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FEED THE FUTURE INNOVATION LAB FOR LEGUME SYSTEMS RESEARCH

September 2021



The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research fosters dynamic, profitable, and environmentally sustainable approaches that contribute to resilience, productivity, and better nutrition and economic opportunities. The lab is managed by Michigan State University.

From the Management Office

New Project Sets to Map Cowpea Data Sources and Identify Gaps in West Africa Value Chain

Cowpea is a strategic crop for income generation and food security in West Africa and largely grown by smallholder farmers. Although cowpea production is characterized by low yield, the crop has important potentials for value addition through diversification of derived products and utilization, which is still unexploited in the sub-region.

Social, cultural and economic factors hindering or promoting cowpea production and marketing systems are poorly documented. This lack of information and unavailability of reliable data on each segment of the cowpea value chain hamper the design of interventions to develop competitive value chains with higher incomes and products for food and nutritional security. As a result, stakeholders along the cowpea value chains mainly farmers, women and youth are unable to take advantage of existing national and export markets.

In addition, there have been a number of projects and initiatives at national and regional levels, which experienced low uptake. This results in inefficient resource allocation and low investment in cowpea value chains.

To tackle these challenges, this project is designed to ensure inclusive and sustainable agricultural-led economic growth to cowpea utilization at various stages and scales within production and market systems in Benin, Nigeria, Niger and Senegal.

The project aims to identify cowpea data sources and gaps along the cowpea value chains in target countries. It is expected that all stakeholders in cowpea value chains in targeted countries and West Africa would benefit from the outputs and outcomes of this project.

The project is led by Dr. Ousmane Coulibaly



Cowpea is an important legume in arid and semi-arid zones of Africa.

[Read more on Cowpea Atlas Project](#)

From the Field

Project Final Reports

To kick start activities the Legume Systems Innovation Lab awarded six initial project grants. These short-term non-competitive awards were selected based

on their research concepts and alignment with overarching innovation lab research goals. All six of these projects have concluded and submitted final reports which we will share over the next several months.



A local farmer harvesting her "baby" trial of a newly released cowpea variety in Senegal.

Enhancing Resilience and Nutrition in the Peanut Basin of Senegal through Increased Integration of Newly Released, Improved Cowpea Varieties

Led by Dr. Zachary P. Stewart, formerly at Kansas State University

The goal of this one-year project, *Enhancing Resilience and Nutrition in the Peanut Basin of Senegal through Increased Integration of Newly Released, Improved Cowpea Varieties*, was to evaluate the scaling potential of newly released cowpea varieties across different agro ecologies and to identify best agronomic management practices for future research. Specific objectives of the research were to: (1) evaluate the scaling potential of improved cowpea genotypes with different management practices across different agro ecologies and (2) empower farmers, extension agents, researchers, and policy makers; and build human and institutional capacity.

Cowpea is one of the most important crops in Senegal for both improved agronomy and nutrition security. Recently, fast maturing, high-yielding and nutrient-dense cowpea varieties have been developed in Senegal, including Lizard, Leona, and Kelle but integration into sustainable farming systems has been limited. The cowpea residues are of high value for animal feed and the rapid maturing, nutrient dense, and high yielding varieties are of great importance to the resilience and socio-economic status of the household.

The project used a "mother-baby" trial design and incorporated approximately 100 farmer "baby" trials. Complete project overview can be found by clicking

the Read More button below.

Read More

In the News

Stories, blogs, papers & publications by legume lab researchers and their colleagues

The legume lab would like to congratulate collaborating partner **ICRISAT** (International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics) on receiving the Africa Food Prize 2021 for their work across 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. [Read more on this achievement and the Tropical Legume Project.](#)

ICRISAT is currently collaborating on a Legume Systems Innovation Lab project using mobile technology to promote trade in regional legume markets in Nigeria and Niger.

Featured Legume of the Month

GREEN LENTILS



Green lentils are also commonly referred to as Puy or French lentils.

According to the USDA, they are the meatiest of the lentil varieties and retain a firm texture after cooking which makes them a favorite pick for salads. We think they are also

an excellent choice for quesadillas. Try the recipe below and see if you agree.

Cooking with Green Lentils...

LENTIL QUESADILLAS

Lentils are very versatile and provide a meatless protein for those looking to add more plant-based protein options into their diet.

This recipe from pulses.org incorporates spices and herbs along with the green lentils to deliver a satisfying

and tasty vegetarian main dish alternative.



[Get recipe here](#)

For More Information on the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research

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