

SUSTAIN PROGRAM

QUARTERLY REPORT (FY 93)
(JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 1993)

I. OVERSEAS ACTIONS

A. Completed Activities

Latin America

INCAP - "Principles of Food Science in Food Applications" Short Course - This course was taught to a core group of instructors selected by INCAP and AGTA by Drs. James Chambers and Jay Marks of Purdue University and Patricia Rayas-Duarte of North Dakota State University on August 3-6. The purpose of this and future short courses is to develop a core group of instructors in Central America who can train food processing workers and managers in food quality assurance and safety systems and techniques. Having a group of trainers builds a resource capable of dispersing training activities to rural and village level food processors. This will raise the level of food quality and safety, which is fundamental in preventing and controlling micronutrient deficiencies and communicable and food-borne diseases. Raising the quality of these foods will make them better able to compete in local, regional, and international markets.

INCAP - SUSTAIN Steering Committee member Dr. Terry Volpe (Senior Director, Manufacturing Development) went to Guatemala in August to provide technical assistance with cereal processing and micro-nutrient and enrichment technologies to INCAP, the Center for Studies of Sensory Impairment, Aging, and Metabolism (CeSSIAM), and several small food processing operations. She worked with INCAP on their composite flour project, which includes the development of a micronutrient-enriched cookie that is served in school feeding programs and on the development of other nutritious products based on cereals and oil seeds. CeSSIAM and the International Eye Foundation collaborated to develop a Vitamin A-enriched weaning food and child cereal made from dried and instant sweet potato buds. Dr. Volpe provided assistance with marketing issues related to the commercialization of the products. She also visited several small bakeries to advise on improving their products and processes. These visits were arranged by INCAP and AGTA.

Panama - SUSTAIN was asked by a representative of the Instituto Centroamericano de Investigacion y Tecnologia Industrial (ICAITI) to locate a slaughterhouse in the U.S. they could visit in order to see and discuss methods of waste handling for purposes of pollution prevention and waste byproduct utilization. The retired Vice President-Corporate Growth & Development of Packerland Packing, Norval Dvorak, hosted a 3-person delegation from Panama for 2 days in July at Packerland in Wisconsin.

Belize - SUSTAIN volunteers Dr. Pedro Sole and Ms. Amy Stockwell and Program Director Liz Turner went to Belize at the request of the Microenterprise Division of the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB). The IDB wanted to tie SUSTAIN's technical assistance to its microenterprise assistance program, which provides capital to local NGOs who in turn provide low interest loans to small and micro-entrepreneurs. The SUSTAIN team worked with two Belizean NGOs to assess their ability to deliver technical and market development assistance. They also consulted with individual micro-entrepreneurs (including a small dairy processor, a cooperative that markets organic products, and a papaya grower) to identify challenges to the expansion and diversification of their businesses and to provide advice on food processing technologies and marketing strategies.

Africa

Uganda - As part of an on-going technical assistance and training agenda planned for Uganda, SUSTAIN helped arrange and host a representative of the UMA on a tour of U.S. processing facilities, etc. In conjunction with AID/ONI, SUSTAIN arranged a tour of the McCormick & Co. facilities, sponsored her attendance at a packaging workshop, and arranged a visit to Purdue University's Food Science Department facilities.

Uganda - Don Lindemann of Land O'Lakes delivered a packaging workshop and visited individual food processing companies to discuss packaging needs and opportunities.

Burkina Faso - At the request of USAID/Burkina Faso, SUSTAIN sent experts in corn milling and in onion and potato storage to evaluate and improve local milling and storage practices. The milling expert made recommendations on improving the quality and shelf life of the flour and to identify other products that could be produced in the milling process. The storage expert made recommendations on improving storage conditions to increase the storage life and improve the quality of the products.

B. Planning for Future Activities

Latin America

INCAP - Drs. Chambers, Marks, and Rayas will return to Guatemala in October to supervise and evaluate the first offering of the "Principles of Food Science" course by the trainers to whom they taught the course in August.

INCAP - To follow up the basic sensory evaluation course she offered in March, Brenda Bravatty will offer an advanced course in sensory evaluation in November.

