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Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity Newsletter, 22nd Edition, March 2023



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Integrated Agriculture Activity Highlights Work at Global (Shree Anna) Millet Conference

At the Global (Shree Anna) Millet Conference in India organized to commemorate the International Year of Millet 2023, Integrated Agriculture Activity (IAA) highlighted the efforts of USAID and its implementing partner, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), in ensuring food security in northeast Nigeria. The International Millet Conference took place on the 18th -19th of March 2023 at the Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi. The conference was themed "Enhancing Productivity and Value Addition in Millets".

The Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, who inaugurated the conference explained that the cultivation of millet in

larger quantities can contribute to food security and help provide more nourishment to people of all ages; hence, the efforts of India and its partner countries (Nigeria inclusive) in educating the world about the wonders of the crop. Other dignitaries such as the Indian Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Suriname's Minister of Agriculture, Parmanand Prahlad Sewdien, Guyana's Agriculture Minister, Zulfikar Mustafa, Agriculture Minister of Zambia, Reuben Mtolo Phiri, agree that if countries of the world gather at agricultural conferences, technologies needed for planting crops such as millet can be exchanged and higher yields achieved.



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During the presentations, the Chief of Party (IAA), Mr. Prakash Kant Silwal, spoke on “Millet stakeholders’ interface for leveraging market opportunities: IITA’s role in millet nutrition, value addition and interfacing different consumers” and “Market approach to improving the livelihood of smallholder farmers in NE Nigeria through technology (Aflasafe) and community nutrition”. Silwal explained how IITA has delivered more than 70% of the CGIAR’s impact in sub-Saharan Africa through a science-driven improvement of agriculture.

He emphasized the uniqueness of USAID’s support in ensuring that northeast Nigeria has viable food value chains. The CoP also spotlighted some of the key technologies, such as Aflasafe, and tools employed in the production of highly nutritive crops like millet.

Mr Silwal attended the conference in the company of members of the Nigeria Millet Initiative and Niger State Ministries of Agriculture, and Investment. The conference created global networking opportunities and prospective partnerships.



Round table discussions on plant health, aflatoxin and Aflasafe during the Global Millet Conference in India: Chief of Party(IAA), Mr. Prakash Kant Silwal (in black suit); flanked by other top officials from India and Suriname.



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Field-Based Monitoring: USAID MELSA Team visits IAA Implementing States

The USAID Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Social Accountability (MELSA) team has begun a field-based monitoring (FBM) exercise for Integrated Agriculture Activity (IAA) implementing states/communities. The exercise commenced on the 20th of March, 2023 in Borno and Yobe States after which the team will move to Adamawa and Gombe States in April.

The purpose of the exercise is to conduct output verification in addition to the assessment of the Activity's compliance with the annual work plan and other tasks. During this period, the MELSA team assessed agronomy, nutrition, as well as

youth, and gender inventions while interacting with the Activity staff and beneficiaries.

In Yobe State, especially, the team met with the Director of Agriculture and Extension services and the extension agents. They also visited communities with profiled farmers and interacted with community leaders in Fika, Nangere, and Damaturu LGAs. The beneficiaries in the five implementing LGAs of Borno state were receptive as they shared the Activity's impact on their lives and communities. An official report will be filed to the donor (USAID) by April ending to mark the end of the exercise.



A member of the USAID MELSA team, Professor John Jiya Musa, assessing a bottle of Tomapepo (a mix of tomato, pepper and onions) made by the Activity's beneficiaries in Kwaya Kusar LGA, Borno State.



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Meet Mallam Shuaibu Sali, the OFSP Farmer.

With one wife and 11 children, 56-year-old Mallam Shuaibu Sali understands what providing food for a large family means. Every season, he plants maize and other crops to feed his large family. He then sells the rest. Income from the sale is usually small compared to the needs of his family. In all, his wife tries to prepare meals that are cheap but nourishing including vegetables.

“As a farmer, I don’t joke with the planting of vegetables. The seeds are cheap, available, and easy to cultivate even in the dry season. Within a few weeks, they are due for harvest and my family can consume them. That was why when Integrated Agriculture Activity

approached me about homestead farming, I was excited. They also showed me a kind of potato that was not common in our community. I wanted to be the first to plant it,” said Mallam Shuaibu.

