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Nigeria
Integrated
Agriculture
Activity
Newsletter,
25th Edition,
June 2023



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Integrated Agriculture Activity Holds Third Annual Agricultural Inputs Fair

USAID-funded Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity held its 2023 Agricultural Inputs Fair in May/June 2023. The 3rd edition of the flagship event, unlike previous years, was held in four states – Adamawa, Borno, Gombe and Yobe States – after USAID granted the expansion of the Activity to two more northeastern states in September 2022.

The main purpose of organizing such an essential Fair is to provide smallholder farmers with access to affordable agricultural inputs such as improved seeds,

agricultural inputs such as improved seeds, agro-chemicals, fertilizers, and other farm implements. Therefore, the Activity partners with seed companies, agro-chemical producers, fertilizer-producing firms, farm implement fabricators to bring these agro-input products closer to farmers at pocket-friendly prices. At the Fair, stands are allotted to the marketers of these products free of charge.

The Fair started in Biu, Borno State on May 30 & 31, 2023 and later Emir's Palace, Shani, Shani LGA, Borno State on June 1 & 2,



IAA Chief of Party, Mr. Prakash Kant Silwal (left), joined by the Deputy Chief of Party, Mr. Olukayode Faleti (centre) and ICRISAT Research Supervisor, Mr. Tolorunleke Balogun (right), explains the processes of Crop Residue Management to the Adamawa State Deputy Governor, Professor Kaletapwa Farauta at the 2023 Agricultural Inputs Fair in Yola.



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The Activity's Youth and Gender Facilitator, Mr. Shakiru Quadri, takes dignitaries including Emir of Fune, Alhaji Saleh Idrissa Ibn Usman and Permanent Secretary, Yobe State Ministry of Agriculture, Dr. Musa Kollere, on a tour of the exhibition stands. Here, Nutrition Officer, Ms. Rebecca Tumba shows them items on display.

2023. From Borno State, the Fair moved to Yola, Adamawa State on June 5 & 6 at the renowned Ribadu Square. Then, Presidential Lodge, Gombi, Adamawa State on June 7 & 8, 2023. On 10th and 11th of June, the Fair took place at the Gombe State ADP/Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry in Gombe, Gombe State. Kaltungo hosted the Fair at the Kaltungo Stadium on June 13, 2023. For 15th and 16th June, the people of Potiskum experienced the Fair while it was the turn of Fika residents on June 17, 2023.

Overall, the 2023 Agricultural Inputs Fair was marked with significant attendance by dignitaries who appreciated the lofty contributions of USAID through its implementing partner, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in collaboration with the International Crops

Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). In Adamawa State, for instance, apart from having the Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries of Agriculture, Livestock and Aquaculture, the Governor, Hon. Ahmadu Fintiri was represented by his deputy, Professor Kaletapwa Farauta. The professor of agronomy and former Vice Chancellor of Adamawa State University, Mubi continuously praised USAID's efforts at ensuring food security and called for further expansion of the initiative to all the Local Government Areas of the State. Borno, Gombe and Yobe witnessed the attendance of Permanent Secretaries from the State Agriculture Ministries and royal fathers who were highly impressed by the varied interventions of the Activity, most especially, the Agricultural Inputs initiative which smallholder farmers are particularly grateful for.



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"IAA Agricultural Inputs Fair: My Gamechanger" – Mallam Musa



Mallam Abubakar Musa has been attending Inputs Fairs but has never experienced a locally agriculturally focused event like the 2023 Agricultural Inputs Fair in Potiskum, Yobe. Abubakar deals in organic and MPK fertilizers and supplies to Potiskum and environs. His invitation to the Fair was greeted with mixed feelings as he made minimal sales at the last fair organized by another Activity.

"I sold just 20 bags at that fair because the attendance was poor. I also spent a lot in transporting my goods to the location. I am truly impressed by the crowd at IAA Fair and the number of dignitaries in attendance. It's like a communal gathering", said Abubakar.

On the first day of the Fair in Potiskum, Abubakar displayed 60 bags of organic fertilizers and 40 bags of NPK fertilizers.

He sold 40 bags of NPK fertilizers at NGN24,000 as against NGN25,000 market price. Also, he sold 22 bags of organic fertilizers at NGN16,500 as against NGN17,500. In all, he made over a million for the first day.

"I couldn't contain the joy, the joy of a businessman much profit with little efforts. I started telling other agricultural dealers about my success on the first day. I wasn't disappointed on the second day either. In fact, my sale on the second day prompted me to find my way to Fika on the third day. My sales ran to millions. I am most grateful to USAID and IITA for this privilege and the awareness they are helping to create about the importance of fertilizers in rural communities. I hope they invite me every year."



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2023

Agricultural Inputs Fair: A Celebration of Cultures

No doubt, the 2023 Agricultural Inputs Fair was a success. Smallholder farmers were able to purchase certified seeds and other agro-products at reduced prices in their localities. Seed companies, agro-chemical manufacturers, fertilizer producers and other agro-producers smiled to the bank as they made profit. Important figures in the states' economic and agriculture sectors were also present to dignify the yearly event that sometimes creates a unifying effect in the host communities.