INCAP - To follow up on her August consultations with bakeries, Terry Volpe will offer a course in basic sanitation and GMP related to the baking industry. The date is to be determined.

Central America - SUSTAIN continues to work on identifying funding to support a local consultant to conduct a survey on food processors in Guatemala.

Belize - In its report, the SUSTAIN team outlined recommendations and identified needs for additional technical assistance. SUSTAIN is working with the IDB's Microenterprise Division to set a schedule to deliver this assistance. Since the IDB project was delayed due to Belize's election, so SUSTAIN's effort there may be delayed.

Africa

Cameroon - SUSTAIN was asked by USAID/Cameroon to field a team of private sector volunteers to advise the Mission on reorienting its agricultural research, outreach, and higher education projects to be more responsive to the needs of the private sector. These projects focus on the agribusiness sector that serves local and regional markets in the areas of cereals, legumes, roots, and tubers. The SUSTAIN team will assess small and medium-sized private sector processing and marketing operations of these products; identify key constraints; and make specific recommendations for USAID-funded agribusiness and market development interventions for these commodities. SUSTAIN arranged a meeting during the IFT Annual Meeting of the three proposed volunteers, the USAID/Cameroon Director of the Agriculture Office, and the Program Director to further discuss the assignment. The dates of this mission are October 3-16, 1993.

Uganda - SUSTAIN is planning a November workshop on quality control and a marketing workshop early in 1994 as part of the two-year program of assistance and training. Volunteers will also provide technical assistance to individual food processing operations.

Asia

Fiji - In follow-up to the Agricultural Products Quality Workshop in Manila last May, USAID/Suva has requested SUSTAIN's support for the services of Thomas Harding, an expert in organic marketing, to travel to Fiji, Western Samoa, and Tonga. He will inspect cropping systems and advise on commercial opportunities for organic product development; advise on organic certification requirements and procedures; make recommendations for sustainable institution development; and present seminars on the development and marketing of organic crops from the South Pacific.

Bangladesh - As a follow-up to RAP, SUSTAIN was asked by USAID/Dhaka to assist a food processing plant by sending a volunteer expert on mushrooms to advise on improving mushroom productivity and on processing techniques and technologies and quality for export to the U.S. and Europe.

Nepal - Following Dr. Gabis' assignment in Nepal last December and meetings held by Program Director with representatives of the Nepal AgroEnterprise Center in Manila in May, SUSTAIN has received a communication from AEC expressing interest in a HACCP workshop. However, AEC is concerned that they may not have project funds to cover the cost.

II. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND PROMOTION

Press Releases - SUSTAIN sent press releases on the awards presented to John Nelson and Bud Denton by AID Administrator J. Brian Atwood to the Cooperative Business Journal, Campbell Soup, Purdue University, and the IFT Journal. The release was published in the September issue of the Cooperative Business Journal.

SUSTAIN Meeting (3) & Reception - SUSTAIN held a Steering Committee meeting and gathering for July 12 during the Institute of Food Technologists' Annual Meeting and Food Expo in Chicago. SUSTAIN volunteers and participants were able to hold face-to-face meetings to discuss the SUSTAIN and specific upcoming activities.

Trip Reports - Trip reports on Uganda, INCAP Seminar, Belize, Guatemalan Food Industry Survey, Manila Workshop, and Guatemala Short Course were mailed out.

"SUSTAIN Notes" - Issues on extrusion and on water conservation and sanitation are in preparation.

Written Requests for Technical Assistance - SUSTAIN replied to 7 written requests for technical information from developing countries.

Carol James - Subcontractor worked on the July Steering Committee meeting minutes, an interview and article on Frances Nsonzi (representative of the Uganda Manufacturers Association), the Annual Report, a memo to AID detailing how SUSTAIN's work fits AID's priorities, a news release on the industry-government awards to Drs. Nelson and Denton, an add-on AID/Asia proposal, and a survey proposed for Guatemala.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

Steering Committee (Meeting 3) - The third meeting of FY 93 was held on July 12 in Chicago during the IFT Annual Meeting.

Steering Committee (Meeting 4) - The fourth meeting of FY 93 was held on September 27 at NCBA.

