IFDC Report

Volume 33, No. 1
March 2008
ISSN 0149-3434

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

www.ifdc.org

World Fertilizer Prices Soar as Food and Fuel Economies Merge

World fertilizer prices rose steadily from 2004 through 2006—then soared in 2007. Food prices also rose sharply. Reasons include new demands for food crops, especially corn (or maize), for ethanol and other biofuels, increased energy and freight prices, higher demand for grain-fed meat in the emerging economies of China, India, and Brazil, and increased use of natural gas as liquefied natural gas (LNG), says Dr. Balu Bumb, leader of the Policy, Trade, and Markets Program of IFDC.

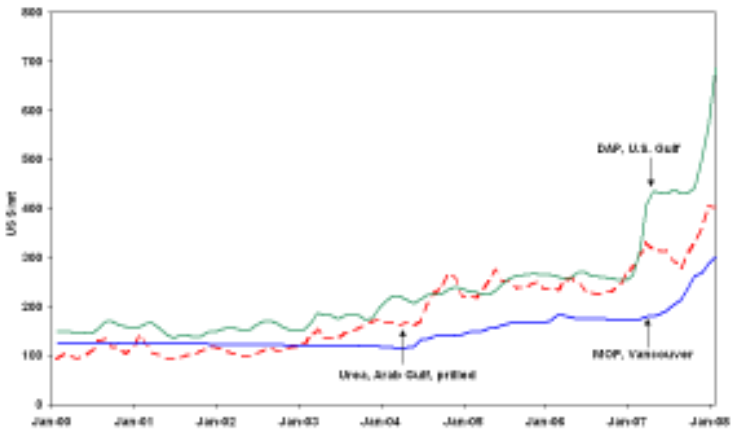
"Farmers in industrialized countries are applying high levels of fertilizers to maximize harvests of grain at the highest prices ever," Bumb says. "Those forces drive fertilizer prices higher."

The highest price rise in 2007 was for diammonium phosphate (DAP). The U.S. Gulf price for DAP was about $252 per ton in January

(Continued on page 2)

The IFDC Market Information Unit (MIU) conducts systematic data and information studies of the global fertilizer industry. Left to right are Dr. Balu Bumb, leader of the IFDC Policy, Trade, and Markets Program; Linda Walsh, MIU Data Management Specialist; and Janice Berry, MIU Coordinator.

Fertilizer Prices
(f.o.b., bulk)
Monthly Averages
2000–2008



f.o.b. = Free on board. Average price, with supplier paying freight and insurance, to destination port.
DAP = diammonium phosphate, MOP = muriate of potash.

World Fertilizer Prices Rose Dramatically in 2007

In This Issue

IFDC Report

Publisher:
IFDC–An International Center for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development

Editor:
Thomas R. Hargrove
Layout/Design:
Donna W. Venable

IFDC Report is a quarterly publication of IFDC, Muscle Shoals, Alabama, U.S.A. Telephone: 256-381-6600, Telefax: 256-381-7408, E-Mail: general@ifdc.org, Web Site: www.ifdc.org. Unless otherwise noted, printed material published in the *IFDC Report* is in the public domain and may be freely reproduced. Source acknowledgment and a copy of any reproduction are requested. Subscriptions are free. A French language edition of the *IFDC Report* is available from IFDC.

IFDC is a public international organization (PIO), governed by an international board of directors with representation from developed and developing countries. The nonprofit Center is supported by various bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, private foundations, and national governments. IFDC focuses on increasing and sustaining food and agricultural productivity in developing countries through the development and transfer of effective and environmentally sound plant nutrient technology and agribusiness expertise.

Change of Address:
To avoid missing copies, allow six weeks for change of address. Send details to: *IFDC Report*, P.O. Box 2040, Muscle Shoals, Alabama 35662, U.S.A.

World Fertilizer Prices Soar as Food and Fuel Economies Merge

(continued from page 1)

2007—but had almost tripled a year later, rising to $752 by January 2008.

Similarly, the Arab Gulf price of prilled urea rose from $272 to $415 per ton in the same period, and the Vancouver price of muriate of potash (MOP) rose from $172 to $352.