The flagship event might be an agriculturally focused one targeted at bringing input closer to smallholder farmers in the northeast, the cultural elements which forms a mesmerizing spectacle is undeniable. The grace and the gait of the traditional leaders as well as how they are adored by their followers in these communities are worthy of note. At the Potiskum Fair, for instance, the Emir of Fune, Alh. Saleh Idrissa Ibn Usman had his colorful entourage led by his 'dogarai', (men attendants) and the traditional musicians, 'Makadan Sarki' who are heralded by the tune of the local flute. The Emir's massive, embroidered umbrella oozing royalty at its finest. One is, therefore, left with no choice than to appreciate the display of culture in its beauty and splendor.



The Arrival of the Emir of Kune with his colourful men attendants, the 'dogarai', at the Potiskum Fair.



The Luku dancers of Kaltungo doing the agelong 'fight of the wives' during the Gombe Fair.



Camouflaged Tangale traditional dancers of Biliri intrigued the Fair audience in Kaltungo.



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Kanjo dancers of Potiskum in action.



'A tribe of proud farmers' performed by the Adamawa State Arts Council in Yola.



Welcoming the new wife: Janbai dance group thrilled the audience at the Gombi Fair, Adamawa State.

Another cultural element which the Agricultural Inputs Fair presents is the local dance of the people. Oftentimes, this dance is a representation of the people's way of life. Features of the kind of crops they cultivate, worldview, religion, lifestyle are displayed during these performances. For example, the Luku dancers from Kaltungo who thrilled the audience at the Gombe Fair to a performance centred around quarrelling wives in a polygamous setting. The Janbai dance group from Gombi, Adamawa State displayed the role of senior wives during the wedding ceremony of a new wife. The Lala traditional dancers of Shani are an agile team of male and female performers who displayed the warrior side of farming of a native people which embodies stages of initiations into adulthood.

Apart from the dance, the dressing, and the food, the local people are elements of culture noticeable on the Fair ground. Hawkers are a common sight, and they sell local drinks and snacks to participants at the Fair. In conclusion, these culture attributes make the Agricultural Inputs Fair not merely an opportunity for buyers and sellers of agro-products but a celebration of the local people's way of life. Look out for these and more at the 2024 Agricultural Inputs Fair.



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Stepping Down Improved Agricultural Training for Smallholder Farmers



In preparation for the 2023 wet season farming, smallholder farmers in Adamawa and Borno States are receiving the much-needed support from USAID through Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity implemented by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and partner, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). One of the avenues through which these farmers are supported is through training in good agricultural practices which helps guarantee food security in the northeast.

The Activity in collaboration with the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) trains Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP) External Agents (EAs) on improved agricultural practices. These EAs pass on this knowledge to smallholder farmers in intervention local government areas. They are trained best agronomic practices in cultivating maize, cowpea, soybean, and rice. They also learn safe handling and

application of IITA's Aflasafe and Nodumax, pesticides as well as Safer Use Action Plan (SUAP) compliance.

To further empower these smallholder farmers, they also acquire knowledge in the areas of nutrition. Hence, they are taught the health and nutritive benefits of crops such as soybean, cowpea, groundnut, maize, rice, sorghum, and millet. Also, they are exposed to key gender concepts and perspectives such as dimensions of gender inequalities in agriculture and other key components of gender mainstreaming.

So far, 12,531 smallholder farmers have been reached in Adamawa State in 2023. For Borno State, 5,201 smallholder farmers have benefitted from the step-down training. That makes a total of 17,732. The number is expected to increase in the coming weeks especially as the Activity embarks on the establishment of demonstration plots.



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Making the Most of Homestead Farming

By March 2023, Grace started selling the spinach in her garden. She made sales of NGN500 to NGN1000 daily. By June 10, she had gathered NGN55,000 from selling just spinach to market women in her community. She also made NGN1,000 from the sale of the okra in her farmstead. The lettuce was presented to her family, friends, and neighbours free of charge. From the amount realized, Grace brought NGN32,000 worth of chicks for her backyard poultry. She also bought more pumpkins at the rate of NGN5000 so she can expand her Ugwu farm.

"My orange-fleshed sweet potatoes will be harvested soon. I can't wait! Until then, I have so much spinach seeds to sell to anyone who wants to have a money-making homestead farm like me. I hope to a popular seed-seller in this community soon. All thanks to USAID, IITA and IAA for the opportunity!"

Mrs. Grace Gana lives in Marama community, Hawul LGA, Borno State. She is one of the Activity's nutrition promoters in her community. With a big expanse of land in her compound, Grace explored the homestead farming option. Although she was not entirely new to homestead farming, she decided to expand her farm by planting more varieties of vitamin A rich vegetables including 'Ugwu' (pumpkin leaves), lettuce, beetroot, and orange-fleshed sweet potatoes.



Mrs. Grace Gana grooming the latest addition to her homestead farm, pumpkin leaves (Ugwu).



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About the Activity

The Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity (IAA) issued under the US Government's Global Food Security Act was awarded by USAID Nigeria to the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and its partners in July 2019 towards the economic recovery of North-East Nigeria, in the wake of the devastation caused by the ongoing insurgency in the region. The Activity supports vulnerable populations in 12 Local Government Areas of Adamawa and Borno states to re-engage in basic farming activities and aims to advance the objectives of inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth, strengthened resilience among people and systems, and a well-nourished population, especially among women and children in targeted locations.

To achieve these objectives, the Activity works with a coalition of public and private sector partners to facilitate improved agro-input and extension advisory services to serve vulnerable populations; strengthen the institutions that form the market system and the networks that serve smallholder farmers disenfranchised by conflict, and facilitate the engagement of youth and women in economic and entrepreneurial activities.

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