

# IFDC Report

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*an update on  
the work & progress at  
IFDC—An International Center for Soil  
Fertility and Agricultural Development*

[www.ifdc.org](http://www.ifdc.org)

## IFDC to Implement Africa Fertilizer Summit

*Flash Forward—Dateline 2015, Maradi, Niger—Young children in a small village in Niger are happily eating from overflowing bowls until their hearts and stomachs are content. “How can this be?” asks a visiting news reporter. “I remember very well covering a story portraying stark images of starving children, broadcast from this very same village in 2005.” What happened? Africa’s Green Revolution—that’s what happened . . . This is not the utopian dream of some ideologue. It is really possible in this century—Now how to make it happen. Here’s how...*



Photo by Mariette Gross

Because of the recognized role of fertilizer in solving Africa’s food security challenges, IFDC has been urged to implement the first Africa Fertilizer Summit, which is slated for June 9-13, 2006, in Abuja, Nigeria. Convened by the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and hosted by the Federal Republic of Nigeria under the Chairmanship of His Excellency, Olusegun Obasanjo, President of Nigeria, the Summit will assemble African heads of state, senior policy-makers and high-ranking government officials, leaders of private companies involved in the production and marketing of agricultural inputs, representatives of farmer organizations, representatives of development agencies including nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), researchers and academics, and representatives of leading donor organizations. The purpose of the Summit is to increase awareness of the role that fertilizer can play in stimulating sustainable pro-poor productivity growth in African agriculture and to discuss approaches for rapidly increasing efficient fertilizer use by African farmers. The goal of the conference is to build consensus around the key issues in increasing fertilizer use in Africa and agree on a strategy for developing an African Fertilizer Action Plan that will accelerate the access of millions of poor farmers to fertilizer and other complementary inputs, help them raise their farm production, and achieve food security.

The Summit will discuss the food challenges of Africa and its fertilizer crisis. Participants at the Summit will map out bold regional and national strategies within the framework of agricultural sector development plans, and financing mechanisms, to trigger an African Green Revolution through the accelerated use of fertilizers and other complementary inputs.

The Summit is supported by NEPAD, the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and a growing list of institutions.

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For more information regarding the Summit, check out the website at  
[www.africafertilizersummit.org](http://www.africafertilizersummit.org)

## IFDC Report

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## Board Chairman McPherson Delivers Fourth Travis P. Hignett Memorial Lecture

IFDC's Board Chairman, M. Peter McPherson, delivered the fourth Travis P. Hignett Memorial Lecture, entitled "Agricultural Revolution in Africa: Pipe Dream or Possibility?" on September 29, 2005, in the Tennessee Valley Authority Auditorium in Muscle Shoals, Alabama (U.S.A.).

McPherson stated that a fundamental principle of development can be stated as follows: "Permanent reduction of poverty, as opposed to perpetual charity, is possible only if people can by their own efforts make more money for their own lives." He listed India and China as examples to prove his point. He commented that during the past few decades most of the world's reduction of poverty has come from India and China because average people had more income.

"Economic growth is the key to poverty reduction," McPherson stated. He listed six factors that are present when broad-based economic growth occurs. These factors include improvements in these areas:

- Human resources
- Institutions
- Technology
- Infrastructure
- Economic policies
- Government commitments

McPherson sees a common characteristic in all of these factors—Governments that take burdens off people's backs to allow them to do more. The greatest asset, as he sees it, is individuals who want to have a better life.

He said he is confident that progress can be made in the war on poverty by working closely with African leaders. "Africa is not a hopeless case; Africa is not a permanent charity case," he said.

World leaders must listen to the needs of the African people rather than create programs that other governments believe will solve Africa's poverty problems, McPherson said.

IFDC initiated the Travis P. Hignett Memorial Lecture Series in 1994 to honor a distinguished chemist, chemical technologist and developer, author, and administrator. Hignett (1907-89) received global recognition for his many accomplishments in the fertilizer world during a 50-year period. The lecture series is sponsored by the Hignett Memorial Fund, established in 1987 to honor the "Father of Fertilizer Technology."

The publication of McPherson's lecture (IFDC-LS-4) should be available from IFDC's Purchasing Department in the near future. The publication will be announced in this newsletter and via IFDC's web site at [www.ifdc.org](http://www.ifdc.org). ■

Photo by Charles Butler



Chairman M. Peter McPherson

## CASE Training Program Conducted in Mali



Bamako, Mali, was the setting for an international training program on Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises (CASE) during November 14-18, 2005. The purpose of the training was to develop skills to analyze and improve the design and implementation of regional strategies for competitive agricultural production systems and enterprises involving multiple stakeholders.

The organizers of the program acknowledge that agricultural production and related industries already are and will continue to be the backbone for economic growth and food security in most of the developing countries for the future decades. However, to support increasing rural and urban populations, agricultural production needs to intensify and become more market oriented, both domestically and internationally. To accomplish this, agricultural development planning urgently needs to be improved, and promising pathways of intensification and agribusiness development need to be identified.

