



# President Goodluck Jonathan promotes IITA-developed cassava bread

## Instructs cabinet to mull new national policy on bread content



An NTA News screengrab of Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan presenting to members of the FEC the IITA-developed bread containing 40 percent cassava flour.

His Excellency President Goodluck Jonathan has hinted that Nigeria may soon have a new policy on bread content, following the successful development of bread containing 40% cassava flour by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA).

Speaking at the presentation of the bread before the meeting of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) in the State House, Abuja on Wednesday, the President directed his ministers to come up with new policies to encourage the production of cassava bread in the country.

"The coordinating minister of the economy will meet with ministers of national planning, trade and investment, agriculture and the Chief Economic Adviser to the President to come up with policies that we will adopt to encourage those who use cassava flour for their manufacturing processes," Jonathan said.

"For us, as a nation, to move forward, we must tame our taste for exotic products. Some of the things we bring from outside are

not even as good as what we have," he emphasized as he praised the product.

The president added that after he tasted the bread about a week ago, he told himself that it was only such bread he would eat from now on. "I thought it proper for us in the council to formally present this bread to Nigerians."

President Jonathan said the effort to increase cassava content in bread was initiated by the administration of

former President Olusegun Obasanjo, which wanted at least 10% cassava content. He added that achieving 40% cassava content in bread was indeed a major development.

"This project is one that the Federal Government started some years back under the administration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo to encourage Nigerians to use cassava as part of the ingredients of producing bread and other items that we need because of the cost of wheat," he said.

Also speaking, Dr Akinwunmi Adesina, Minister of Agriculture, said that this IITA-developed cassava bread offers myriad of opportunities for the country.

"This will create a lot of jobs, create markets for our farmers, stabilize prices, and give us pride in the fact that we have actually eaten what we produce," the minister stressed.

He also noted that Nigeria was the highest cassava producer in the world, producing 34 million tons of the produce annually, but the country accounted for zero percent in terms of added value.

Under the agriculture transformation strategy, the current government will be working actively to create new markets for cassava-growing farmers.

*Agriculture Minister Adesina on the IITA-developed cassava bread: "This will create a myriad of opportunities for the country."*



## IITA bids farewell to four staff

The IITA Human Resource Service announces that the following staff have disengaged their services from the institute:



**Hailu Tefera**, Soybean Breeder and Country Representative to Malawi, effective 12 November. He will be going back to the US to join his family there;



**Bi Irie Vroh**, Banana Breeder, effective 20 November;



**Dominique Dumet**, Head of the Genetic Resources Center, effective 31 December (but has left November). She will be working at IRD based in Marseille, France; and



**Dr Opeyemi Sikuade**, Head of the IITA Clinic, effective 31 December (also left November). She will be going to back to the UK to join her family and continue her medical practice there.

The IITA Community thanks them for their invaluable contributions to the Institute and wishes them good luck in their future endeavors.

For comments and/or contributions to the IITA Bulletin, please email: Jeffrey T. Oliver ([j.olyer@cgiar.org](mailto:j.olyer@cgiar.org)), Godwin Atser ([g.atser@cgiar.org](mailto:g.atser@cgiar.org)), or Catherine Njuguna ([c.njuguna@cgiar.org](mailto:c.njuguna@cgiar.org)).

## Better farming methods, fertilizer use can double Uganda's coffee production

Using inorganic fertilizers and following improved farming practices can increase, and even double, coffee production among smallholder farmers in Uganda, the world's 11th largest producer of the crop.

This is according to a recent study conducted by IITA researchers which found that farmers of Robusta coffee in southern Uganda who used urea fertilizer to address nitrogen deficiency in their fields harvested twice as much coffee beans as those who did not. This applied to either when the coffee was monocropped or intercropped with banana, a common practice in the country.

The study also found that the rate of return for farmers' investment in fertilizer using 2006-2007 prices were as high as 545% for Robusta grown together with banana, and 305% when grown alone.

However, yield increases and profitability of applying nitrogen fertilizer were much lower for Arabica coffee in the Mount Elgon area where the yield increased by an average of 36% while the rate of return was below 100%. Nutrient deficiency mapping in the region confirmed that the region's soils had a general imbalance of important minerals (cation imbalance) and not just nitrogen. Over 80% of the coffee grown in Uganda is Robusta.

According to Piet Van Asten, Systems Agronomist with IITA, the current average yield for both Arabica and Robusta coffee at one ton per hectare per year is very low but farmers can easily double their production by using fertilizer and improving current farming practices.

However, he says, to get the maximum return out of fertilizer use, it is important to target the nutrient deficiency in a particular area and the type of coffee instead of following blanket fertilizer recommendation.



*Coffee intercropped with banana near a homestead in Uganda.*

"Arabica and Robusta coffee have different nutrient requirements and nutrient deficiencies vary from place to place, yet the current fertilizer recommendations for the crop are not specific to the coffee type or region."

Godfrey Senabulya, 45, from Bukomansimbi district in Uganda, is one of the farmers involved in the study who is making much more money than before from his coffee farming by using fertilizer and improved farming practices. He started using fertilizers in 2006 after attending various training conducted under the Agricultural Productivity Enhancement Program (APEP) funded by USAID in 2005 and 2006.

Senabulya says he is able to comfortably feed and educate his seven children with the earnings from coffee and has greatly improved his house and farm.

"Farmers should not be scared of using fertilizers. They should go for training to learn how and which fertilizers to use and they will see the difference," he says.

The research was funded by USAID through APEP. The findings are also in line with a similar study led by van Asten and Lydia Wairegi, a PhD student at Makerere University, which showed that moderate use of mineral fertilizers could double the production of East African highland bananas in Uganda.

## Aflatoxin project Website now live!



The Website of the "Aflatoxin Mitigation in Africa" project is now live at [www.aflasafe.com](http://www.aflasafe.com).

The site highlights the various initiatives and efforts of the IITA-USDA-AATF-Doreo team and partners to reduce aflatoxin burden on African food and trade through various donor-supported aflatoxin R4D projects.

Also on the project Website are relevant news and other useful information and resources on mycotoxins and their control and management, which are relevant not only to Africa but the international community as well.