The price of 1 metric ton of corn—traditionally the main ingredient of livestock feed and now the main raw material used for biofuels in the United States—rose from $3.05/bushel in January 2007 to $4.28/bushel in January 2008 ($120 to $168/metric ton). The price of 1 U.S. gallon [3.8 liters] of milk also rose from $3.20 to $3.87 in the United States from January 2006 to December 2007.

Implications for Developing Countries

"The unprecedented rise in fertilizer prices is creating a fertilizer crisis for resource-poor farmers in developing countries," Bumb says. "Particularly hard hit are farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa. Farmers there need fertilizers desperately, to replenish their nutrient-depleted soils. But fertilizer use in Africa is the world's lowest—about 8 kg per hectare. The lack of fertilizers in Africa accentuates hunger and poverty. To stimulate adequate fertilizer use, the purchasing power of the poorest of the poor must be enhanced through market-friendly safety nets so they can be included in the marketing process."

Sources of Fertilizer Raw Materials Affect Prices

"Prices of phosphate fertilizers rose more steeply than the price of nitrogen-based urea because production sources are more limited," Bumb says. Most of the world's phosphate fertilizers are produced in the United States, Morocco, and along the Baltic Sea. Canada produces 70% of the world's MOP.

But plants to manufacture urea, for which natural gas is the main raw material resource, are dispersed worldwide. The world is currently short of urea, but global production may increase because at least six large new urea plants are projected to open in 2008: two in Iran and one each in Egypt, Nigeria, Oman, and Russia.

IFDC's Phil Humphres says food and energy economies are now merging.

Corn for Ethanol

"There was once a food economy and an energy economy—but the boom in biofuels is now merging the two," says Phil Humphres, IFDC Senior Specialist—Engineering.

In the United States, 70% of corn production has traditionally been used as animal feed, Humphres says. But 18% to 20% of the 2007 U.S. corn crop was used for ethanol, driving corn prices up by 70%. In 2008, 25% of U.S. corn is projected to go into ethanol.

U.S. corn production in 2007 was 13.1 billion bushels (333 million tons) according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)—24% more than in 2006 and the largest U.S. corn harvest since 1933.

But the *world* cereal production decreased from 2.05 billion tons in 2005/06 to 2.01 billion tons in 2006/07, partly because drought limited Australia's wheat crop. And the world's cereal *inventory* has dropped to its lowest level in the past 20 years—from 471 million to 428 million tons in the same period, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

In other words, world cereal production decreased by about 2% in the past year—but cereal reserves decreased by more than 9%.

Humphres adds, "Prices of products that use corn are rising, and much of the cost will be passed to consumers." Protest riots broke out

(Continued on page 3)

World Fertilizer Prices Soar as Food and Fuel Economies Merge

(continued from page 2)

in Mexico in 2007 after a doubling of the price of tortillas, which are made mostly from corn imported from the United States.

"In the United States, the government subsidizes ethanol by 51 cents a gallon [3.8 liters]," Humphres says. "Large companies are contracting corn from farmers who apply more fertilizer to maximize production.

"But if all U.S. corn production were converted to ethanol, it would supply only 27% of the United States' current transportation fuel demand."

Only meeting the U.S. mandate for biofuel production would require a 60% increase in U.S. land planted to corn, according to the International Food Policy Research Institute.

Brazil's success in use of ethanol from sugarcane is well-known. Dennis Avery, Director of the Center for Global Food Issues at the Hudson Institute, U.S.A., points out that Brazilian sugarcane yields 3.6 units of energy per unit of energy invested. Corn yields only 1.2 units.

Biofuel, Food Security, and the Environment

Two articles published in the February 7, 2008, edition of the prestigious journal *Science* indicate that subsidized biofuel production may actually *increase* global warming. The main reason is that farmers are responding to higher prices by burning and plowing huge areas of forest and grassland to convert them to cropland. That not only releases more greenhouse gases but also deprives the earth of natural "sponges" that absorb carbon emissions.

Lead authors of the studies are Timothy Searchinger of Princeton University and Joseph Fargione of The Nature Conservancy, U.S.A.

Searchinger wrote that "…corn-based ethanol, instead of producing a 20% savings, nearly doubles greenhouse emissions over 30 years…"

Simultaneously, farmers in North America are growing corn on land previously planted to soybeans. Brazil is capitalizing on the soybean demand by clearing vast areas of forest and savannas to grow soybeans.