This French-language training was targeted toward professional development of public and private sector specialists involved in agricultural and agribusiness development in developing countries. New knowledge of and tools and methods for agricultural intensification and agribusiness development, including institutional and policy issues, were presented by IFDC and invited guest lecturers. The participants in the program strengthened their practical skills through the analysis and elaboration of real-life cases and through group exercises and simulation games.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## New Initiative in Afghanistan Has Worthy Goal

*Photo by Dr. Thomas P. Thompson*



**An Afghan farm family**

A new initiative in Afghanistan holds the promise of providing another avenue through which that country can increase the food security of its people. At the request of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)/Afghanistan and the Department for International Development (DFID), IFDC is serving as an implementing agency in helping 537,000 farm families gain access to improved seeds and fertilizers during the fall 2005 planting season.

This project is a Government of Afghanistan initiative to help mitigate the economic hardships of farmers due to reduced income from a voluntary or forced reduction in the acreage of poppy sown. The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Health and Food; the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development; and the Ministry of Counter Narcotics are leading the program.

The project will achieve its goal by working with the network of private input supply importers, wholesalers, and retailers. The regional importers agree to sell, store, and arrange the transport of 40,000 tons of fertilizer and 17,000 tons of seed (wheat, potato, and onion) to provincial wholesaler storage facilities in all 34 provinces. Provincial wholesalers agree to store, bag, and transport seed and fertilizer to district-level retail shops. District input supply retailers store inputs, distribute technical packages to farmers in exchange for 550,000 vouchers, and submit collected vouchers to the regional coordinators for payment of services rendered. The beneficiaries of the project will obtain their packages of seed and fertilizer from the IFDC-certified district retailers. The district retailers will receive payment for services rendered based on the number of vouchers received and according to the negotiated rate agreement with IFDC. Each district will develop an action plan that defines how the repayment funds will be used in their communities. The district action plans will be approved by the provincial extension services.

The project is expected to help farmers produce crops worth US \$75 million. In addition to countering poppy growth, the project will help improve the capacity of the Government of Afghanistan to administer such programs and reinforce the private sector input dealer network. DFID has provided funding to expand the number of farmers reached by the initiative. ■

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“This training was based on the CASE approach developed by IFDC and its partner institutions,” says Dr. Arno Maatman, Leader of IFDC’s Integrated Accessibility Program and Manager of this training program. “The CASE approach is grounded in experiential learning theories and fosters agricultural intensification and market development by using a commodity chain approach.”

The central principle behind the CASE approach is that the competitive advantages of particular regions can be greatly increased through a three-fold strategy:

1. Focusing on well-targeted industry clusters, e.g., groups of enterprises and facilitating services involved in particular commodity value chains located within the region;
2. Strengthening technical, managerial, and organizational capacities of the main stakeholders involved in input supply, crop, and livestock production, post-harvest handling and marketing, and in related business development services;
3. Facilitating efficient linkages among them.

This training consisted of four inter-related modules as follows:

1. Development of competitive strategies at the enterprise level;
2. Analysis of comparative and competitive advantages at the regional level by using Porter’s diamond of competitiveness and the concept of industry clusters;
3. Organizational strengthening/institutional development—When markets are thin and poorly developed, the focus needs to be on innovative institutional arrangements to improve coordination among all actors along the commodity chain;
4. Communication for innovation: facilitation of experiential and social learning, networking, and lobbying.

After returning home, the participants should now be able to analyze opportunities and constraints for commodity chain development within specific target regions and to develop and implement plans to strengthen technical, managerial, and networking skills of the various stakeholders involved. ■

## Food for Agricultural Revitalization and Market Systems (FARMS) Program in Afghanistan

The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), through its Food for Progress (FFP) Program, has recently awarded IFDC a grant to monetize 5,150 tons of soybean oil in Afghanistan and 10,000 tons of soybeans in Pakistan. All proceeds resulting from the commodity sales will be used to implement the Food for Agricultural Revitalization and Market Systems (FARMS) project, which provides technical assistance programs focused on improved nutrient management technologies for identified crops along with technical and market development assistance to the existing milling industry. The ultimate goal of the project is to replace current imports of some staple foods and food products (e.g., flour and cooking oil) with competitive domestic production.

Previous experience has shown that widespread dissemination of information to farmers on improved nutrient management techniques will quickly result in increased crop production. To identify up-to-date and appropriate nutrient management techniques for important crops, IFDC will combine results from site-specific demonstrations and trials analyzing various nutrient management practices with its expertise in decision support systems to develop nationwide recommendations that will increase land productivity and reduce risks to farmers. Beginning in spring 2006, IFDC will partner with and provide funds to the Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture and its extension staff to conduct site-specific research and on-farm trials to identify best nutrient management practices for important food crops in five important agro-ecological zones. The resulting field data will then be combined with various decision support system tools (crop simulation models, geographic information systems) and with geo-referenced databases to identify appropriate crop management practices and production capabilities.

