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The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

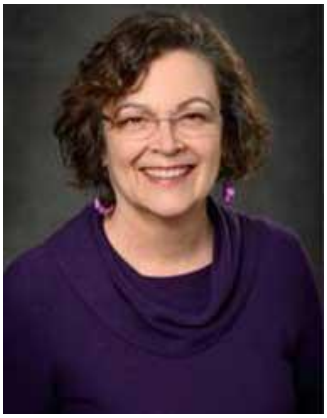
FEED THE FUTURE INNOVATION LAB FOR LEGUME SYSTEMS RESEARCH

June 2022

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

Legume Systems Innovation Lab gender specialist, Andrea Allen, to focus on new project



Dr. Andrea Allen, has spent the last few years leading gender efforts as a member of the Legume Systems Innovation Lab's Resource Resilience Team (RRT). She is now embarking on a new opportunity.

According to Andrea, her new venture in social program evaluation owes much to her many years of experience working in support of similar social justice and equity goals in global development. Although soon shifting her focus to local, Michigan communities, Andrea will continue to 1) apply rigorous, qualitative methods for

engaging local voices and 2) collaborate with multidisciplinary, quantitative methodologists.

“Experience has taught me that combining local knowledge and global perspectives, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, provides the fullest set of insights to social programs on the effectiveness of their current paths and how best to navigate the road ahead,” says Allen. Services will include participatory needs assessments and evaluation designs, capacity building in culturally responsive evaluation approaches, and communicating results to multiple audiences.

While looking forward to launching this new venture, Andrea shares that she will undoubtedly miss her work with the Lab. “I very much appreciate the ability this position has afforded to promote gender equity and women’s empowerment within such a valuable portfolio of research and among such a talented set of investigators.”

Andrea will be missed by the Legume Lab team. "Andrea has provided a tremendous contribution to the lab in the area of gender and we grateful for her work," says Barry Pittendrigh, Legume Systems Innovation Lab Director.

Read a new article authored by Andrea on Legume Lab gender efforts below in the section titled, *"In the field."*

GLOBAL VIRTUAL CONVENING 2022

Over 100 global legume researchers and stakeholders attended the two-day public forum virtual event in March which featured Legume Systems Innovation Lab project research updates.

Each month we will highlight a recorded presentation from one of these research projects.

This month we feature the project, **"How Input Subsidy Policies Change the Legume Farming Landscape."** The project is led by Dr. Melinda Smale, Michigan State University and works in Mali and Burkina Faso.

Click on the image below to view the presentation on YouTube.

FEED THE FUTURE
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Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research

How Input Subsidy Policies Change the Cowpea Farming Landscape in West Africa

Global Convening February 2022

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In the Field

Spotlight on gender responsive legume systems research

By Andrea Allen

Without complete, accurate data, entire groups of people are invisible to us. All too often, they are the ones we most need to see, and all too often they are women. Together, we can make women's empowerment a top priority and close the gender data gap in agriculture. -- Samantha Power, USAID Administrator, 2022

The international development community increasingly emphasizes the need to build the evidence base on gender and agri-food systems. Both the *U.S. Government (USG) Food Security Strategy, 2022-2026* and the forthcoming *USG Global Food Security Research Strategy, 2022-2026* promote equitable engagement of women and men, along with equitable benefits from research and development investments. As such, attention to data collection and analysis of gender-differentiated data – and their intersections with ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age etc. -- must be integrated into the intermediate results of all related USG-funded food security initiatives.

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research led by Michigan State University supports multiple projects toward this end, including the four highlights of gender responsive research. Two of these projects, focused on the economic dimensions of crop subsidies and product markets respectively, have incorporated attention to gender differentiated data collection and analysis as part of their initial research designs and budgets. The remaining two projects have focused on integrated pest management (IPM) and plant breeding, respectively, both utilizing Legume Systems Innovation Lab supplementary funds to strengthen the gender responsive dimensions of their research approaches.

So why is this important? USAID recognizes the important role of gender in achieving sustainable outcomes and has recently announced the doubling of funding in efforts to advance global gender equity and equality. The above highlights of Legume Systems Innovation Lab supported gender responsive research demonstrates the key contributions each project is making to both these core research areas. At the same time, through publication of results and ongoing partnerships with development implementers downstream, the value of these findings can be multiplied. For example, the G+ bean team working in Southern Africa will share their findings at the Legume Systems Innovation Lab 2023 Global Convening. This targeted outreach to teams also researching common beans across the value chain and relevant cowpea breeding activities taking place in West Africa will amplify the benefits of this work.

