

Soybean Innovation Lab Newsletter

November 2015

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Our Mission

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Soybean Value Chain Research is USAID's only comprehensive program dedicated to soybean technical knowledge and innovation. Our international team of tropical soybean experts provides direct technical support to researchers, private sector firms, non-governmental organizations, extensionists, agronomists, technicians and farmer associations tasked with soybean development.

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Two Success Stories, One Mission

Pan-African Soybean Variety Evaluation Trialing Underway

The goal of the pan-African soybean variety evaluation trial is transparency. Properly functioning seed systems require third party independent variety trials to ensure that farmers know the performance characteristics of seed adapted to their environments. Currently there is no formal, continuous, comprehensive, third party soybean varietal program in Africa. To that end the Soybean Innovation Lab (SIL), with partners at the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture (SFSA) and the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), are engaged in a pan-African soybean varietal testing program using the SFSA Seeds2B demand-led approach. The Seeds2B model engages processors, input suppliers and seed traders in the trial phase in an effort to establish a supply of high-performing, quality soybean seed varieties to smallholder farmers.

The consortium piloted the pan-African soybean variety evaluation in pre-trials during the 2014/2015 side seasons in Kenya (Kajiado, Thika and Narok), and Malawi (Kasinthula and Chitala Research Stations) with 9 entries. The consortium is expanding the trial this year by evaluating 24 entries in Kenya and Malawi. The 24 entries come from the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA), the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), the Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI) in Ghana and MRI Seed in Zambia. An additional 4 varieties from Seed Co in Zimbabwe will be included in the next trialing season.

SIL and SFSA would like to expand the pan-African soybean varietal evaluation effort to include more trials, more varieties, more locations, but we need your help. We welcome donor support, industry sponsorship, breeder collaboration, and varietal submissions. If you are interested in getting involved please contact Dominik Klauser (dominik.klauser@syngenta.com) or Courtney Tamimie (tamimi@illinois.edu).

Soymilk Opportunities Taking Off in Mozambique

Not far from the soybean producing regions of northern Mozambique, the Mocuba Winnua Ltd. Company operates a SoyCow facility as part of the Soybean Innovation Lab's human nutrition efforts. Winnua is a household brand name for high quality maize flour, which is processed by the company as well. The facility's soymilk and soy yoghurt processing center came online in late spring 2015, and a few months later their production took off.

Part of Winnua's daily soymilk production is provided to the company's staff who work in the dusty corn milling environment. Soy yoghurt is also produced and sold fresh from their Mocuba store. Support from local bank BCI also enables Winnua to deliver soymilk daily to a school located near the soy dairy processing center. The school feeding project is introducing soymilk in a region where milk of any kind is rare. The high-quality protein delivered in a cup of soymilk can meet 1/3 to 1/2 of the protein requirements for the young students. Teachers report students are more attentive and engaged in their lessons and eagerly look forward to their daily serving of soymilk.

Moving forward, Winnua plans to expand their production, adding a second shift to double the amount of soymilk produced. They plan to increase their staff also, allowing them to expand their soy yoghurt line. Winnua is also working with local poultry producers to explore ways to utilize the *okara*, a fibrous by-product of the soymilk production, in their feed formulations.

Best of all, additional schools in the area are interested in the school feeding program. The nutrient rich and tasty soy products are receiving a warm welcome in an area where food insecurity is common among rural households.

The Winnua SoyCow facility is technically supported by the SIL human nutrition research leads at the National Soybean Research Laboratory (NSRL) and partners at Malnutrition Matters and the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH).