Since a viable market is required to absorb the expected increased crop output, concurrent market development activities will focus on linking farmers/producers to processors (millers and oilseed crushers) to add value to farm outputs and to increase domestic production of important finished food products. A significant portion of the commodity-generated proceeds will be used to support market development through increased capacity and efficiency within the domestic milling (e.g., flour) industry. Initial efforts will focus on conducting training programs and workshops that provide information on the latest technologies and equipment, identifying sources of credit for equipment improvement or purchases, disseminating market information, and promoting domestic production and consumption through a well-organized media campaign.

Because the USDA FFP programs promote private sector development in developing countries and emerging democracies, the FARMS project is a natural complement to current IFDC agricultural development activities. For example, IFDC activities in Afghanistan are centered on development of and assistance to agricultural input dealers to source quality and competitively priced agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, crop protection products) from international suppliers. These activities address the first link in the value-added commodity chain by providing timely and affordable access to quality agricultural inputs to Afghan farmers. Based on previous IFDC experiences in the Balkans, Central Asia and West Africa, providing simultaneous technical support to the various stakeholders (agricultural input suppliers, farmers, and food processors)

David W. Rutland (second from left), FARMS Project Manager, conducts an auction of vegetable oil in Afghanistan.



Photo by Sohrab Samadi

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offers the opportunity to create sustainable value-added commodity chains and benefit everyone, including the consumers. In Afghanistan, these linkages will be instrumental in reaching the ultimate goal of increased domestic production of important staple foods and will provide a foundation for continued agricultural development.

To introduce Afghans to the FARMS program, IFDC staff conducted seminars to explain the procedures for the soybean oil sales and the initial plans for agricultural development work to be funded from the generated sales proceeds. In November, FARMS Project Manager, David Rutland, presented a seminar on IFDC's plans and procedures for auctioning the first shipment of soybean oil arriving in December. Subsequently, immediately following the December arrival of the initial 500 tons of soybean oil, it was successfully sold through transparent sealed bid auctions as originally planned and presented to the Afghan private sector entrepreneurs. This open auction process allowed for competitive bidding and attracted 50% more bidding participants than IFDC's initial market intelligence identified. The number of participants suggests that the private sector participants responded favorably to IFDC's invitation to participate in sealed bid auction process. In addition, the average price received for the commodity was approximately 5% higher than anticipated, indicating a good demand for the quality product. Two additional shipments totaling 4,650 tons will arrive during the first quarter of 2006 and will be sold through transparent free market mechanisms.

Because of the initial reactions and support from the Afghan private sector, IFDC looks forward to complete and successful implementation of the FARMS activity. ■

## “There is Money in the Soil” and Togolese Farmers Want It

“There is money in the soil,” sing the joyful men and women farmers gathered for the second annual rural workshop in Djaka Kope, a village in the maritime region of southern Togo. Two hundred farmers, representing 15 farmer-based organizations known as village granaries, participated in the workshop on September 15, 2005. The Institute of Technical Advice and Support, the Togolese Institute for Agricultural Research, the Campaign for a Sustainable Development, the Center for Research and Trials on Self-Promotion Models, and IFDC organized the workshop.

Through hand-written posters, farmer delegates presented the results of self-managed research-action experiences, which were conducted on learning plots. They showcased their mastery of the various stages of the integrated soil fertility management (ISFM) strategy.

Akouavi Anani, President of the Agbebe Farmer Group, is grateful to the supporting organizations that have paved the way for change in the villages. “Life was tough around here; and hope was a mirage,” he says. “Today we know how to care for our soil. We know how to make it produce more. The real problem is the market.”

As the workshop song says, marketing is clearly a key issue. In their interventions, farmers stressed the need to understand the operation of the market and to be trained to become well-informed and well-organized market players.

The workshop gave farmers the opportunity to voice their concerns and pose questions directly to government officials, which indeed was one of the ultimate goals of these annual rural workshops, in line with IFDC's principle of developing linkages among key stakeholders. Thus, the senior private secretary to the Togolese Minister of Agriculture, Stock Rearing and Fishery—Mr. Kedessa Bouwassi—was interviewed concerning the price of maize, which had reached an all-time high during the previous 2 months. Most farmers could not avail themselves of this situation because they had already sold the largest part of their harvests. Those who still had stocks available were penalized by the Government's intervention to curb prices artificially. Bouwassi was also asked to explain the role of the Togolese Observatory of Food Security, which was established to monitor and regulate stocks and prices of cereals in the country.

How to get the right fertilizers where and when they are needed was also a primary concern. “For instance, when you need nitrogen, you can find only potash fertilizers,” a farmer said. “When the product you need is available, the quantity is too low.”

In his response, Bikpeta Anakoma, Director of the National Fertilizer Service, explained the Government's intervention in this domain and warned farmers not to cooperate with the game of some private retailers who buy fertilizers at subsidized prices and resell them at exorbitant benefit margins.