New Volunteers - SUSTAIN continues to recruit new volunteers in the food processing sector.

Recruiting for Full-Time Food Technology Specialist - SUSTAIN rented a booth at the IFT Annual Meeting and reviewed resumes and interviewed the most promising candidates. SUSTAIN offered the position to Vaishali Patel, who has a B.S. and an M.S. in food science and has industry experience. She accepted and will start approximately October 1.

IV. PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES AND EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THEM

SUSTAIN has found that person-to-person contact with AID mission and regional bureau personnel is an effective way to inform people deluged with paper of what services SUSTAIN offers. This approach has been fruitful and provides a two-way exchange of AID needs and SUSTAIN services that can fill these needs. Several requests have come as a result of these exchanges.

Central Staff Support

A limitation on SUSTAIN's ability to respond to the flood of new requests (May-June 1993 received 8 requests from 7 countries) has been the shortage of staff to administer the growing program. We are pleased to have Office of Nutrition Project Officer concurrence with hiring a full-time technical person. Her primary areas of responsibility will be research on food processing issues in the context of international development; drafting reports, concept papers, and responses to technical inquiries; coordinating the publication of SUSTAIN Notes; and assisting Program Director with matching volunteers with overseas assignments.

Local Consultant

Because of the need for SUSTAIN assistance and also strong support from NGO collaborators and AID missions, some countries have become priorities for SUSTAIN. However, the major obstacle to SUSTAIN's expansion and effectiveness in these countries is the lack of resources capable of identifying individual needs and of coordinating logistics on the ground. These tasks are usually more complicated than they initially appear; it takes much analysis to sort through the issues and match the needs with the volunteers. SUSTAIN cannot do both these tasks from Washington, and local NGOs are limited in their ability to do them. If SUSTAIN is to continue to pursue this model of focusing and concentrating services in countries that have demonstrated a substantial desire for continuing SUSTAIN services, it has found that this can be done most effectively by having a local hire consultant in those countries. We are pleased to have the support of the Project Officer for piloting this concept in Central America and Russia.

In Central America, SUSTAIN proposes to undertake a local-hire consultant on a pilot basis for six months to survey local food processors in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras to identify specific needs for technical assistance and training. Survey information will facilitate planning for SUSTAIN, the Office of Nutrition, ROCAP, and collaborating NGOs. It will help SUSTAIN by identifying opportunities for one-on-one technical assistance with individual food processors; focus and prioritize subjects of workshops geared to local needs; and plan future development assistance activities by identifying constraints to growth of indigenous food manufacturing sectors. In the long term, the survey will assist in meeting the following goals: improve the quality, safety, and nutrition of foods in Central America; improve manufacturing practices to help food processors to become more competitive and to expand their markets; and to build knowledge about the size, scope, and economic contribution of the food processing sectors of the three countries surveyed. Undertaking this survey will also give the Office of Nutrition a baseline measurement to use in assessing future programs geared to the food processing sector of Central America. It will also strengthen the programs of participating NGOs.

This local hire will not entail the setting up of another office or bureaucracy. INCAP and AGTA will supply office space and cover supplies, secretarial support, and local travel.

The additional funds needed for local hires will be crucial to ensure maximum effectiveness of SUSTAIN programs in these countries.

Continuity of Program Funding

During this quarter, SUSTAIN fulfilled and planned 11 missions in 7 countries. When SUSTAIN was authorized under the five-year agreement, it was seen as part of a broader initiative under FTE. Even though FTE has not come on line, SUSTAIN management, AID/R&D/N Project Officer for SUSTAIN, and the Steering Committee have worked through strategic planning meetings to convert SUSTAIN to a more comprehensive program that offers on-going support to food processors, NGOs, and AID missions on a continuing basis instead of a one-time approach that SUSTAIN had done previously. Under the 5-year agreement, it was foreseen that activities would be concentrated in four countries; but we are finding that because of the uniqueness of volunteer caliber and the program's reputation that we are getting more requests than foreseen. At the current rate of demand, we will run out of funding before March 31, 1994. In light of this, we would like to have the opportunity to review the overall grant amount with R&D/Nutrition to adjust and increase this amount to reflect current and expected demand.

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