Competition for Natural Gas

Humphres points out that competition for the world's natural gas resources is growing. "Production of 1 ton of ammonia requires about 30 to 33 million Btu of natural gas—about 90% of the raw material cost," he says. Much of the world's huge reserves of gas is "flared" or burned off and wasted, but natural gas is also the main raw resource to produce ammonia for nitrogen fertilizer.

Natural gas is increasingly being liquefied and shipped abroad in huge tankers as liquid natural gas—which now accounts for about 22% of global energy use.

"One hundred eighty-seven vessels are currently shipping LNG worldwide," Humphres says. "Another 130 tankers are on order. Construction capacity is 40 vessels per year, so there is now a 3-year backlog."

Converting Energy to Food Security

"Although the production of fertilizer is energy intensive, the benefits of using energy to enhance food security through fertilizer manufacture and use are enormous," Bumb says. "Every 1 million Btu of energy use[1] in the fertilizer sector produces an additional 218 kg of grain—enough to provide the minimum caloric intake for one person for a year.

"Thus, converting energy into food security through fertilizer and associated inputs is probably the world's most cost-effective and humane alternative for use of energy resources."

By 2020, energy used for fertilizer production and distribution is projected to increase to 8,494 trillion Btu, Bumb adds. "But even then, energy consumed in the fertilizer sector will remain less than 2% of global energy consumption—far less than what people will use driving personal cars."

Need to Improve Fertilizer Use Efficiency

"The sharp rise in fertilizer prices emphasizes the need for more research to improve the efficiency of fertilizer use," says Dr. Amit Roy, IFDC President and Chief Executive Officer.

"For example, most rice farmers in Asia broadcast urea directly into the floodwater," Roy says. "But only one bag in three is used by the plants. The rest is lost to the air and water."

The use of urea deep placement (UDP)—inserting large urea briquettes into the rice root zone after transplanting—can increase rice yields by 25% while using less than 50% as much urea as before. More than 550,000 farmers in Bangladesh now use UDP. The Government of Bangladesh is expanding UDP use to another 1.6 million Bangladeshi farm families on almost 1 million hectares. IFDC has also introduced UDP technology to Cambodia, Vietnam, Nepal, Nigeria, Mali, Togo, and Malawi.

"IFDC has also pioneered the development of integrated soil fertility management, or ISFM, as a tool to improve the efficiency—and thus the profitability—of fertilizer use for smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa," says Dr. Henk Breman, IFDC Principal Scientist and Expert Adviser, Environment and Agronomy, based in Rwanda.

In ISFM both organic and inorganic sources of plant nutrients, including mineral fertilizers, crop residue, phosphate rock, and lime, are combined as soil amendments to produce higher yields. ISFM has improved soil fertility for 150,000 farmers in West Africa and is being expanded to reach 1 million farm families or 10 million people.

"IFDC has an obligation to continue to help farmers, worldwide, get higher yields with less fertilizer," Roy says.

---

[1]The equivalent of the energy used to drive from Washington, D.C. to New York City in a family car that averages 25 miles per gallon [40 km per 3.4 liter] of gasoline.

MIR Helps Develop Regional Agri-Input Markets in West Africa

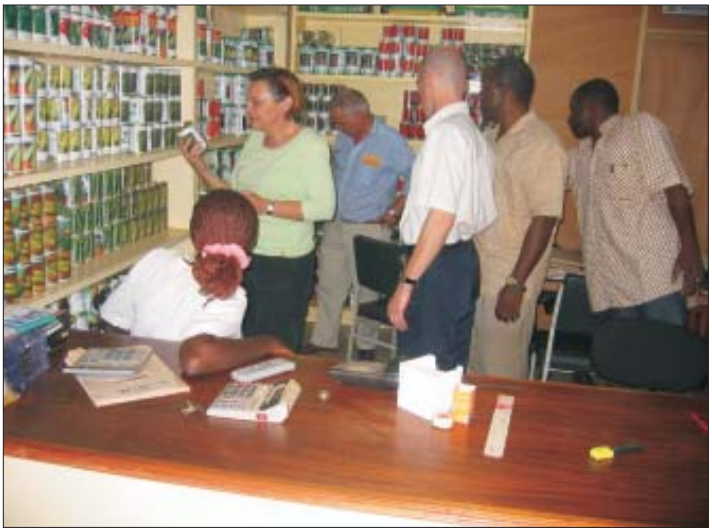
"Soils in West Africa are depleted due partly to insufficient or improper use of farm inputs," says Francis Dabiré, Communications Manager of IFDC's Marketing Inputs Regionally (MIR) project. "The inadequate supply of affordable quality inputs, especially fertilizers, at the farm gate is a major bottleneck to increased farm production."