In the Djaka Kope development experience, IFDC plays an important role by coordinating the interventions of various institutions and their support to farmers. Atsu Theophile, President of a farmer's union, appreciates IFDC's contribution. “Previously, an organization would introduce something; tomorrow another would bring in something else,” he said. “IFDC has caused all of the stakeholders to work together and to communicate better with us. We all benefit from this interaction.” ■

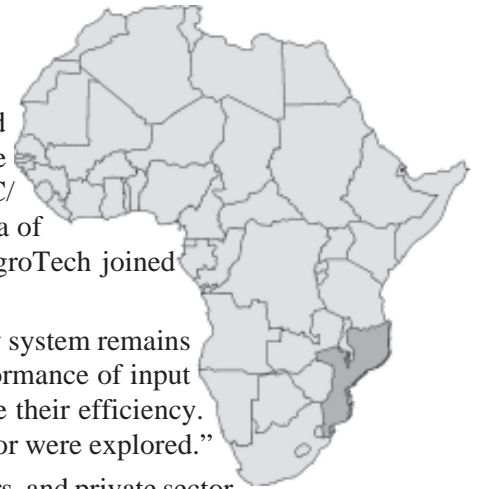
Photo by Serena Palverigiani



A woman farmer prepares to incorporate fertilizer.

## Assessment of the Inputs Sector Conducted in Mozambique

IFDC Principal Economist, Dr. Balu L. Bumb, conducted an assessment of the seed and other input supply systems in Mozambique for the Seed Initiative of the International Crops Research Institute of the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)/IFDC/Iowa State University. Dr. Belay Simane, Seed Consultant; Mr. Carlos Zandamela of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; and Mr. Rui Santos of HygroTech joined Dr. Bumb in the assessment.



“Our assessment focused on the supply side of the market because the input supply system remains weak,” says Dr. Bumb. “Specifically, the study covered the functioning and performance of input markets, constraints affecting their performance, and measures needed to improve their efficiency. Additionally, issues related to seed production and the potential of the private sector were explored.”

The team held discussions with several stakeholders including donors, policymakers, and private sector dealers. The team discovered that the input markets are underdeveloped, and the use of modern inputs such as improved seed, fertilizers, and crop protection products (CPPs) remains low. During 2004 Mozambique used less than 20,000 tons of fertilizer products, and most of that was used on cash crops such as sugarcane and tobacco. Little fertilizer is used on cotton and cereals.

Dealer networks have not been formed in rural areas, and the skills of dealers currently involved in selling inputs are limited. As a result, farmers must travel long distances to purchase inputs and cannot receive credible advice from dealers about the proper use of inputs.

To strengthen input marketing in Mozambique, a proactive approach is needed to strengthen the capacity of the private sector. This approach should focus on creating an enabling policy environment, building human capital, improving access to finance, establishing market transparency, and enforcing quality control regulations.

The capacity for foundation seed and certified seed production should be strengthened. Because improved seed varieties are coming from publicly funded research institutes, public-private arrangements should be made to build the bridge between the public research institutions and private seed companies. To improve access to improved seeds by smallholder farmers, certified seed production should be decentralized through private seed companies in different parts of the country.

Because of the small size of Mozambique’s input markets, the country’s input supply systems should be developed by making them an integral part of the regional markets. Different seed markets in the region are being linked through Southern African Development Community (SADC) under the Seed Initiative by promoting harmonization of policy and regulation standards. ■

## Tajikistan Project Moves Forward

IFDC is involved in a 2-year USAID-funded project in Tajikistan, which is providing farmers with training and extension services on the value of using high-quality inputs, including seeds, fertilizer, and crop protection products (CPPs), plus feed production and nutrition of dairy cattle. As an integral part of this objective, the project has been instrumental in the establishment of the Agribusiness Association of Tajikistan (AAT). Nearly 100 enthusiastic new member prospects attended the inaugural meeting of AAT on December 16, 2005.

The association will be the fundamental legacy of the project upon its completion. In only the first few months, project and management staff members have provided more than 30 training opportunities to nearly 1,000 participants. This training covers everything from field demonstrations—showing the benefits of using high-quality seeds, fertilizers, and CPPs to work with farmers on dairy cattle nutrition and veterinarian care. Additionally, several training sessions have been conducted on business management and association growth and development. As a direct result of this training, the first retail agribusiness farm store in Tajikistan opened in December 2005.

The vision of this project is to improve the productivity and profitability of the agriculture sector in the Batken (Kyrgyzstan) and Sugd (Tajikistan) Oblasts, thus reducing rural poverty and increasing social stability in the region. The overall mission is three-fold: (1) To



Photo by Ylli Bicoku

Data from demonstration plot is recorded in Tajikistan .

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provide high-quality livestock feeds in northern Tajikistan in support of the Agricultural Finance Plus (AG-FIN+) project; (2) To develop an Association of Agro-Input Suppliers of Tajikistan, which will deliver appropriate and high-quality inputs (including animal feeds, seeds, fertilizer and CPPs) and information to their farmer customers; and (3) To demonstrate the value of using new and improved seeds, fertilizers, CPPs, and enhanced varieties of feed grains and oilseed crops that can be successfully grown locally to increase milk output and, therefore, on-farm incomes.

