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Intsormil

TRIP REPORT

THE GAMBIA
by

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MERIDEAN, MISSISSIPPI

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☆ International Sorghum/Millet

☆ Collaborative Research Support Program (CRSP)

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Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Best Available Document

FOREIGN TRAVEL REPORT

Traveler: Natale Zummo, Research Plant Pathologist, U. S. Sugar Crops Field Station, Meridian, Mississippi 39301.
NRP NO. 20090.

Country Visited: The Gambia

Purpose of Trip: To represent INTSORMIL at the Deuxieme Reunion Des Comites Scientifiques Nationaux Du Project Regional D'Amerlioration des Mil, Sorgho, Niebe et Mais at Banjul, Gambia.

Summary:

The Gambia appears to be receptive to INTSORMIL programs to help improve production of sorghum and millet. Mr. Ruben Thomas, Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Sampon Seecy, Director of Research, and Mr. Sulymann MBoob, Director of Crop Protection Service, The Government of The Gambia strongly indicated that they would welcome cooperative research with INTSORMIL and would like to take advantage of whatever training opportunities for students are available through INTSORMIL. Mr. Quincy Benbow, Agriculture Development Officer, USAID in Banjul said that USAID in The Gambia would be receptive and supportive of cooperative research between INTSORMIL and The Gambia. There are indications that USAID through the Regional Food Crop Protection Project, Steve Wisecarver, Project Director, would be able to assist with some funding of Gambians for training in sorghum and millet research. There was also a possibility that funds from this source might assist Gambians to attend the Striga Workshop in North Carolina in July and to attend the Sorghum and Millet Disease Workshop in Kamboense, Upper Volta in October.

The Gambia appears to be a good place for cooperative research for INTSORMIL. The country is in need of this type of cooperation, the official language is English, the local researchers appear to want to cooperate, and the AID people seem to be receptive.

Travel Details:

When I arrived in Gambia, I found that the Deuxieme Reunion des Comites Scientifiques Nationaux Du Project Regional D'Amelioration des Mil, Sorgho, Niebe et Mais had been rescheduled for the week of March 7 - 10, 1983. I talked with Mr. Owen Roberts, Charge d Affairs at the U. S. Embassy. He expressed an interest in INTSORMIL and set up an appointment for me with Mr. Quincy Benbow, Agriculture Development Officer with AID in Banjul. Mr. Benbow was interested

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in what INTSORMIL had to offer The Gambia and was very helpful in setting up appointments with Gambians who might be interested in cooperating with INTSORMIL. Mr. Benbow briefed me on the agriculture situation in The Gambia and made suggestions as to how INTSORMIL might interface with sorghum and millet research in The Gambia.

The [illegible] food grain in The Gambia is rice, most of which is i[illegible] followed by millet, sorghu, and maize in that order. C[illegible] prefer rice over the traditional cereals (millet and so[illegible] but rice is very expensive to grow in The Gambia and much of it has to be imported. The government of The Gambia recognizes that there is a need to increase production of sorghum and millet to replace some of the imported rice. This is where INTSORMIL fits in.

On Tuesday, 22 February 1983, I met with Mr. Sam[illegible]on Seecy, Director of Agricultural Research for The Gamb[illegible] at Cape St. Mary. He discussed sorghum and millet produc[illegible]ion in The Gambia. Yield of local varieties of millet and sorghum is low 300-600 lbs/acre. Striga and downy mildew of millet are the major diseas[illegible] problems of local varieties. Mr. Seecy was very disappointed in all varieties of sorghum and millet obtained from ICRISAT. The exotic millet varieties are all susceptible to downy mildew. This may be due in part to the higher relative humidity along the Gambia River than in some of the drier areas where millet is typically grown. The exotic sorghums were injured by Ergot and Long Smut.

Mr. Seecy discussed Mr. Musa Mbenga an agriculture student at Texas Tech who is interested in further studies. There is also a Gambian MSC plant pathology student studying in New Zealand. Mr. Seecy said that there is some cooperation with Dr. Gupta, Plant Breeder with ICRISAT based at Bambey, Senegal.

Mr. Seecy took me over for a short visit with Mr. Ruben Thomas, Minister of Agriculture for The Gambia. Mr. Thomas invited me back for a more detailed discussion on 24 February 1983. That afternoon I met with Dr. Glen D. Fulcher, Chief of Party, Mixed Farming who was interested in obtaining some juicy sorghums for livestock breeding. I will send him several sweet sorghum lines for this purpose.

On Wednesday, 23 February 1983, I met with Mr. Sulyman MBoob, who is the Director of Crop Protection. Mr. MBoab is an entomologist by training. We discussed the sorghum and millet disease situation in The Gambia which is basically the same as in Nigeria except that Mr. MBoab described Striga aspera as a parasite on grasses in The Gambia. Mr. MBoab is interested in having members of his staff attend the Striga Workshop in Raleigh, North Carolina in July and the Sorghum and Millet Disease Workshop in Upper Volta in October.

I met with Steve Wisecarver, Project Director, Regional Food Crop Protection Project for USAID who told Mr. MBoab that funds for Gambians to attend these meetings could probably be made available. Steve Wisecarver is interested in training in West Africa and expressed a desire to publish for distribution in West Africa whatever INTSORMIL might think important.

I met with Arnold Snodden, Soil Conservationist who is sending 10 Technician Students to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria for training in soils. He expressed considerable interest in what INTSORMIL could offer these students upon their return.

On Thursday, 24 February 1983, I met again with Mr. Ruben Thomas, Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Thomas was interested in sending people to both the Striga Workshop at Raleigh, North Carolina and the Sorghum and Millet Disease Workshop in Upper Volta. He was also interested in cooperating with INTSORMIL wherever possible.

After the meeting with Mr. Thomas, I had a discussion with Mr. Benbow. He said that USAID would also be interested in having INTSORMIL come into The Gambia. Mr. Owen Roberts, Charge d'Affairs asked how he could be of help to INTSORMIL.

Departed The Gambia for Senegal.