The MIR project, which began in 2003, was financed by the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands (DGIS) and implemented by IFDC and partners to address the decreasing agricultural productivity in West Africa. Based in Burkina Faso, MIR also has offices in Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Togo, and Benin.

MIR has worked to strengthen the private sector, facilitate dialogue among stakeholders, and develop regional markets for agricultural inputs in West Africa.

The project worked to harmonize regulatory frameworks for the seed and crop protection product (CPP) sectors under the leadership of ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States) and UEMOA (West African Economic and Monetary Union).

"We helped several West African countries draft instruments for seed, fertilizer, and CPP regulations," Dabiré says. "At the regional level, two regulatory frameworks on seed production, marketing, and CPP registration are being finalized for adoption. Efforts are now underway to legitimize implementation of these two regulatory frameworks and to develop the fertilizer regulatory framework."



Monique Calon, DGIS representative (with green blouse), visiting an input shop in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, with MIR staff.

MIR also sparked the professionalization of agri-input dealers and their organizations through improved input purchasing systems, better fertilizer formulations, and judicious use of CPPs in cotton production.

MIR had implemented 49 training sessions with 1,180 private sector participants by June 2007. Activities were to raise stakeholder awareness, stimulate association building, and build professional capacity of organizations.

A tested training strategy and four "toolboxes" for agri-input dealer training are important outputs of MIR's support to the private sector. The first directory of West African agri-input dealers, described as a "who's who" in the agri-input sector, has also been made available.

At the regional level, MIR made a large initial investment to support the Federation of African Agro-Input Trade Associations (FACIA).

At the national level, MIR has dealt with input dealer associations such as:

- Ghana Agri-Input Dealers Association (GAIDA).
- Nigeria Agri-Input Dealers' Association (NAIDA).
- Agri-Inputs Dealers Association of Togo (AFITO).
- National Seed Association of Benin (ANASEB).
- Cooperative of Agric Equipment and Inputs (COCIMA) in Burkina Faso.
- Agri-Input Wholesalers and Retailers Association of Burkina Faso (AGRODIA).
- Network of Agri-Inputs Operators of Mali (ORIAM).

"To address declining cotton yields and to support privatization in West African countries, MIR developed a Cotton Emergency Plan," Dabiré says. "Activities included improving the purchase, distribution, and use of inputs; fostering good farm management and farmer organizations; reviewing cotton input formulas; and bringing stakeholders together."

MIR focused on bottlenecks on inputs for cotton production. Constraints in input and information supply to stakeholders were analyzed. Technical and negotiation capacities of key actors were strengthened. Technologies were developed that promote more judicious input use.

The project helped build regional and national platforms for exchange and dialogue among all agri-input market stakeholders. MIR disseminated information through newsletters, information notes, newspaper articles, press conferences, and mass media events. Global fertilizer prices were supplied through MIR's monthly *Fertilizer Price Outlook.*

A video, *Hope for West Africa's Agri-Input Markets,* was produced to increase communication on agri-input procurement in West Africa. This documentary film, shown at many conferences and workshops, increased MIR's popularity in the region and was used as a basis for public debate in Burkina Faso, Benin, and Togo.

"MIR catalyzed the harmonization of regulatory frameworks, changes that will be fundamental and sustainable," Dabiré says.

"DGIS's initial financing of the project ended in December 2007, but continuing the project's activities at the regional level is being explored by ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS [Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel], IFDC, and other partners," Dabiré says. "Consultations with partners have already begun."

