This women’s group in Nigeria sells bread, cakes, biscuits and other traditional dishes made from millet, sorghum and groundnut. The profit they earn from the sale is used for their children’s education.

Creating jobs and opportunities through agriculture in Nigeria

Creating jobs and opportunities through agriculture, processing and market connections were high on the agenda during discussions between ICRISAT partners and Dr David Bergvinson, Director General, ICRISAT, in Nigeria last week.

Significant improvements in the productivity of sorghum and groundnut were highlighted at a meeting with key staff of Nigeria’s Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), including Representative of the Permanent Secretary, Mr Jide Olumeko.

In Nigeria, sorghum is used for malt products, high energy foods, flour for pastries and bread, and also for animal feed. Increased production and productivity is the goal of the Ministry, with successful impacts already being seen through ICRISAT’s work on the sorghum value chain. Participating farmers have seen yield increase from less than 1 tons per hectare to 2-2.5 tons per hectare.

Similarly, the ICRISAT partnership on groundnut improvement in 16 states has seen participating farmers increase yield from about 1 tons per hectare to 1.7 tons per hectare. Dry season groundnut production is spreading rapidly and seed availability has increased significantly.

Ministry staff strongly welcomed ICRISAT’s plan to establish an aflatoxin lab to support research, training and for commercial purposes to address aflatoxin detection and control in groundnut.

On this trip, Dr Bergvinson also met with partners: Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria, Institute for Agricultural Research, Centre for Dryland Agriculture, Bayero University, women’s groups and Cellulant - a mobile services company.

More on: http://dgblog.icrisat.org/
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Prof. Mohammed Faguji Ishiyaku, Director of the Ahmadu Bello University’s Institute for Agricultural Research, Zaria, receiving the ICRISAT Partnership Award from Dr Bergvinson.

ARCN’s Dr Abu Mohammed Ataja (2nd left), Dr Dahiru JM Adamu (3rd left) and Yarama D Ndirpaya (far right) and others with Dr Bergvinson.

Dr David Bergvinson with Prof. Abubakar Adamu Rasheed, Vice-Chancellor of Bayero University and staff of Centre for Dryland Agriculture in Kano, Nigeria.

With staff at the Kubwa station near Abuja of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA).

With the owners and staff of Dala Foods.

Dr Bergvinson with staff of Catholic Relief Services.

Photos: ICRISAT
Science-led interventions and market linkages to revitalize agriculture: Plans for Indian state of Andhra Pradesh

Building the confidence of farmers, motivating them to use science-led interventions for higher benefits, and linking them to markets – were some of the points identified as critical to revitalizing agriculture by Mr Prathipati Pulla Rao, Minister for Agriculture, Government of Andhra Pradesh (AP), India. He was addressing a team building and action plan preparatory workshop for the AP Primary Sector Mission at ICRISAT-India.

Mr SP Tucker, Special Chief Secretary and Agriculture Production Commissioner, Govt. of AP, exhorted the group to come up with a clear strategy in their respective sectors. He said that pilot sites should be developed as labs for achieving faster growth. He spoke of the need for skill development for fast growing sectors like fisheries and dairy, addressing micronutrient deficiencies in soils. He expressed concern over high fertilizer application in coastal areas; and expansion of maize in water-depleted regions.

He stressed on the adoption of value chain approach; formation of Farmer Producers Organizations; infrastructure for storage; price stabilization mechanisms; formation of task force groups to work on insurance; scientific trends of production of different commodities by analyzing global data; market linkages – both national and international; and quality issues to target international markets.

During the two-day workshop, a team of 220 government officials; representatives from the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Consultancy Services; Centre for Good Governance; State universities of Agriculture, Horticulture, Livestock and Fisheries; and scientists from CGIAR centers and ICRISAT deliberated extensively on different issues of primary sector and prepared a district-level action plan that would serve as the basis for mandal-level action plan preparation.

Mr Vijay Kumar, Special Chief Secretary, Agriculture; Dr Manmohan Singh, Principal Secretary, Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development & Fisheries Department; Mr Madhusudan Rao, Commissioner of Agriculture; Ms V Usha Rani, Commissioner, Horticulture & Ex-Officio Secretary to Government (Horticulture & Sericulture) and Dr Kishore, Commissioner Marketing also participated in the deliberations. Dr Suhas P Wani, Director, ICRISAT Development Center (IDC) and Dr KV Raju, Assistant Director, IDC, guided the deliberations during the workshop held on 28-29 April at ICRISAT-India.

