



Improving Vegetable Production and Consumption in Mali, Phase II

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1. Introduction

This monthly Feed the Future (FtF) report describes the current and up-coming activities conducted during the period from February 1-28, 2014. It focuses on consultations/visitors and major events that have occurred during this period. It also highlights outstanding achievements for the phase II of the project "Improving Vegetable Production and Consumption in Mali (Sikasso)".

2. Current and up-coming consultations/visitors

An USAID mission team from Washington DC and USAID Mali visited 2 demonstration sites of AVRDC from January 31 to February 1, 2014. Meanwhile a field day is under preparation and will be held on 17 March 2014. It will gather AVRDC's project partners in Mali and Ghana on the site of Sokourani for visiting activities relative to the promotion of vegetables in rural zones as part of the implementation of the USAID Mali project on production.

3. Activities and events undertaken in the reporting period

3.1 Key activities

The activities that were undertaken during this reporting period include:

- Monitoring of on-station trials for regeneration of improved technologies in vegetable production as well as seed production of elite AVRDC varieties
- Extension of the project benefits and lessons to beneficiaries in other FtF communities in the Sikasso region, notably in Bougouni and Kadiolo districts (training farmers in the new technologies of vegetable production).
- Monitoring seed production fields in the demonstration sites,
- Harvest and seed extraction of some vegetable species under seed production in the field sites and satellite villages.
- Training of trainers (ToT) in Domba commune,
- Monitoring of the project activities with a particular focus on the quality of data collected.
- Collecting FtF indicator data on areas under improved technologies or management practices, farmers and organizations and their members receiving and applying improved technologies or management practices.
- Preparing a regional field day to be held on Monday March 17, 2014 involving direct and indirect collaborators such as local administrative authorities, government agricultural and health services, partners, NGOs, USAID Mali and Media.
- Awareness creation on environmental mitigation issues among the project beneficiaries in compliance with USAID requirements.

As achievements, producers started to harvest their tomato seeds and were very enthusiastic to extract by themselves good quality seed using the technologies learnt during the training sessions.

3.2 Events

From January 31 to February 1 2014, a USAID delegation composed of: Jerry Glover Eric Witte and David Yanggen visited AVRDC activities being implemented at Sokourani and Molobala field sites. Plots with improved varieties and production techniques were shown to the visitors who appreciated them a lot. Four improved irrigation systems and 2 improved soil moisture conservation techniques (utilization of mulch or otherwise) were compared to standard farmer practices. This visit ended at the Molobala site with a demonstration on tomato juice extraction, amaranth leaves drying and conservation of fresh legumes in local condition by women at the new training center built by AVRDC. These technologies being acquired through trainings held by AVRDC has enabled women to extract more tomato juice during the peak tomato production season. The extracted juice can be stored and used for up to six months, when tomato is scarce in the market (lean season). This visit seems to have been very fruitful for our donors who took this opportunity to evaluate the importance of vegetable production, marketing and consumption for the rural population.

4. Upcoming activities and events of the forthcoming reporting period

4.1 Activities

The key activities for the next reporting period are:

- Plan to extend the project benefits and lessons to beneficiaries to other FtF communities in the Sikasso region notably in Bougouni and Kadiolo districts (training farmers in the new technologies of vegetable production).
- Monitoring the incidence and severity of disease and pest on vegetable plants in the fields and the application of appropriate treatments with an emphasis on biological control and management measures,
- Monitoring the project activities with a particular focus on the quality of data collected.
- Monitoring seed production fields in the demonstration sites and supervising the activities of the seed companies engaged in vegetable seed production through negotiated contracts with AVRDC.
- Collecting FtF indicator data on areas under improved technologies or management practices, farmers and organizations and their members receiving and applying improved technologies or management practices.
- Awareness creation on environmental mitigation issues among the project beneficiaries in compliance with USAID requirements.

4.2 Events

An international field day involving direct and indirect collaborators such as local administrative authorities, government agricultural and health services, partners, NGOs, USAID-Mali and Media will be held on March 17, 2014 at Sokourani site (Korro Barrage commune) in the district of Sikasso. AVRDC's partners of Ghana involved in Africa rising project will take part to this event.