IFDC Trains Afghan Agronomists in Statistical Design for Agricultural Experiments

IFDC conducted a training course for 14 Afghan agronomists in "Statistical Design and Analysis for Agricultural Experiments," August 21–September 1, 2007, at the Agriculture Ministry in Kabul.

Nine of the trainees were from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL), four were IFDC-Afghanistan staff, and one was with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT).

"This was the first time any of the trainees were exposed to this type of statistical material," says the instructor, Dr. Joaquin Sanabria, IFDC Scientist—Biometrician.

The instruction covered theoretical principles and applications of the most common experimental designs used in agriculture (completely randomized, complete block randomized, factorials, and split plot), analysis of variance, multiple comparisons of means, and regression analysis. Practices to minimize experimental error and increase precision were emphasized for all phases of the experiments: planning, conducting, data collection, and analysis.

"We conducted concept and practical exercises using data from 2006/07 IFDC wheat research trials in six Afghanistan provinces," Sanabria says. "Participants were trained to use SPSS [Statistical Package for Social Science] software for the data analysis from field and greenhouse experiments."

The lectures were simultaneously translated into Pashto and Dari by Abdul Jalal and Homayoun Watan, IFDC-Afghanistan staff.

Dr. Joaquin Sanabria (far right) lectures in English as Abdul Jalal (far left) translates into Dari.

IFDC-Afghanistan staff member Hassamuddin Hashimi, by the fan, and four other participants.

Training in Soil Testing for Afghan Agricultural Researchers

IFDC trained 26 Afghan agricultural researchers in "Soil Sampling, Testing, and Interpretation Related to Soil Fertility and Plant Nutrition Management," October 31–November 6, 2007, at the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) in Kabul, Afghanistan.

The training was conducted by IFDC's Food for Agricultural Revitalization and Market Systems (FARMS) project. Trainees were from MAIL; Nangarhar University; the Alternative Livelihoods Project in Eastern Afghanistan, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); and IFDC-Afghanistan.

Organizing and conducting the course were Dr. Steven Kovach, Program Leader, IFDC Soil and Nutrient Dynamics Program; and Dr. Thomas W. Crawford, Jr., former Director, IFDC Research and Market Development Division.

"The training course was structured to improve the participants' understanding of key issues in soil science," Kovach says. "The training included field exercises, classroom lectures, and both classroom and field laboratory exercises. The course also established or improved communication and linkages among participants."

Crawford says, "The hands-on training in soil and irrigation water testing expanded the participants' awareness of the chemical and physical properties of

(Continued on page 6)

Training in Soil Testing for Afghan Agricultural Researchers

(Continued from page 5)

soils and how they relate to agronomic management. The participants previously had only textbook knowledge of these areas—but had never actually used instruments for testing."

Topics covered included:

- An overview of plant nutrition:
  - The 17 essential plant nutrients.
  - Roles of essential plant nutrients and deficiency symptoms.
  - The *law of the minimum*, which states that, "The most growth-limiting nutrient will limit plant growth, regardless of the adequacy of supply of the other nutrients" (Singer and Munns in *Soils: An Introduction*).
- Introduction to soils:
  - Physical properties of soils.
  - Chemical properties of soils.
  - Soil characterization by analysis.
  - Soil fertility assessment.
- Characteristics and management of problem soils.
- Soil-plant-water relationships.
- Testing and interpretation of soil and plant tissue analyses.

Dr. Tom Crawford (tallest, in center) shows Afghan trainees how to collect soil samples for testing.

Homayoun Watan (right) with the IFDC FARMS project overseeing the collection of soil samples.

Manfred Smotzok, Chief of Party of IFDC's FARMS project, presenting a training course certificate to Mohammed Azam, an agronomist from the MAIL Puzah Ishan Research Farm in Baghlan Province, Afghanistan.

Manfred Smotzok presenting a training course certificate to M. Amin Bayat, Manager of the MAIL Karghar Vegetable Research Station, Kabul, Afghanistan, as Homayoun Watan looks on.

An Agribusiness Information Point is Officially Launched in Tchamba, Togo

Agricultural producers and traders of Togo's Central Region can now easily connect to world markets through a new Agribusiness Information Point (ABIP) in Tchamba District. The ABIP launching was on December 1, 2007, coinciding with the 10th anniversary of the Farmers' Association for Rural Communication (APCR).