In addition, the project staff conducted an open field day in August 2005, in which 125 farmers, entrepreneurs, and donor representatives participated. The participants visited a demonstration plot on a cooperative farm, where several varieties of maize, sunflower and soybean were tested. The use of traditional and progressive methods of crop cultivation, application of necessary fertilizers, and choice of high-quality seeds in the demonstration plot were discussed.

On the demonstration field, 22 varieties of maize, 5 of soybean, and 3 of sunflower were tested. The demonstration proved that the effective use of complex fertilizers results in higher yields. The soil test showed that the amount of nitrogen was limited; phosphorus was normal whereas potassium was lacking. The main objective of this demonstration was to show that the application of best farmers' practices increases production and productivity and results in higher incomes for farmers.

The project recently sponsored a local farmer's participation in an American Soybean Association seminar in Turkey. The farmer cooperates with the project by growing soybeans and sunflower. At that seminar he became acquainted with modern technology for growing, processing, and producing soybean oil. In the future, he plans to begin producing soybean oil.

This USAID-funded, IFDC-managed development project is another in a long line of successes for the local population that IFDC is serving. The practical demonstrations and "real world" training conducted around the world has changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people who make their livelihood off the land. ■

## His Excellency President Obasanjo Addresses IFA Meeting Regarding Next Year's Africa Fertilizer Summit

During an IFA Council Meeting in Seville, Spain, held November 14-18, His Excellency President Obasanjo of Nigeria addressed the delegates. In his address President Obasanjo discussed the importance and potential impact of next year's Africa Fertilizer Summit. His brief address is reprinted below:

"Greetings from Nigeria—It gives me great pleasure to address you about an exciting major African-led initiative, which has great potential to be a prime mover in changing the current reality of Africa from a continent plagued by hunger and poverty to a continent that can feed itself. I want to urge you to join hands with us to make this dream a reality.

As has been starkly exemplified by the recent situation in Niger Republic, food insecurity is a serious problem in Africa. In Africa per capita food production has declined over the past three decades. The main reason for Africa's food shortages is soil nutrient depletion. Africa loses about \$4 billion worth of plant nutrients from its soils each year due to continuous cultivation without nutrient replenishment. If Africa is to rapidly enhance its ability to feed itself, we need what the U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has called for—a uniquely African Green Revolution. This will require an increase in the use of fertilizer. Today, fertilizer use in Sub-Saharan Africa is extremely low at about 8 kilograms per hectare annually.

Therefore, African governments have decided to take action to catalyze large-scale adoption of fertilizer. The Africa Fertilizer Summit is being called for and convened by the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative. We have asked the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), an institution that all of you know well, to coordinate and implement the Summit. The Africa Fertilizer Summit will assemble high-level stakeholders, including African heads of state, fertilizer producers, private agribusiness firms, farmers' organizations, and development agencies to highlight the crucial role of fertilizer in stimulating productivity growth in African agriculture and determine the most promising strategies for rapidly increasing fertilizer use by African farmers. The goal of the Summit is to build a consensus around the key issues constraining increased fertilizer use in Africa and to agree on a strategy for developing an African Fertilizer Action Plan and national fertilizer action plans. This will accelerate the access by millions of poor farmers to inorganic fertilizers and other complementary inputs in order to help them raise their farm production and achieve food security.

The goal of the Summit and the successful implementation of the action plans cannot be achieved without the support of the private sector. The only way to increase the availability of and access to fertilizers in Africa is through well-functioning private sector-led input marketing systems.

Photo, Courtesy of Federal Republic of Nigeria



His Excellency President  
Olusegun Obasanjo

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International fertilizer companies should care about developing agricultural practices in Sub-Saharan Africa to complement the efforts of African governments that are embarking on bold steps to transform the agricultural sector and create new opportunities to expand the use of modern farm inputs. By investing in African fertilizer markets now, these companies will be preparing the way for tomorrow's growth market.

The fundamental mission of the international fertilizer industry is to help feed the world. This is the reason it came into existence, and there is nowhere today that the industry's help is more needed than in Africa. In this way, we can make a Green Revolution happen. Together we can work to change African agriculture and offer new hope for millions of our people who depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.

It will be my pleasure to personally chair the Africa Fertilizer Summit. This Summit is critical for African agricultural development, and the support of the international fertilizer industry association and its members to ensure its success is very vital.