In July 2021, Shuaibu provided the Activity with a 10 X 10 piece of land for a homestead farming demonstration in his compound in Tashan Tsamiya community, Bayo LGA, Borno State. Orange-fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSP) and other micronutrient-rich vegetables were planted on the piece of land. Thereafter, Mallam Shuaib was put in charge of the demonstration. By December 2021 when he discovered how



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successful the demonstration was, Shuaibu got more of the OFSP vines from the Activity and planted them on his larger farm. He invested NGN30,500 in planting, weeding, and fencing the farm. The yield was plenteous. Shuaibu harvested twelve and a half bags of OFSP by March 2022. He made a sale of NGN150,000.



Harvest time on Mallam Shuaibu's OFSP farm

“I never knew I could get such a yield let alone make so much money. I and my family consumed a good portion of the OFSP and even gifted neighbors a lot of the potatoes, despite that I still made a lot of money. The potatoes are not only unique, but they are also highly nutritious”.

OFSP contains vitamins A, B complex, C, potassium, zinc, and magnesium. It helps in the treatment of inflammation, and ulcer; aids digestion; reduces arthritis pain; and helps control diabetes.



A heap of orange-fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSPs) after harvest on Mallam Shuaibu's farm.

Shuaibu is on his way to another bountiful harvest. He harvested the first batch of his OFSP on 12 March 2023 and has so far sold NGN20,000 worth. He admits that although he planted the indigenous white variety of sweet potatoes, he got a better yield with OFSP.



Bagging time: one of the full bags of OFSP harvested on Shuaibu's farm



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‘Exclusive breastfeeding makes all the difference.’ – Mother of four children

Halima Mohammed is not a novice to childbearing. She is a young mother of 4 children. When she had her first two children, she was unaware of the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding.

“My mom and my mother-in-law would ask me to give the children water at intervals. My mother-in-law, especially, would tell me that a baby will not tell you when he is thirsty so you have to offer him water as often as possible. They told me that breastmilk is never enough for any child. I followed their direction and I kept wondering why my first two kids were always falling ill”

When Halima joined the Gwathubur farmers’ group in Mainahari community (Biu LGA, Borno State), Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity provided training to mothers in the group on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF). They were taught the appropriate kind of feeding for newborns and children under two years.

“They taught us that only a mother’s breast milk is needed from birth to six months and that other liquids are not dangerous. Water should not even be given as the breast milk contains water and other needed nutrients. I also learned that feeding bottles should be avoided as they could carry dangerous diseases. Right now, I can tell you that exclusive breastfeeding really makes the difference.”

The story is different with Halima’s third and fourth children. Breastfeeding them translated to healthy children and less frequent visits to the hospital. She has since become an advocate of breastfeeding in her community.



Exclusively breastfed, five-month-old Haruna Salisu held by his mom, Halima Mohammed.



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“IAA taught me what my friend couldn't” - Nutrition Beneficiary

Mrs. Zainab Isa is a prominent member of the Women in Agriculture (WiA) group in Shani LGA, Borno State. She also volunteers as a nutrition promoter for Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity. In August 2022, Zainab was privileged to attend one of the Activity's micro-processing training in her community. She learned how to process peanut snacks among other snacks and drinks.

“I was so excited about the peanut snack because I had always wanted to learn how to make it. One of my friends makes and sells it. Each time I ask her to teach me, she will say she is busy. I know she isn't busy; she just doesn't want the competition. When I got tired of asking her, I stopped,” Zainab recounts.

To start the peanut snack business, Zainab bought groundnut, sugar, and eggs for NGN3,000 and made a profit of NGN1200. Due to the high demand, she kept re-invested her capital and profit. She started processing 3 measures of groundnut with a profit of NGN3,000 per week. With the profits, she purchased half a bag of groundnut which she exhausted within six weeks. After three months, she was making a profit of NGN8,400.

“I didn't know the peanut snack will do so well. I decided my profit must go into weekly savings with my savings group. I also started saving on behalf of my daughter. At the end of the day, I was able to save NGN68,000.



Mrs. Zainab Isa displays her packaged nutritious peanut snacks

From her savings, Zainab purchased NGN25,000 worth of firewood which she deals in. She also bought NGN5,000 chicks which she is currently raising in readiness for sale during the festive period. She spent NGN4,000 on fertilizers, pesticides, and laborers for the 2023 wet season farming.



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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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
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