
WORKING VISIT TO MALI ON THE

**CSIR-WEST AFRICA AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY
PROGRAMME (WAAPP)**

VISITING SCIENTISTS PROGRAMME

BY

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DECEMBER, 2011.

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As one of the requirements of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAP), Mali WAAPP office requested the services of a Food Scientist from Ghana to assist in the implementation of the project activities. I, Gregory Afra Komlaga, a Food Scientist/Technologist, from CSIR-Food Research Institute (CSIR-FRI), Ghana, was nominated by the Director of CSIR-FRI with approval by the Deputy Director General of CSIR to represent Ghana. The main task for me in Mali was to assist in Post-Harvest rice processing. I was also trained to co-ordinate and conduct a regional survey in Accra on rice consumers' habits and preferences after which I helped to analyze the results. I worked with "Institut d'Economie Rurale" (IER), Mali, for a period of one month and all expenses were borne by WAAPP, Mali. I left Ghana on the 31st of October 2011 and arrived on the same day in Bamako, Mali by air. I was warmly welcomed on arrival at the Senou International Airport, Bamako, Mali, by Dr. Coulibaly Salimata Sidibe, the coordinator of the visiting programme and the Head, "Laboratoire de Technologie Alimentaire" IER, Sotuba. I was formally introduced to the Coordinator of WAAPP, Mali in the person of Dr. Gaoussou Traore and the rest of the staff the next day by Dr. Coulibaly. Work began on the third day until November 8, 2011 when I returned to Ghana to conduct a survey on rice consumers' habits and preferences in Accra. The survey in Accra was conducted together with selected staff of CSIR-FRI from November 10-16, 2011. The suburbs covered in the survey were Legon, Madina, Achimota, Accra Central (Osu, 37, Kaneshie, Makola), Ashaiman and Tema. I returned to Mali on November 21, 2011 with the data gathered. The data was discussed and added to data collected from Senegal, Mali and Benin on similar surveys conducted earlier. Knowledge was shared in rice parboiling and preparation of *Omu Tuo* (rice balls) with the staff of IER, Mali from November 24 – 28, 2011. I finally departed for Ghana on November 29, 2011.

2.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my profound gratitude to the WAAP office, Mali, for the opportunity of inviting me to assist in the project work in Mali. My profound gratitude goes to Dr. Gaoussou Traore especially, for giving me all the necessary support in making my stay in Mali a comfortable one.

I am grateful to the Deputy Director General, CSIR Ghana as well as the Director, CSIR-FRI for the approval and nomination respectively for the programme. I thank you so much for the confidence you had in me.

My sincere thanks go to Dr. Coulibaly Salimata Sidibe and her team at IER, Sotuba, Mali. I salute you all and may God richly bless and reward you for all you did to make my stay a comfortable one in Mali.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP) is a sub-regional programme shared by all 15 member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and coordinated by the Central African Council for Agricultural Research (WECARD/CORAF). The programme was designed to focus on improving export competitiveness, biodiversity, land administration and management, technology diffusion, trade facilitation and market access. The World Bank approved credits in support of the first phase of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP) in Ghana, Mali and Senegal.

The objective of the WAAPP Support Project is to generate and disseminate improved technologies in the participating countries' top priority areas that are aligned with the region's top priorities, as identified by Central Africa Counsel for Agricultural Research (CORAF). These include roots and tubers in Ghana; rice in Mali; and cereals in Senegal. The project has four main components. The first component is enabling conditions for regional cooperation in technology generation and dissemination. This aims at strengthening the mechanisms and procedures for the dissemination of technology, as to allow countries to benefit fully from the regional cooperation in technology generation that is being promoted. This component targets common regulations related to genetic materials, pesticides and other crop protection products, national registration committees for genetic materials and pesticides in the participating countries and information system on agricultural technologies and research skills at the regional level.

One of the requirements of the project is to exchange knowledge on technologies developed between participating countries on the commodities involved. To satisfy this condition on the project, WAAPP, Mali requested for a Food Scientist from Ghana to assist in the implementation of the project in rice processing in Mali. The request came to CSIR Ghana after which a Food Scientist/Technologist (Mr. Gregory Afra Komlaga) was nominated from CSIR-FRI to represent Ghana. The visit lasted one month and the work carried out during the visit is described below.

4.0 ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING THE PERIOD OF THE VISIT

4.1 Introduction to WAAPP and IER staff.

Dr. Coulibaly Salimata Sidibe introduced me officially on the second day of arrival to all the staff related to the project. The first place of call was the WAAPP project office, Bamako, Mali. I was introduced to the project coordinator, Dr. Gaoussou Traore after which discussions centered on the work schedule and conditions of stay for the period were held. Dr. Gaoussou was grateful the invitation was honoured and promised to make my stay in Mali a memorable one. I was introduced later to other staff members at the WAAPP office by Dr. Gaoussou Traore.

