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END OF TOUR REPORT  
MSU CONTRACT TEAM LEADER AND MARKETING ECONOMIST  
EASTERN ORD, UPPER VOLTA  
MAY 1977 TO JUNE 1981\*

by

David C. Wilcock

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with the Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University,  
East Lansing, Michigan 48824.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This report is a summary of work completed over a four year period as a member of Michigan State University's technical assistance team which worked with the Eastern ORD (Regional Development Organization) of the Government of Upper Volta. This technical assistance was part of the overall aid provided to the Eastern ORD through the USAID Upper Volta Integrated Rural Development Project. During 38 months in the field I served as MSU chief-of-party and as the team marketing economist; the period from September 1980 to June 1981 was spent on the campus of Michigan State University completing computer data analysis and report writing.

A more extensive chronology of events and description of work output is contained in semi-annual reports produced over the contract period and in specific subject matter documents. (In this report numbers in parentheses refer to items in the appended team bibliography covering the period 1976-1981.) Most of the work undertaken during this period can be grouped into three areas which will be discussed below: administration, applied research in farm production and marketing, and regional planning.

## II. ADMINISTRATION

Administrative activities are covered first because they consumed much more time than originally anticipated and they provide the context within which other work took place. The importance of administrative and logistical support does not need to be emphasized to those who have lived in third world areas, particularly in more isolated rural environments

such as Fada N'Gourma, Upper Volta. The dimensions of this task were dictated by the need to provide support for seven MSU technicians and their families and for two senior Voltaic collaborators, and to supervise over 30 local ORD employees. Administrative work fell into three areas: project management in Fada N'Gourma, project business with Michigan State University and USAID, and line administrative functions within the ORD.

In Fada major activities involved:

A. Financial Management. A \$30,000 revolving imprest fund was required for local project expenses such as housing, utilities, local personnel costs, vehicle expenses and field research costs. Accounting and financial reporting of this fund absorbed a minimum of 2 to 3 days per month.

B. Housing and Utilities. The team was directly involved in the construction/renovation of three government houses and three rented houses. This also involved maintenance, rental agreements, and providing utilities (water, bottled gas for cooking, kerosene for lighting and refrigeration). As a demonstration, solar water heating systems were installed on five project houses. For a year in which substantial time was spent by team members in Ouagadougou doing computer work, a guest house was rented.

C. Vehicles, Repairs and Fuel. The team had five project vehicles (and three drivers) in Fada which were heavily used in field work and which demanded significant amounts of time for obtaining spare parts and repairs. Stocks of gasoline, oil and tires needed to be maintained.

D. Personnel. Six local employees were administered directly by the MSU Team. Fortunately, paperwork for the field research staff and drivers, numbering over 30, were handled directly by the ORD. Operation of a revolving fund to purchase motorcycles for field staff turned out to also be a time consuming task.

F. Technician Support and Team Reporting. Support for all technicians was provided through periodic team meetings and through individual collaborative effort. Semi-annual reporting was coordinated and I edited six such reports (No.'s 1-6). Most of these, as other team documents, were translated into French and locally reproduced. Report production is a major bottleneck in Upper Volta and significant improvements in contract team productivity could be obtained through the installation of more efficient yet technologically appropriate systems.

In retrospect given these administrative demands it would have made great sense to have had a senior level assistant capable of literate and effective work in both French and English. Locally recruited assistants were helpful in running a wide variety of errands but were not able to do much of the English language paperwork. Given the difficulties of recruiting a bi-lingual Voltaic of this type to work "in the bush" the most cost effective solution would probably have been to hire one or more ex-Peace Corps Volunteers as project assistants. As it was these administrative activities did not become a full-time job because of the cooperative spirit and exceptionally self-reliant nature of other MSU team members.

The second area of administrative work involved liaison, primarily with Michigan State University and USAID Ouagadougou. With MSU, besides financial accounting, the coordinating of consultants and administrative visits was the most time consuming. Over the three year field period there were at least fifteen such visits, ranging in length from a week to three months. With USAID Ouagadougou liaison was facilitated by Mr. Tom Luche, Project Manager, who also provided the team with very effective and much appreciated support.

Finally, as the case with all MSU team members, I was functionally integrated into line positions within the headquarters structure of the

E. ORD. For about a year I served as Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Economic Analysis and Planning (BAEP), one of six ORD Bureau's. For another year I served as the head of that Bureau's Planning Section. Periodic meetings, correspondence and production of the ORD's annual plan of work and its Annual Report, for one year, were part of this work.

### III. FARM LEVEL PRODUCTION AND MARKETING RESEARCH

One of the principal activities engaged in by the Voltaic and US employees of the ORD's BAEP over the 1978-80 period was the preparation, execution and analysis of the 1978-79 baseline Farm Survey. This year-long survey of 480 farm families in 14 sample areas across the large Eastern Region produced an extensive data base which was used to document existing "traditional" agricultural patterns and to evaluate the success of the major USAID/ORD farm level project intervention, the introduction and use of animal power for farm field activities.<sup>1</sup> The major challenge now to both USAID and the ORD is whether they will be able to effectively incorporate existing results and future utilization of this data set in agricultural development work in the region.

I was actively involved in the farm survey in the following ways:

A. Planning and Questionnaire Design. The survey was planned over a six month period and this is reflected in the initial MSU "Plan of Work" of October 1977 (8). The study objectives and methodology employed are extensively described in the second team six month report (2). Over the first six months of the survey period I was solely responsible for the design of seven or eight questionnaires (33).

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<sup>1</sup>This survey was under the direct supervision of MSU team member Gregory Lassiter. For more details see his end of tour report, MSU, April 1981.