Action points from the meeting

- An urgent need to ensure suitable marketing and price support to farmers.
- Pursue value-chain and processing through public-private partnerships to benefit farmers.
- Post-harvest losses need to be tackled by developing infrastructure for drying, processing, storage and value addition.
- Necessary financial and human resources support need to be ensured by fast-tracking policies and clearances by the concerned departments. Trained human resources to achieve and sustain the growth of each sub-sector.
- Urgent need to pursue the development of training centers for farmers and skill development policy for the Primary Sector.
- Weekly video or teleconference involving key decision-making officials at state and district levels to monitor progress.
Punjab Agricultural University to collaborate with ICRISAT

At the 4th Insect Science Congress that had Dr Hari Sharma, Principal Scientist – Entomology, ICRISAT as Guest of Honor, Dr BS Dhillon, Vice-Chancellor, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, announced plans to collaborate with ICRISAT on shoot fly resistance in sorghum, which has emerged as a major problem in forage sorghum in Punjab.

At the event, Dr Sharma delivered the keynote address on “Host plant resistance to insects: Potential and limitations”. Dr Sharma also chaired the session on ‘Useful Insects’, and inaugurated the Insect Photo Exhibition. The congress was attended by more than 400 participants and covered the major areas of recent advances in entomology, climate change effects on arthropods, toxicology, taxonomy, physiology and pest management.

Readers’ comments

I appreciate ICRISAT’s efforts in bringing changes in the agricultural scenario. I am sure the kind of efforts ICRISAT is going to put will certainly lead to enhanced production of targeted crops. The most important issue is upscaling of science-based solutions in general and for poor or smallholder farmers of rainfed areas.

Dr Sushil K Chaturvedi
Head (Crop Improvement), IIPR

I liked your news item on funding from Sehgal foundation…. I think it is good funding for different activities in ICRISAT. Glad that good efforts are made by ICRISAT for strengthening the seed supply chain, seed management information system, apart from women empowerment in Malawi and Zimbabwe. Supply of climate resilient improved seed of sorghum and pearl millet would be greatly beneficial to the farmers for their livelihood in Zimbabwe.

Suitable intercropping systems with sorghum and pearl millet as base crops would be useful to minimize risk and maximize monetary returns, and improving the livelihood of farmers.

The fortnightly column on Village Dynamic Insights in India/Bangladesh & Dr Bergvinson, ICRISAT DG’s journal with his interviews and meetings with farmers and other people would be very useful.

Based on ICRISAT’s interventions in Kenya, I am sure the sorghum production system will improve in Kenya. Glad that the first hybrid pigeonpea has been released by ICRISAT in Orissa state. This will surely improve the production in the state.

Dr GR Maruthi Sankar
Principal Scientist (Agricultural Statistics).
AICRP for Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture

Welcome

Ms Richa Jain, an Indian national, joined ICRISAT-India as Manager – Human Resources on 4 May. She will be leading the HR Business Partner and Staff Development teams.

Ms Richa Jain is a Bachelor of Engineering in Industrial Production and has done her MBA in Human Resources from ICFAI Hyderabad, India, in 2006. She has over eight years of work experience in the private sector with companies such as Satyam Computers and Schneider Electric across different verticals in HR. Prior to joining ICRISAT, she was with Infosys Ltd. as Senior Lead BPHR. She comes with knowledge of various functions of HR and has strong grasp of processes. She has also successfully spearheaded multiple projects on Compensation, Performance Management, Talent Development & Management, HR Systems, etc.

We welcome Ms Richa Jain to Team ICRISAT and wish her all success.

New project

Project title: Livelihoods and Food Security Program – Agricultural Production and Nutrition
Principal Investigator: Dr Kizito Mazvimavi
Investor: Welthungerhilfe-Harare
Aims: The focus of the current program is facilitation of linkages between farmers and viable commodity value chains in both the local and export market in Zimbabwe.

Marketing challenges that stakeholders faced in the previous program are addressed through regular dialogue sessions with stakeholders in the market.

To improve investment in commercial agriculture production by farmers so that they meet the market requirements in terms of quality and quantity community based microfinance institutions (ISALs) are strengthened/ formed.

ICRISAT is a member of the CGIAR Consortium
About ICRISAT: www.icrisat.org
ICRISAT’s scientific information: http://EXPLORE.it.icrisat.org