APCR contributes to IFDC's mission to boost agricultural trade, ensure food security, and reduce poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. More than 300 participants attended the 2-day event.

One hundred and fifty ABIPs have been established in conjunction with Strengthening Regional Networks of Market Information Systems and Traders Organizations in West Africa (MISTOWA). Implemented by IFDC and partners, MISTOWA was funded by USAID through August 2007.

"ABIPs use TradeNet, an electronic platform that provides access to real-time market information—prices, offers to buy and sell, business contacts, and relevant news—on more than 300 agricultural products from 500 markets throughout West Africa," says Claudia Lalumia, representing Rob Groot, Director of IFDC Africa. "TradeNet helps farmers and traders communicate thus facilitating trade via mobile phone or Internet."

MISTOWA operates in 10 countries and targets products that significantly impact trade, income generation, and food security in West Africa. Products include grains, cassava, livestock, onion, tomato, cashew nut, shea butter, and fertilizer.

"We commend IFDC for making this information tool available precisely as the European Union is renewing its cooperation with our country," said Hawa Titikpina, President of the Organization for the Development of Women in Islam. "By connecting our traders to the rest of the world and allowing them to find market opportunities, the ABIP will help reduce poverty."

At the ribbon cutting of the official launching of the ABIP in Tchamba are, left to right, Hawa Titikpina, representing the Prefect of Tchamba; Claudia Lalumia, representing Rob Groot, Director of IFDC Africa; and Bienvenu Kombate, Executive Director of APCR. (Photo by Raoul Klutse)

"I particularly welcome the new ABIP in Tchamba because women will be the first beneficiaries. Women are very active traders in the region. Men usually farm while their wives sell the produce," Titikpina said.

"The ABIP will bring great change in the milieu by helping farmers sell more products at the best market prices and improve their incomes," says Bienvenu Kombate, APCR's Executive Director. "At the start, members had difficulty paying their dues because they barely had enough to eat. The situation worsened when cotton prices fell drastically. Therefore the first priority was to initiate income-generating activities and look for market opportunities."

"Cajou Espoir, a private enterprise, offered APCR an excellent opportunity to partner in processing, exporting, and collecting cashew nuts in the region," Kombate said. "The ABIP will help sell cashew surplus that Cajou Espoir can't process."

"The need to establish APCR emerged from a lack of communication that was drastically affecting our community," says Awossa Missih, APCR President. "The Togolese Cotton Company (SOTOCO) was promoting the application of a single dose of a cotton fertilizer 30 days after planting. Somehow, farmers were told or understood that they should apply the fertilizer 15 days after planting. That cropping season was a disaster. As the villagers accused one another, some leaders decided to create an association that would focus on communication to prevent such problems."

"APCR has made a tangible impact by organizing literacy education and capacity-building programs for farmers' groups over the past 10 years. We have also organized HIV/AIDs sensitization activities and created think-tanks on crucial issues. We have set up village libraries for the new literates and developed a radio project, which, unfortunately, we had to stop because of technical and financial problems," Missih says.

(Continued on page 8)

An Agribusiness Information Point is Officially Launched in Tchamba, Togo

(Continued from page 7)

APCR started in 1997 with 25 individual farmers and now it has more than 100 farmer groups.

"People need such assemblies to voice their concerns," says Pastor Moussa Koudjo Koumai. "Many farmers have stocks of maize they cannot sell because prices are too low to cover even production costs. Nor can they sell abroad because the government banned cereal exports 2 years ago after maize prices hit an all-time high."

Kokou Adzessi, Manager of the Kpalime ABIP in Togo's Plateaux Region said, "The export ban was a conservation measure taken by the Food Security Observatory in Togo (OSAT) to face maize's soaring prices. This was due to a strong demand from neighboring countries that were experiencing food shortages."

Now that the grain supply situation has improved in Togo, cross-border trade is allowed if the traders get the required authorization.

"Business is difficult nowadays," says Assoumaila Moussiliatou, executive director of a women's group involved in storage. "We have not produced for the last 7 years because finding fertilizers when you need them is almost impossible. Now, we do collective marketing and share the benefits."