I look forward to warmly welcoming you as a partner to the Africa Fertilizer Summit, which will be held in Abuja, Nigeria, from June 9 to June 13, 2006. You will be most welcome." ■

## Assessment of Agricultural Input Markets Conducted in Kenya

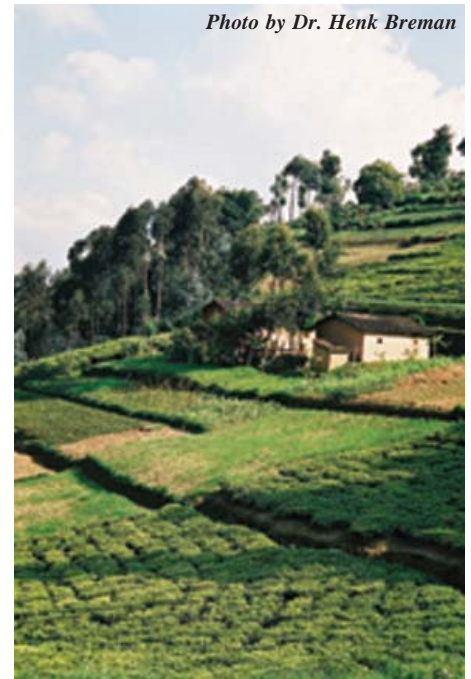
In May/June 2005 an IFDC team of economists and marketing specialists conducted an assessment of the agricultural input markets in Kenya. The assessment focused on the functioning and performance of seed, fertilizer, and crop protection product markets; the constraints affecting their functioning; and measures needed to strengthen their performance. This assessment was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture.

The team included Dr. Balu L. Bumb, Program Leader and Principal Economist; M. Feisal Beig, Senior Marketing Specialist; and Dr. Maria Wanzala, Economist. During their visit to Kenya, the team visited with more than 200 stakeholders from the public and private sectors and the donor community. Field work in numerous locations was geared to assessing the policy environment, adequacy of human capital and market information, access to finance, and enforcement of regulations.

"The team's primary recommendations dealt with strengthening the five pillars of market development, improving the use of rail transport, creating market-friendly safety nets for the poor farmers under the Njaa Marufuku Kenya (Eliminating Hunger in Kenya) framework, addressing soil fertility and acidity issues, and integrating the Kenyan market into the East African regional market," says Dr. Bumb. "Although Kenya's fertilizer market is relatively more advanced in the region, a consistent and supportive policy environment needs to be maintained, and signals that may hinder further development should be avoided."

The team also recommended that the Kenya National Fertilizer Association should be revived to assist in the capac-

Photo by Dr. Henk Brehman



Hillside agriculture in Kenya

ity building, especially training of stockists on fertilizer use and market information dissemination. In addition, if a risk management fund is established, access to finance could be enhanced. On the supply side, if an importer has access to bank credit, a supply guarantee could be given to the wholesalers and also be extended to the stockists.

The economists/marketing specialists recommended that the regional market information should be improved and transparency should be enhanced. The capacity of the regulatory systems needs to be enhanced; funding support for the regulatory organs needs to be improved to make them more effective.

Because stockists are often the first contact point for farmers, by enhancing their capacity on fertilizer recommendations, the public-private sector collaboration and service delivery could be improved. In addition, the team suggested that it may be necessary to introduce a voucher system for disadvantaged groups. ■

## Soil and Nutrient Dynamics Program Provides Technical Support to Near East and North Africa Project

Within the IFAD-funded project, “Development and Implementation of an Information and Decision Support System for Cereal Production in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) Region,” IFDC scientists are developing systems to assist farmers in Morocco and Syria to manage more effectively cereal crop production. IFDC scientists are working closely with scientists at both the National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA) in Morocco and the General Commission for Scientific Agricultural Research (GCSAR) in Syria to build the climate and soil databases needed to incorporate crop models in developing recommendations for managing wheat and barley.

IFDC is using the crop models in the Decision Support System for Agrotechnology Transfer (DSSAT) linked with a Geographic Information System (GIS) to analyze and include the databases generated in Morocco and Syria. When linked with historical weather data, this Information and Decision Support System (IDSS), developed by scientists of IFDC, Morocco, and Syria, can examine farmer management practices on both spatial and temporal bases and generate site-specific fertilizer and management recommendations for farmers, including incorporating estimates of the impact of year-to-year climate variability. The recommendations generated by IFDC scientists and their colleagues in Morocco and Syria are being communicated to farmers as an additional resource for optimizing crop management.

The impact of the adoption of these recommendations, targeted at the poorest of farmers, will be measured through farmer surveys at the beginning and end of the project. In addition to generating crop recommendations, IFDC staff members participated in capacity strengthening by training their collaborators to use simulation models. IFDC is eager to scale up this work within the region to include Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt, and other countries. ■

## “Hope for West Africa’s Agri-Input Market” Proclaimed in Video

The IFDC Marketing Inputs Regionally (MIR) project recently produced a 26-minute documentary on the agri-input market in West Africa. Produced in both English and French, this video deals with the importance of developing an open, dynamic and competitive agri-input market to increase agricultural productivity in West Africa. It addresses West African stakeholders of the public sector (ministries, regional and/or sub-regional institutions), private sector (economic operators/suppliers); farmer-based organizations (producers and producers’ associations), the West African civil society, development partners, and the international public.

This video, organized around three main topics, depicts the agri-input market in three phases. First, it presents the current market seen by the main actors, namely agricultural producers who use inputs; the private sector, which distributes inputs; and the public sector, which regulates inputs marketing. This first part highlights the realities, constraints, and challenges characterizing the agri-input markets in West Africa.

