

CFC, IITA inaugurate additional cassava processing center in Sierra Leone

The Cassava Value Chain Development Project has again inaugurated a cassava processing center in Sierra Leone, bringing the number of processing centers commissioned under the project in that country to six, thanks to the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC)—the initiator and financier of the project.

The center which is located in Walihun, about eight hours drive from the capital Freetown in the southern part of the country, will help resource poor farmers in that region to process cassava tubers to several products including gari, and fufu.

"It will also ease the pains associated with the traditional or manual system of cassava processing," says Olu John, President of the National Association of Farmers in Sierra Leone.

In December 2009, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)—the implementing agency—, and the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), commissioned five cassava processing sites to ease the burden of processing, create additional markets for cassava products and more importantly generate wealth in local communities through increased cassava production.

The five centers are Gbotima processing center in Bo District; Njala Agricultural Research Center, in Moyamba District; Adamaris cassava processing center in Bombali District; UPWARDS cassava processing center in Port Loko District; and another center in Waterloo in the Western Rural District.

John said farmers were glad over these projects but added, "we request for more to boost cassava production."

Beneficiaries of the project commended IITA-CFC West Africa for putting the project in their community.

Samuel Konde, leader of Walihun Farmers Association, said the project would turn around the fortunes of cassava farmers in the community.

"We are happy because help has finally come," he said.

In Sierra Leone, cassava is a key crop because of its ease of cultivation and culinary qualities such as straightforwardness of preparation. Usually, the roots are either boiled or eaten in raw form. Cassava leaves are also a delicacy that is served with several dishes.

The project, which seeks to diversify and make more products from cassava, will allow farmers access to more money, says Sanni Lateef, Project Coordinator, IITA-CFC West Africa.

"Our project beneficiaries now have the opportunity to process quality cassava products and make money," he stressed.

Lateef called on beneficiaries to jealously monitor and to tap the enormous potential of the enterprises.

According to him, IITA, FAO, SLARI and other partners will continue to train stakeholders in areas such as effective hygienic practices, equipment maintenance, and enterprise management to ensure that beneficiaries get sustainable income and nutritious foods.



CFC-IITA project beneficiaries begin to produce gari immediately after the inauguration of the new cassava processing center in Walihun, Sierra Leone

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.

IITA School welcomes new teacher



This week a new teacher/intern joins the IITA School. Thierry Middleton, a Canadian, will be teaching the pre kindergarten class. Middleton himself attended IITA School for six years whilst his parents were members of staff based on the Ibadan campus.

Middleton is currently a student at Laurentian University in Ontario, Canada where he is part way through an undergraduate degree comprising both a Bachelor of Arts in Sport Psychology and a Bachelor in Education.

He has extensive experience in sports coaching and has worked with children since 2003 in various roles including being camp team leader, swimming instructor and lifeguard.

Middleton will reside at No. 8 Tilbury. He can be reached via his email address at T.Middleton@cgiar.org, or at the school on extension 2593.

Ensuring quality and safety standards of cassava products in Malawi

In its continuing efforts to ensure that processed cassava products meet the required quality and safety standards to promote commercialization of the crop, IITA-Malawi under the Unleashing the Power of Cassava (UPoCA) project trained 22 processors on quality management in cassava processing.

The guest of honour, Moses Banda, the Deputy Director of Agricultural Services commended IITA, its UPoCA project, and other NGOs in promoting cassava production and processing to improve food security and marketing of its products.

"I am happy to learn that the Malawi Bureau of Standards is working hand in hand with my Ministry and IITA/SARRNET to set the standards for edible and non edible cassava products," he said.

Pheneas Ntawuruhunga, the IITA/SARRNET Coordinator said the training aimed to assist cassava processors to develop quality management guidelines in the production of the various cassava products that meet requirements of the Bureau of Standards.

The participants were drawn from various projects including IITA's UPoCA, FAO, Total Land Care (TLC); Cassava Value

Addition Africa (C:AVA), Malawi Enterprise Development Institute (MEDI) and Ministry of Agriculture.

In attendance also was Braima James, UPoCA Manager, who was on supervisory visit to the country.

The training which was conducted on 23-25 August 2010. It looked at quality/safety standards and regulations for cassava chips and flour, basic quality assessment of cassava chips and flour and recommended principles of good manufacturing and hygienic practices (GMP and GHP) in cassava processing.

UPoCA project has engaged the Malawi Bureau of Standards to provide technical support on best practices as required by the standards bureau.

IITA-Malawi is implementing the UPoCA Project in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Total Land Care (TLC) and Evangelical Lutheran Development Services (ELDS). The Project is supporting five processors with solar driers and other processing equipment. In addition, the project will this year distribute improved variety planting materials to cover 498 ha in the coming cropping season.



Peeling and washing cassava at a starch factory in Malawi. The training focused on quality and safety standards of processed cassava products including cassava starch.

IITA-Ibadan nominated to "7 Wonders of Nigeria"

Africa Travel Quarterly (ATQ), the first travel magazine in West Africa and the inflight magazine of Air Nigeria (formerly Virgin Nigeria), has named IITA-Ibadan as among the top 55 nominees in its search for the "7 Wonders of Nigeria".

IITA-Ibadan is nominated alongside a myriad of natural formations and man-made structures including bridges, modern buildings, nature parks, waterfalls, caves, mosques, a church, a dam, a palace, mountains, rock formations, and rivers, among others.

In its August issue (Issue #23), the magazine described IITA-Ibadan as "the most famous agricultural research center in Africa currently being developed into the continent's very first Science Park."

The top 55 nominees were selected in March by a select group of Nigerian heritage experts, engineers, architects, environmentalists, geographers, and tour operators.

The selection panel will visit all the 55 sites, and between August and December reduce the number to 21 from which the Final 7 would be derived. The public will have a say on which would go into the Final 7 by voting via SMS from the Top 21, which will be announced in October during the AKWAABA Travel Market that ATQ is also organizing.

The search for the 7 wonders of Nigeria was conceived as the magazine's contribution to the growth of the tourism industry in the country and the development of national pride.

In its Web site (<http://www.africantravelquarterly.com/sevenwonders.html>), ATQ says that as Nigeria marks its 50th anniversary, "there is a need to renew a communal love for the country hence the need to identify National Icons of International repute...that are "must see" for every Nigerian and every visitor to the country - images that can be universally recognized and promoted as Nigerian destinations. This will draw attention to the beauty of Nigeria and its people.

