

Endemic to the savanna agroecological zone of West Africa, *Striga* has become an important constraint to maize production, accounting for yield losses of between 20 and 80% in sub-Saharan Africa, and affecting the welfare and livelihood of over 100 million people.

Also, unpredictable bouts of rainfall in SSA because of climate change is equally reducing productivity gains.

Dr. Robert Asuboah of the Grains and Legumes Development Board of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in Ghana



A maize demo farm

says farmers are eager to get the new varieties.

“We are excited because the varieties are ‘insurance’ crops. We are now experiencing droughts even during rainy seasons so the varieties will enable farmers to harvest more and make more money,” he says.

## Regional planning meeting of the Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa project holds in Ibadan



Participants in the DTMA meeting pose for a group photo in Ibadan.

Researchers, policymakers and the private sector are meeting in Ibadan for the Regional planning meeting of the Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa project.

The meeting which was declared open by Dr. Robert Asiedu, IITA Director on 30

March will end on 2 April.

Stakeholders at the meeting are taking a retrospect, acknowledging progress made, making the necessary adjustments, and mapping out plans for the way forward.

Asiedu commended the efforts of

scientists working on the project and urged them to sustain the tempo.

He also advised scientists to have their ears to the ground and to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

The IITA director commended the spirit of collaboration between IITA, CIMMYT, the national partners and the involvement of the private seed companies in the project, adding that for “IITA, the attention on maize improvement is still high.”

Dr. Wilfred Mwangi, DTMA Project Leader, gave a summary of achievements of the project, including the release of drought-tolerant maize varieties, training of African scientists (PhD, MSc), technicians, and technical backstopping for the private seed companies and farmers.

He also said publications by DTMA scientists on maize had been made while the team had also embarked on high-level advocacy to draw policymakers’ attention to the maize seed sector.

# IITA Women's Group announces scholarship for 2010

The IITA Women's Group is happy to announce the annual scholarship competition for 2010. The group welcomes applications from qualified candidates for scholarships in the following categories:

- Junior secondary school
- Senior secondary school
- Polytechnic
- University

The criteria for the awards are:

- Applicants must be children of IITA employees in Nigeria on pay grades 1-6.
- Parents of such applicants must have worked at IITA for at least two years and must be presently employed.
- Applicants must be above average academically and must have school reports to prove this.

- Applicants must be registered in schools or must have secured admission into a recognized school.
- Applicants will be expected to perform well during the interviews (both oral and written), which will be conducted for short-listed candidates.

The value for each scholarship has increased from last year and is as follows:

- Junior Secondary = N 7,500
- Senior Secondary = N10,000
- Post Secondary = N15,000

Interested parents with children in these categories may collect the forms from the Employee Services Unit of the Human Resources Program in Building 500 during working hours. Completed forms should be returned to the Employee Services Unit on or before 14 May. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.



Photo from Getty Images

## Adoptable initiatives exist in the US on women and entrepreneurship

The 2010 United States International Visitor Leadership program has proved the existence of initiatives which developing countries can adopt to empower women and promote entrepreneurial skills on the continent.

The program, which is an annual event, also highlighted both the contribution of women to the US economic development and explored the progress of women around the world in participating better in the global economy.

IITA's Peju Onadipe who participated in the program says the US government gives women an enabling environment and support to develop socio-economically.

"This was an observation worthy of note for advocacy and emulation back home," she adds.

The program, which offered participants the opportunity to tour/visit different states/cities and interact with women leaders, NGO coordinators, business owners, and associations/organizations, also underpinned the 'can do spirit' in women.



Local processing of cassava by women

Onadipe says "From interaction with these women, I saw the power of association to drive change, the strong effect of networking in entrepreneurship, and the potential of women in reducing economic recession, as it was said that 16% of business in the US is controlled by women and that they have the power to make more."

She appreciated the Americans on their great passion for development and high spirit of volunteerism.

According to her, the program increased her skills in managing women and women's groups, which is useful to her work with women who are being trained in processing important crops for improved livelihoods.

### 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.

## 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