Staff of the Mocuba Winnua Ltd. soy processing center check the progress of soybeans ground for the next batch of soymilk, as the current fresh soymilk batch is dispensed from the SoyCow. Photo credit: Dr. Marilyn Nash



Soybean variety evaluation trialing sites in Malawi at the Kasinthula and Chitala Research Stations. Photo credit: SFSA



Photos of Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI) released Soybean varieties being evaluated under the SIL/SFSA/AATF variety evaluation pre-trial. The pre-trial took place during the side season in Kenya and Malawi. These photos were taken 90 days after planting. The full trial with approximately 24 entries began in Kenya and Malawi in October/November 2015.
Photo credit: SFSA



Bottled soy yoghurt at the Mocuba Winnua Ltd. Company based in Mocuba, Mozambique. Winnua bottles and sells the fresh soy yoghurt daily at their Mocuba store and also supplies soymilk daily to employees at their corn milling plant. The company is actively working to expand their soy yoghurt line and product offering.
Photo credit: Mocuba Winnua Ltd. Company



Through support from local bank BCI the Mocuba Winnua Ltd. Company began implementing a soy-based school feeding program at LoBue Mocuba Primary School. The program delivers a daily serving of soymilk to students. Teachers have already reported more attentive and engaged students.
Photo credit: Mocuba Winnua Ltd. Company

Soybean Kick-off Event: Showcasing Research-for-Development in Action



Over 200 individuals attended the first Soybean Kick-off Event, held at the Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI) of Ghana, an integral SIL research partner, on October 14, 2015. The event included welcoming remarks from SARI Director Dr. Stephen Nutsugah and USAID/Ghana Office of Economic Growth Deputy Director Brian Conklin. A soy-enhanced lunch was served to all attendees to begin the event including a spiced tofu khebab, a soy-based palava sauce and soybean tubani. The lunch also included fresh soymilk produced at the SIL-supported soy dairy installation at SARI managed by Flora Amagloh, SARI Food Research Scientist.

Following the lunch, the “Soy for Poultry Nutrition” panel commenced with expert presentations provided by Dr. Mike Lacy, Professor of Poultry Science at the University of Georgia and from Mr. William Ahiadormey, CEO of Agricare Mills, Ltd., a large producer of poultry feeds in Ghana. The poultry panel highlighted the direct link between local soy production and demand from the poultry sector for protein-rich feeds.



Attendees then embarked on research-for-development tour stops highlighting collaborative research efforts between SIL and SARI to improve the soybean value chain in northern Ghana including the SIL SMART Farm, focused on soybean production and agronomics; the SIL Plant Breeding efforts, focused on developing locally-adapted varieties bred for high yield, shattering and disease resistance; and the SIL Soy Dairy Installation focused on utilizing small-scale soy processing units known as SoyCows to produce soymilk, soy yoghurts and tofu for local schools, hospitals, the private sector and in military and other government-funded programs. At each tour stop, attendees saw research-for-development first-hand, posed questions to researchers and highlighted their own needs and challenges in soybean production.

Meet a SIL Researcher & Collaborator

The Soybean Innovation Lab brings together U.S. and African researchers to address the most challenging issues facing soybean production, adoption and utilization in Sub-Saharan Africa. Here we introduce U.S. and African experts committed to developing the technical knowledge and innovation needed to successfully develop the soybean value chain in Sub-Saharan Africa.



Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale is an Associate Research Professor in the Social Science Research Center (SSRC) at Mississippi State University. Dr. Ragsdale is an applied medical anthropologist with a PhD in Cultural Anthropology. Before joining Mississippi State University Dr. Ragsdale completed National Institutes of Health (NIH) postdoctoral fellowships in Milwaukee and New York City. Dr. Ragsdale’s research addresses health disparities among minority and vulnerable populations in the U.S. and abroad. Dr. Ragsdale is the Principal Investigator of the Soybean Innovation Lab’s gender research. Her research utilizes a soy-adapted version of the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) among over 600 households in Ghana to understand issues of gender equity and the role of women within sustainable soybean systems.



Dr. Mary Rebecca Read-Wahidi is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow and Visiting Scholar in the Social Science Research Center (SSRC) at Mississippi State University. Dr. Read-Wahidi received her Ph.D. in Biocultural Medical Anthropology from the University of Alabama in December 2014. Dr. Read-Wahidi’s research focuses on how culture shapes our daily lives and our health through such things as diet, work, social structures, and family life. She has conducted research among Mexican immigrants in Mississippi and most recently in Kuwait. Dr. Read-Wahidi recently joined the Soybean Innovation Lab (SIL) project as a Post-Doctoral Researcher on Dr. Ragsdale’s team implementing the soy-adapted Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) in Ghana.



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