The video also emphasizes some of the current efforts and advises as to how West Africa should increase competitiveness of the market in comparison with the current globalization of the world economy. The main part of the documentary proposes pathways toward a much more competitive market in the sub-region.

Presented in the form of a forum, the video stresses the integrated nature of the process because the options of sub-regional integration make it possible to obtain scale economies that can reduce transaction costs and facilitate transparency and competitiveness of the markets.

It is a mixture of narration, images and interviews, which help to depict current concerns for a more competitive agri-input market enabling increased agricultural productivity in West Africa. This approach, therefore, makes it possible to have a better knowledge of the market and to be aware of the need for acting to save the agriculture sector.

The goal of this documentary is to lead stakeholders of the fertile triangle—agricultural producers, agri-input distributors, and decisionmakers—to adopt behaviors that allow the strengthening or the development of affordable markets for the inputs that producers buy and profitable markets for the agricultural products they sell.

Copies of this video are available from the MIR project in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and at all satellite offices of the project in West Africa.

The IFDC MIR Project (Marketing Inputs Regionally) is supporting the creation of conditions favorable to the development of an efficient, transparent, and competitive market to improve the availability and affordability of agri-inputs in West Africa. Thus, for about 2-1/2 years, it has been supporting the efforts of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and those of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which aim to create a regional agri-input market within the framework of a common agricultural policy. Special attention is given to the strengthening of the private sector and the facilitation of dialogue among stakeholders of the market. The MIR Project, therefore, contributes to create conditions that allow stakeholders of agriculture to make sustainable strategic choices to meet the needs of the present and future generations. ■



## Gender Training Conducted as Part of the MISTOWA Project

Dr. Nancy E. Horn, Consultant with AMEX International, provided gender training in Ghana, Benin, and Nigeria as part of the Market Information Systems and Traders' Organizations in West Africa (MISTOWA) project, based in Ghana.

The ultimate goal of this 4-year project is to increase regional agricultural trade and food security by improving and linking the existing regional efforts to generate, disseminate, and use market information commercially. Key cross-cutting issues in the project are increasing the number of women producers and traders benefiting from the project and combating HIV/AIDS in the region.

“The main objective of my consultancy was to provide gender training to a significant number of members of the trader and producer organizations involved in the MISTOWA project in Ghana, Benin, and Nigeria,” says Dr. Horn. “Of key concern was the identification of women’s problems in production and trading and how these might be resolved, at least in part, by the dissemination of information through MISTOWA’s web site and web sites of other organizations. Of additional concern was the identification of informational needs in the area of HIV/AIDS. Since this pandemic has severely affected both agricultural production and trading—largely through the loss of labor—IFDC determined it critical that HIV/AIDS messages be made available to reduce the impact of the disease on farming and trading families.”

During the training workshops Horn employed a methodology whereby the women producers and traders, organized in their respective commodity groups, answered three questions: (1) What problems do you have in production and trading? (2) What information do you need that can help you do better business? (3) Once you have access to information through MISTOWA, how can you disseminate it, especially to women in your associations?

The key problems identified by the producers included access to land, credit, labor, transport, and technical assistance on production. The main problems identified by traders included access to credit, transport, information on trading with other countries, ending the physical and financial harassment of women at borders, language, and knowledge of standards and regulations for trading different crops across borders.

The information that producers require addresses each of their problems:



MISTOWA Gender Training Consultant, Dr. Nancy E. Horn, discusses concerns and challenges confronting women producers and traders.

- Advocacy on women’s legal right to land.
- Knowledge of where to obtain loans from different types of institutions.
- Information on labor-saving production techniques and technologies.
- Identification of different transporters along with their haulage rates, capacity, etc.
- Agricultural extension information on different inputs and on the different crops targeted by MISTOWA.

The information that traders require to help overcome their problems includes the following:

- Knowledge of where to obtain loans
- Identification of different transporters
- Pricing and import-export regulations on different crops from each of the MISTOWA countries
- Advocacy with ECOWAS to stop border harassment by uniformed men
- Organizing associations for language classes in business French and English
- Helping to create standards of measure for different crops in all MISTOWA countries.

As a result of the information provided by the participants in the workshops, several recommendations were presented. Most of the recommendations address the information needs that producers and traders have, but some address the capacity building that associations need in order to become advocates on their own behalf and to become more organized. ■

## Calendar of Events Involving IFDC Staff

**African Agricultural Scientific Week: Third Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) General Assembly**, June 6-12, 2005, Entebbe, Uganda

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Fertilizer Working Group Meeting**, June 26, 2005, Rome, Italy. Regional and global demand projections and supply-demand balances were discussed.

