Abstract Title: Food Insecurity and Gender Disparities among Smallholder Farmers in Rural Ghana: Preliminary Results from the Baseline WEAI+ (Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index + Household Hunger Scale, Soy Modules)

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Abstract Text: Background: The Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Lab (SIL) works to assist Sub-Saharan rural farmers towards improved food security and socioeconomic development through sustainable soy production. Methods: To evaluate this progress, SIL’s Socioeconomic/Gender Equity Research (SGER) team administered the baseline WEAI+ to 675 smallholder farmers (333 women, 49.3%) in rural Ghana. Preliminary analyses explore how men and women smallholder farmers (MSF and WSF) compare across the WEAI (Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index) and Household Hunger Scale. Results: Over 30% of participants reported their household (HH) had no food to eat in their dwelling due to lack of resources 1-2 times (19.1%), 3-10 times (11.6%), or ≥10 times (2.1%) in the past 4 weeks. Nearly 29% reported a HH member had gone to sleep hungry because there was not enough food 1-2 times (16.8%), 3-10 times (11.4%), or ≥10 times (2.8%) in the past 4 weeks. Nearly 23% reported a HH member had gone 24-hours without eating anything because there was not enough food 1-2 times (11.6%), 3-10 times (10.3%), or ≥10 times (2.9%) in the past 4 weeks. Significant gender disparities emerged: WSF are significantly less empowered in three WEAI dimensions: Production, Resources, and Leadership; more WSF experienced “occasional” hunger, but the gender gap closed at “moderate” and “severe” hunger event levels. Discussion: Results suggest a need for 1) affordable nutrient-rich food sources among smallholder farmers and their families and 2) a better understanding of gender disparities and circumstances surrounding hunger events in order to improve food security in rural Ghana.

Related Web Page: http://soybeaninnovationlab.illinois.edu/

Program: Food and Nutrition

Preferred Presentation Format: Oral Preferred

Learning Objectives: Describe results from the Baseline WEAI+ (Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index + Household Hunger Scale, Soy Modules) administered to 675 men and women smallholder farmers in Ghana’s Northern Region. Discuss implications for enhancing gender equity and food security among women smallholder farmers and their children in rural Ghana.

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Target Audiences: Social/behavioral researchers and CHES who conduct research and program evaluations to address global health, food insecurity, gender empowerment, and women’s socioeconomic advancement through development programs; Public health leaders, social/behavioral researchers, and CHES involved in health initiatives to enhance health/nutrition education programs and agricultural and development efforts targeting vulnerable women and children.

Keyword(s): Food Security, Gender

Learning Areas:
Conduct evaluation related to programs, research, and other areas of practice
Implementation of health education strategies, interventions and programs
Planning of health education strategies, interventions, and programs
Public health or related research
Social and behavioral sciences

Primary geographic focus of the program or study: Ghana