



## Health care at the door steps of cocoa farmers in Ghana

Over 1,000 Ghanaian cocoa farmers and their families attended a one-day health fair on 20 March. The event was organized by IITA-STCP as part of efforts to bring health care to the door steps of cocoa farmers.

The objective of the Community Health for Every Cocoa Farmer Medical Examination, dubbed CHECme, was to raise health awareness among cocoa farmers. Most productive cocoa farmers in Ghana have limited access to health care.

The health fair concept, initiated by STCP's Regional Participatory and Extension Specialist, Sonii David, was developed by STCP as an efficient and effective health care sensitization method financed by the local cocoa industry with the aim of making the activity sustainable. It is anticipated that CHECme will become an annual event organized in different parts of the country.

The pilot CHECme event was funded by the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) and supported by several companies in the Ghanaian cocoa sector including Cadbury Ghana Ltd., Armajaro Ghana Ltd., Ghana Cocoa Board, Cocoa Clinic, Nestlé Ghana Ltd., Wienco Ghana Ltd., Cocoa Abrabopa, and Yara Ghana Ltd.

The farmers came from Bibiani Anhwiaso-Bekwai and 10 surrounding districts in the Western and Ashanti Regions. They were screened for diabetes, hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and general health status



*Gyamfi addressing the gathering*

including malnourishment, weight, and height. Health care providers including nurses, lab technicians, and general medical assistants were drawn from the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, one of Ghana's biggest teaching hospitals and the Cocoa Clinic, a health unit of the Ghana Cocoa Board.

Most farmers who attended the fair expressed their joy and appreciation to IITA-STCP for taking such an initiative to cater to their health needs. Owusu Aduomi, who came from Seidi in the Atwima Nwabiagwa District of the Ashanti Region, said that he could not recall any program of this kind organized for cocoa farmers in his

16 years of farming. He was particularly thankful to the funders for making this event possible. He said that unless the cocoa farmer was healthy and happy, he could not be productive. Like many of the farmers and their families present at the fair, Aduomi was examined for diabetes, hepatitis B, and malaria. Fortunately for him, no serious illness was detected.

The event was officially launched by STCP-Ghana Country Manager and IITA Country Representative, Isaac Gyamfi. He called on the chocolate industry to consider the health needs of cocoa farmers as an integral part to sustain a vibrant cocoa industry.

## Farmer organizations to help make a strong case for yam improvement in West Africa



*Representatives of farmers' organizations at the meeting*

IITA has convened a meeting of Farmer Organizations (FO) representatives from Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Nigeria, and Togo in Accra, Ghana, to gather information to fill in the gaps identified in a study conducted to assess the status of yam development in West Africa. The study was initiated by IITA through a planning grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The two-day meeting gathered heads of farmers' organizations from West Africa to collect information on FOs and their current and potential activities related to yam production, processing, and commercialization, and to identify and discuss a roadmap for the development of a yam value chain in the subregion.

# Global Positioning System training held in Mbalmayo, Cameroon

A four-day training workshop on the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) has been held in Mbalmayo, Central region of Cameroon. Participants included Cyrille Kamdem, Lapbim Julius Nkeh, Nathalie Ewane, and Christelle Ebounga, all of STCP Cameroon and 15 technical advisors of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Livestock and Fishery under the Amélioration de la Compétitivité des Exploitations Familiales Agro-pastorales (ACEFA- Program for the Improvement of the Competitiveness of Family Agro-pastoral Farms) project. The training was organized by IITA-STCP Cameroon in collaboration with the ACEFA project, a joint program of the two ministries and financed by France.

The training aims to introduce the GPS to participants and increase their technical capability on using the system, thus strengthening their ability to collect and



Participants posed for a group photo during the GPS workshop

record information in the computer, and generate data using the mapping system. Participants were also taught how to train Farmer Field School facilitators on the use of GPS.

The participants expressed the need for a supplementary training on Geographical Information System (GIS) to equip them with the ability to analyze and interpret data collected from the GPS.

## 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

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

## IITA welcomes, Gezahegn Girma Tessema, Associate Professional Officer



Gezahegn Girma Tessema has joined the Genetic Resources Center as an Associate Professional Officer – Clonal Crop Field Bank Management. He is from Arsi, Ethiopia.

Before joining, IITA he worked for the Ethiopian Coffee Forest Forum as a genetics research assistant.

Tessema completed a BSc in Agriculture (Plant Science) at Debub University, Awassa College of Agriculture. He then completed an MSc in Biology (Applied Genetics) at Addis Ababa University.

Gezahegn arrived with his wife, Tseganesh Sergework Dessie.

Gezahegn's office is in Biotech, office 16, and his telephone extension is 2718. His email address is [g.tessema@cgiar.org](mailto:g.tessema@cgiar.org)

## 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

### Change of name

Former Ms. Agene, Glory Ebinehita of Security Unit wishes to be addressed as Mrs. Oshiopekhai, Glory Ebinehita henceforth.

### R4D Seminars 12 April, Vigna Room

9:00 am, Lava Kumar, *Winning the race against virus threats to food crops in sub-Saharan Africa*

2:00 pm, Sarah Hearne, *IITA – the appliance of science: Harnessing interdisciplinary approaches for germplasm development*