**Regional Workshop for Validating the Technical Document of the Regulatory Framework for Crop Varieties Evaluation and Release, Seed Control, and Certification in West Africa**, September 15-16, 2005, Accra, Ghana

**IFDC Board Meeting and Staff Retreat**, September 26-30, 2005, Muscle Shoals, Alabama

**Phosphate Fertilizer Production Technology Workshop**, September 26-30, 2005, Brussels, Belgium. Workshop organized by IFDC on behalf of IFA

**USDA-Hosted World Food Day**, October 13, 2005, Washington, D.C.

**U. S. Global Leadership Campaign Tenth Anniversary**, November 8, 2005, Washington, D.C.

**IFA Council Meeting**, November 14-18, 2005, Seville, Spain

**First Technical Committee Meeting for the Africa Fertilizer Summit**, November 28-30, 2005, Johannesburg, South Africa

**Annual General Meeting of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)**, December 5-9, 2005, Marrakech, Morocco

**International Training Program on Fertilizer Marketing Management**, December 5-16, 2005, Bangkok, Thailand.

**First Communications Strategy Group Meeting for the Africa Fertilizer Summit**, December 9, 2005, Rockefeller Foundation, New York, N.Y. ■

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## Announcements

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**Dr. Mamadou Kabiron N'Diaye**—The Government of Mali has awarded Dr. Mamadou Kabiron N'Diaye, IFDC Team Leader of the PRODEPAM Project, the Agricultural Merit Medal for his contributions to Mali's agriculture.

**Mr. M. Peter McPherson**, IFDC's Chairman of the Board of Directors, has been tapped to become the new President of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, as of January 1, 2006.

**Ms. M. Ann Tutwiler**, Managing Director for Trade and Development, Hewlett Foundation, has been appointed to the IFDC Board of Directors. Previously she was Chief Executive Officer, International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council. She also served as Director of International Governmental Affairs for Central Soya Company, Inc. She was the Co-Founder and Associate Director of the International Policy Council on Agriculture, Food and Trade.

**Dr. Mortimer Hugh Neufville**, Executive Vice President of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, has been selected for the IFDC Board of Directors. He was previously Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore. He also served as Associate Dean for Cooperative Research and Extension at Lincoln University.

**Dr. G. J. Doornbos**, President of LTO Nederland—Federation of Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations, has been appointed to the IFDC Board of Directors. He has also served as President of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers. Previously he served as a member of the executive committee of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers and a member of the Board of the European Agricultural Confederation.

**Dr. Craig A. Meisner** joined IFDC in August 2005 as a senior agronomist and is posted in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Prior to joining IFDC, Meisner was employed by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) for 15 years. In 1992 he served as an agronomist with the Wheat Research Center of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute. He was also responsible for developing and implementing successful strategies to promote maize production in Bangladesh. Meisner received a Ph.D. degree in agronomy and crop physiology from the University of Georgia. From North Carolina State University, he received an M.S. degree in pathology, physiology, and crop production and a B.S. degree in agronomy. For the past 5 years, Meisner has also served as Adjunct Associate Professor and now as International Professor with the Soil Management Collaborative Research Support Program (CRSP) of Cornell University.

**Mr. Donald Crane** was employed in October 2005 as IFDC's Development Officer, posted in Washington, D.C. Crane has 25 years of experience in promoting economic growth and organizational management for development assistance. He was a key leader in the growth of ACDI/VOCA—Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance—in Washington, D.C. Crane holds an M.S. degree in agricultural production economics from the University of Florida and a B.S. degree in accounting from the University of Maryland.

**Dr. Oumou Camara** joined IFDC in December 2005 to assist in the implementation of the Africa Fertilizer Summit. Dr. Camara's previous work experience includes employment as Agro-Economist Consultant, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in Niamey, Niger; Research Assistant, Michigan State University (MSU); Young African Professional Fellow, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Research Assistant with Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Virginia Tech's Peanut Collaborative Support Research Program in Senegal; and Teaching and Research Assistant, Washington State University. Dr. Camara received her Ph.D. degree in agricultural economics from Michigan State University and her M.A. and B.S. degrees in agricultural economics from Washington State University. ■

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## IFDC 2006 International Training Calendar

Training Program/Workshop	Dates	Location	Program Fee, US \$	Late Fee, US \$
1. The Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises (CASE) Approach	April 3-7	Sogakope, Ghana	1,000	1,200
2. Strengthening Market Information Systems	May 15-19	Abuja, Nigeria	1,000	1,200
3. Strengthening Agricultural Trade Organizations	June 19-23	Bamako, Mali	1,000	1,200
4. Challenges in Developing Agricultural Input Markets in Africa	August 21-25	Arusha, Tanzania	1,000	1,200
5. Decision Support Systems and Crop Modeling	September 4-8	Marrakech, Morocco	1,000	1,200
6. NPK Production Alternatives	November 6-10	Southeast Asia	1,000	1,200

**Note:** A non-refundable deposit of \$200 is required with each registration. The deposit will be credited toward the program fee, which is due 4 weeks before the program is scheduled. Thereafter, a *late fee* will apply. The program fee, less the deposit, will be refunded for cancellations made 2 weeks before the commencement of the program; thereafter, 90% of the paid fee will be returned and 10%, in addition to the deposit, will be charged to cover administrative costs.

*IFDC reserves the right to cancel any program or change the dates and/or venue of any program without liability for compensation.*