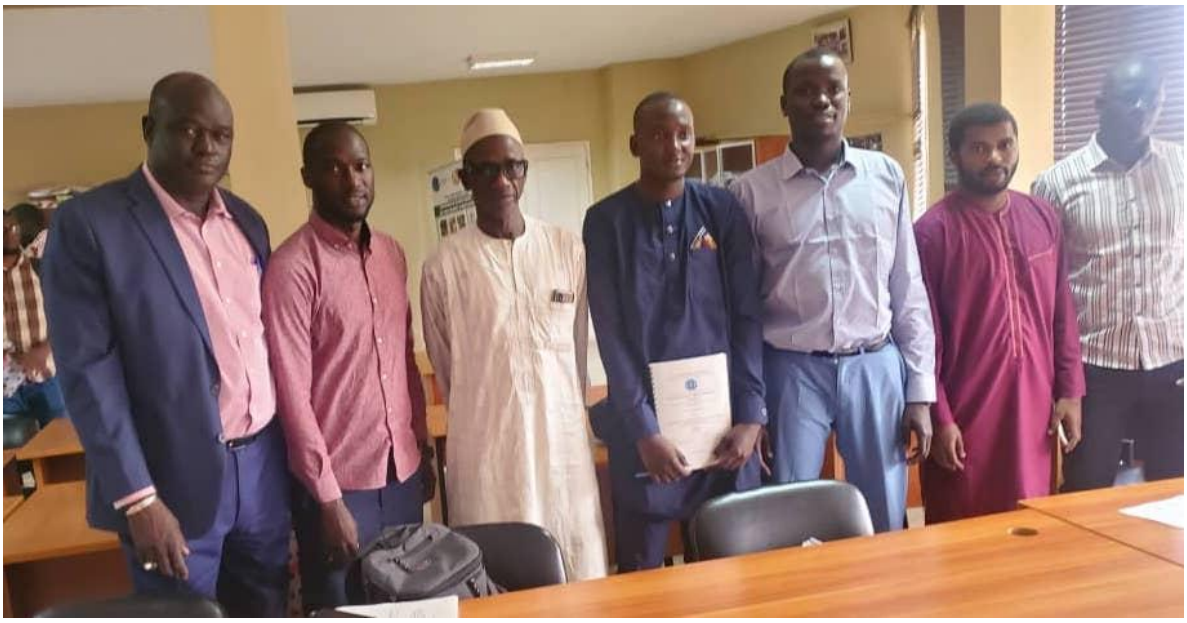
The end result can be a far wider impact with research and development dollars than has been realized to date. Because women have often been ignored or minimalized in the design and implementation of food systems activities, the investment in their inclusion proves strategic, as rate of return-on-investment dollars will be greater than ever before. Through effectively understanding, including and facilitating the equity empowerment of women and men the pace of food security strengthening will be significantly multiplied.

In the News

Legume Lab supported student receives Masters Degree

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research proudly supports the next generation of global legume researchers through degree training programs.

One such initiative, led by the Legume Systems Innovation Lab project "Sustainable Intensification of Dual-Purpose Cowpea Varieties for Enhanced Food and Fodder in Senegal," recently celebrated graduate student Omar Diouf. Mr. Diouf successful defended his thesis titled, "Impact of New Varieties Adoption On the Cowpea Farmers Performance," earning him a Master's Degree in Rural Economy from the Faculty of Economics and Management of the Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, Senegal (FASEG-UCAD).



Mr. Omar Diouf pictured above, in the center, holding his MS certificate.

The project that supported Mr. Diouf's studies is led by Dr. Augustine Obour from Kansas State University. "Findings of Mr. Diouf's research will be critical in our understanding of socioeconomic barriers to adoption of dual-purpose cowpea varieties by farmers," says Dr. Obour. "The ultimate goal of this project is developing agronomic packages for sustainable integration and scaling of dual-purpose cowpea (with increased quantity and quality of grain and fodder) in agro-pastoral farming systems to improve resilience, nutrition and food security of Senegalese smallholder farmers."

The results of Diouf's research using a combination of Logit model (logistic regression) and an impact evaluation model based on propensity score matching, show a positive and significant impact of the use of new improved cowpea varieties on yield. To increase the use of new improved varieties of cowpea by farmers, action is needed through education by extension agencies along with increased access to seed and agronomic information. In addition improved cowpea seed distribution policies targeting women along with land policies facilitating access to land for women were also identified.

Congratulations also to Mr. Diouf's advisors and Legume Lab project co-PIs, Dr. Assane Beye, Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar and Dr. Aliou Faye, Institut Sénégalais de Recherches Agricoles (ISRA). Thank you for supporting student research and education.

Featured Legume of the Month

Pigeon Pea

Like many legumes, pigeon pea is high in protein and low in fat. The crop is native to south Asia and is adaptable to arid environments. It has become an important food crop across sub-Saharan Africa.

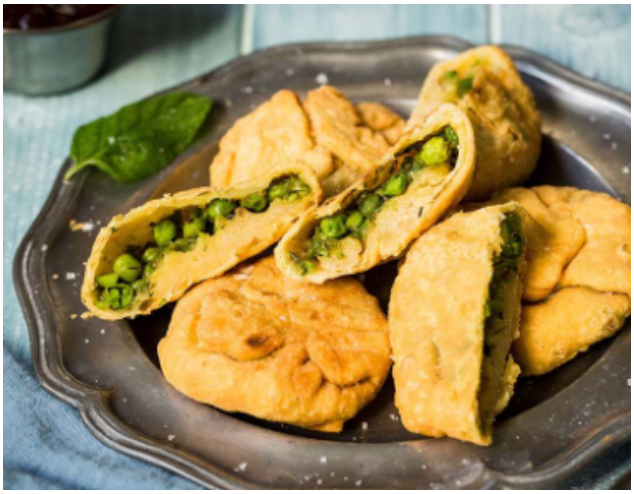
Pigeon pea offers good amounts of phosphorus and folate. The plants also provide fodder for livestock. In addition, it can be intercropped with maize and cowpea offering smallholder farmers more growing options.

Cooking with Pigeon Pea...

Pigeon Pea Kachori

Kachori is a popular deep fried snack. This recipe from Pulses.org uses pigeon pea as the main ingredient.

Many flavorful spices including ginger curry paste, cumin seeds, turmeric powder, garam masala, and coriander leaves give a spicy and tasty flavor to the fried dough's pigeon pea filling.



The snack is often served with green and sweet chutney to balance the flavors. Set aside 50-60 minutes for the prep and cooking of this special treat.

Get the recipe here

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

Visit our website

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