B. Hiring and Training of ORD Survey Personnel. The recruiting and training of an additional 20 personnel for the ORD was a major task which was completed by May 1978 when they were placed at their field posts. This required extensive travel by all senior survey staff including a minimum of two meetings in each of twenty-eight villages to select sample farmers and explain the objectives of this applied research program.

C. Supervision. This was the activity which probably involved the greatest amount of staff time. The demands on personnel and vehicles were enormous to frequently visit, over very bad roads, the fourteen survey areas. As an illustration it would take between 10 and 12 hours of steady driving to go between the furthest two sample areas. Moreover, the payoffs were great in terms of data quality to this time spent attending interviews with farmers, helping to measure fields and review the accuracy of each interviewer's completed survey forms.

D. Data Analysis and Write-up. Most of the time-consuming data preparation and cleaning was done by MSU colleague Greg Lassiter and the very competent staff of the CENATRIN computer staff in Ouagadougou. Other team members participated in the analysis and write-up of this voluminous data set. I was involved in the analysis in Ouagadougou of farm level marketing data with Ismael Ouedraogo (44) and in East Lansing of continued work on marketing (47) and animal traction (46). While contract objectives have been met by analysis completed by December, 1980, there remains a great deal of useful information which can still be extracted from this unique data set. In fact perhaps only a third of the potential value of Eastern ORD agricultural data base has yet been realized.

It should be stressed that data collection at the ORD did not end after this one year effort. The fact that trained personnel were available enabled a scaled down farm survey to be completed in a second year, one

that had a more distinct focus on previously identified marketing problems (47) and followed suggestions for follow-up work made by MSU Consultant Steven Buccola (52). This field staff was then available in April and May of 1980 to conduct the 1980 ORD Regional Planning Village Inventory and Small Scale Industry surveys which are described in the following section.

Further work in the actual mechanics of ORD crop marketing and storage were conducted during the three year period in Fada. In the first few months in Fada an effort was made to document and evaluate the results of the 1976-77 marketing campaign which had just ended. This effort continued into assistance in the planning of the 1977-78 marketing campaign and in special reporting to USAID on the use of its project marketing rolling fund. In the final two years in Fada direct work in crop marketing was largely eliminated due to the political and economic decision of the ORD to drastically curtail its marketing program and due to an expansion of the applied research program.

One activity however which did grow in size during this period was the ORD cereal bank experiment which increased from 3 villages in 1978 to over 20 in 1980. At the suggestion of MSU staff rural credit funds were made available to ORD village groups for the purchase and dry season storage of local grain reserves (see 9 and 11 for more details).

#### IV. REGIONAL PLANNING

In the course of a three-month 1975 study mission in Upper Volta, an MSU team had suggested that there was a great need for coordinated regional development planning to avoid individual development projects being implanted in a haphazard fashion (7). The Eastern ORD director, facing the task of coordinating over 20 separate projects in his territory

in 1977, specifically requested that the MSU team provide assistance in this area and that the applied research program be seen as part of the data collection phase of this wider planning effort. Although this was not part of the original terms of reference for the Michigan State contract, a major effort was made to respond to this acutely felt need. Most work was undertaken by myself and Dr. Assefa Mehretu, MSU Geographer and regional planning specialist who made four consulting trips to Upper Volta between January 1978 and June 1980. We were assisted by the 3 additional short-term consultants in the areas of market study planning (52), small scale industry development potential and regional road network analysis.

Initial work in 1977 and 1978 allowed an overall scheme to be drawn up for the regional planning process (50 and 51) which incorporated minimum information requirements for adequate planning. Progress in meeting those needs, a sector by sector overview, and a detailed geographical description of the region were completed in 1979 (53 and 54).

In addition to completing the 1978-79 detailed farm level economic survey, two other major data requirements had been identified: a comprehensive baseline inventory of village socio-economic resources and various specialized studies including marketing and small scale off-farm employment opportunities. These were addressed in early 1980 when questionnaires for the village resource inventory and a small scale industry survey were prepared with consultant assistance. The existing well trained field staff was exposed to these new survey instruments and, with assistance from other ORD staff, these surveys were completed in April and May 1980.

The resources of 637 of 644 of the region's villages were surveyed and the data were available for computer analysis by September 1980. This

resulted in a summary descriptive document (58) and in the establishment of a computer data base (59) available in Ouagadougou at CENATRIN for future planning work. At the same time, the small scale industry survey was completed in 180 villages in the region (including all of those over 2000 population) and this pointed out the great income generating potential of a number of agricultural processing, traditional craft and more modern manufacturing and retailing enterprises (57). The final synthesis of all of the regional planning information into a five year plan was to be completed under the leadership of Jean-Martin Kabire head of the BAEP's Planning Section and Daniel Zembo, Chief of the BAEP.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

While a thorough evaluation of the MSU team's work in Eastern Upper Volta was not done it is this author's highly personal opinion that the highlights of this contract include the following:

1. Four years of applied research and program implementation work in the Eastern Region.
2. Training of Voltaic personnel at all levels through thorough integration of team members into ORD structures, close collaboration over several years in the field with two Voltaic Ph.D. candidates in agricultural economics, and the development of applied programs which could be carried on after the team's departure.
3. Taking full advantage of existing Voltaic technical expertise, specifically the CENATRIN computer center in Ouagadougou. MSU's experience with center work in processing farm survey data led to the computerization of the ORD's rural credit system, and its personnel, payroll, and inventory control accounts.

4. Providing a very detailed socio-economic data base on the Eastern Region which can be put to further use in the future for agricultural and other rural development evaluation and planning.

5. Introducing an approach to objective development planning at the regional level as an on-going part of the integrated rural development process.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
UPPER VOLTA TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE TEAM  
CONTRACT USAID afr-C-1314

USAID INTEGRATED RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT  
FADA N'GOURMA, UPPER VOLTA

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(Revised September 1981)

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