The introduction to the staff of IER, Bamako and Sotuba continued after Lunch. Some key staff members I was introduced to included the Director of IER, Sotuba, the Accountant and Cashier and Heads of various units at IER. Dr. Coulibaly outlined the schedule for the visit to me after the formal introduction. Discussions were held between me and Dr. Coulibaly to finalize the timetable for the period. The day was very successful and I was already feeling at home in Bamako, Mali.

4.2 Translation of, and training on questionnaire

Actual work on the programme started on the third day (November 2, 2011) in Mali. The questionnaire to be used for the rice consumer survey which was in French was translated into English by Dr. Coulibaly and I. Dr. Coulibaly had working knowledge in English but could not easily translate some parts of the questionnaire exactly to what the questionnaire meant in English. She explained verbally what she wanted from respondents on such topics after which I assisted to compose sentences in English to pose the question to respondents. The translation took two days to complete after which training on the questionnaire followed. The training ended on November 7, 2011 and I departed for Ghana on November 8, 2011 to train selected FRI staff to administer the questionnaires.

4.3 Questionnaire administration in Ghana

The work on the survey in Ghana started on November 10, 2011. Selected Technologists in CSIR-FRI were given one day training on how to administer the questionnaires effectively. They

were allocated tools and the questionnaire to start work the following day. The personnel were assigned to specific suburbs of Accra, as decided on in Mali, to administer the questionnaires. The suburbs covered in the survey were Legon, Madina, Achimota, Accra Central (Osu, 37, Kaneshie, Makola), Ashaiman and Tema. The personnel were to report to me after close of work every day to report on progress of work and any challenge they might have faced in the field. The questionnaire administration took four (4) days to complete, ending on November 16, 2011. Discussions were held on the data from the field from November 17-18, 2011 between me and the personnel in order to equip me to interpret the data effectively with the staff in Mali on my return.

4.4 Data interpretation and related issues.

I returned to Mali on November 21, 2011 with one hundred and fifty (150) sets of completed questionnaires. The questionnaires were discussed with Dr. Coulibaly and two other staff responsible for the survey data entry and analysis. The discussions and explanations on the questionnaire were held for two days. The team in Mali was very impressed about the data collected from Ghana and they were grateful to me and the team in Ghana for a good job done.

4.5 Training on rice parboiling

One of the key challenges that confront rice processors in Mali is breaking up of rice grains during milling. Technologies have been developed in Ghana and other parts of West African sub-region to minimize this challenge. Parboiling of rice is one key technology that helps to reduce the breaking of grains and this technology had been introduced and practiced in Mali to reduce the breaking up of the rice grains during milling. Ghana is one of the leading countries in the sub-region who practice this technology widely especially in the northern parts of the country. The team thought it wise to share knowledge on the parboiling technology that is practiced in both countries. Two (2) days were allocated for the practical sessions on parboiling of rice. Two methods of parboiling were demonstrated by the IER staff after which I shared experiences on parboiling in Ghana with the staff in Mali. The discussions held after the practical sessions were fruitful and very beneficial to all participants as new ideas were shared and would be put into practice to enhance parboiling of rice in both countries.

4.6 Training on preparation of *Omu tuo* (rice balls)

The team in Mali after the parboiling practical sessions was interested in learning about rice based food products of interest that CSIR-FRI had developed which could be introduced in Mali. I took the staff through practical session of *Omu tuo* (rice balls) preparation on November 28, 2011. The team in Mali enjoyed the *Omu tuo* so much after the lessons that Dr. Coulibaly promised organizing a workshop for restaurant operators and related enterprises to take up the production. The team was very grateful to me for sharing the knowledge with them.

4.7 Closing ceremony

A brief session was held in Dr. Coulibaly's office to officially end the programme. The ceremony was chaired by Dr. Coulibaly. She expressed the joy of working with Mr. Komlaga and hoped that the collaboration between the two countries continues. Other staff members expressed their joy as well for the opportunity of working with Mr. Komlaga. In response, I was very grateful to the entire team at Sotuba, Mali and thanked them for their warmest reception throughout my stay and promised to be in touch with them always for future collaborations. I finally wished them well in their endeavours after which the entire team wished me a safe trip to Ghana.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The visit was very beneficial to both countries in the sense that knowledge had been exchanged on technology of rice parboiling which will be useful for both countries. For the first time the staff at IER, Mali learnt how rice could be turned into *Omu tuo* which is a popular meal in most households in Ghana.

It is recommended that officers are given prior information about the conditions of stay of such visits in terms of accommodation, feeding and allowances before they embark on the trip. This will allow them to prepare adequately for such trips.