"Last year, we bought 80 bags [50 kg each] of maize at FCFA 13,000 [US $29.23]. Prices dropped to FCFA 7,000 [US $15.74] within 4 months. Who will pay the difference? Our only hope is to sell our stocks in other markets in the region."

"We need information not only on markets but also on the production aspects, particularly soil fertility and fertilizers," says Daouda Adamu, member of ALAFIA, a microfinance consortium of Beninese and Togolese NGOs. "We hope that the ABIP will bring us market information and support to help us succeed."

Meg Ross Receives U.S. President's Call to Service Award

Ross demonstrating the functionality of MISTOWA's TradeNet. At left is Jatinder Cheema, Mission Director for USAID's West Africa Regional Program (WARP).

Meg Ross, an IFDC Web and graphic designer working on contract and based in Ghana, has received the U.S. President's Call to Service Award from the International Executive Service Corps (IESC) for 4,000 hours of voluntary work. Ross completed more than half of her service in Ghana with IFDC's MISTOWA[1] project. Ross was recruited as a volunteer by Geekcorps, a nonprofit IESC group and IFDC partner. Geekcorps provides assistance to developing countries in information and communication technology. IESC is a partner organization of Volunteers for Prosperity, an initiative of President George W. Bush to encourage U.S. professionals to volunteer their services in the developing world. The President's Call to Service Award is the highest honor issued by Volunteers for Prosperity partners.

Ross volunteered for the MISTOWA project from January to September 2005 and from February to December 2006. MISTOWA helps strengthen market information systems and trader organizations in West Africa.

"Meg is every manager's dream staff member," says Dr. Kofi Debrah, MISTOWA Chief of Party and IFDC Representative in Ghana. "Her work has raised our project's profile, increased our visibility, and drawn a lot of attention to the good work we have done."

"Meg arrived in Accra on January 10 and put in her online application to Geekcorps the same day that the organization posted an opening for a new volunteer Web designer for MISTOWA. That's a terrific example of being the right person in the right place at the right time!"

Ross has contributed to MISTOWA and other projects by designing and developing Web sites and graphics materials.

Ross has also worked as a volunteer with the IFDC projects From Thousands to Millions (1000s+), Marketing Inputs Regionally (MIR), and the West African Cotton Improvement Program (WACIP).

---

[1]Strengthening Regional Networks of Market Information Systems and Traders Organizations in West Africa.

Announcements

Dr. Constant Dangbégnon began serving as Postdoctoral Scientist – Social Science/Agronomy effective February 1, 2008, in the Africa Division (AFD) with initial posting to Lomé, Togo. He previously served IFDC as Socio-Economist – Extension Specialist in the AFD. Dr. Dangbégnon holds a Ph.D. in communication and innovation studies from Wageningen University, the Netherlands. His previous work experience includes Research Fellow for the Sustainable Natural Resource Management program in West Africa; Israel Development Research Program (NIRP), the Netherlands; and Research Assistant at the University of Abomey-Calavi (formerly National University of Benin). Dr. Dangbégnon's e-mail address is cdangbegnon@ifdc.org.

Mr. Udo Rüdiger became a Postdoctoral Scientist – Cluster Adviser in the Africa Division (AFD) on January 1, 2008, with posting to Lomé, Togo. Mr. Rüdiger holds an M.A. degree in international agriculture from the University of Kassel, Germany. His employment history includes service as Cluster Adviser 1000s+/Technical Assistant for AFD; "global learning" teacher at EPIZ (Pedagogical Information Center for Development) in Reutlingen, Germany; Technical Assistant, DED (Germany Development Service), in Cotonou, Benin; Technical Assistant to ISFM Project Manager, DED, Dori, Burkina Faso; and Agricultural Instructor, GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) in Otse, Botswana. Mr. Rüdiger's e-mail address is urudiger@ifdc.org.

Ms. Oulie C. Keita joined IFDC on January 1, 2008, as Postdoctoral Scientist – Bilingual Communication Specialist, West African Cotton Improvement Program (WACIP), with posting to Bamako, Mali. Ms. Keita holds an M.S. degree in program management from the Regis University graduate school in Denver, Colorado. Her previous work experience includes serving as a Consultant for ECOWAS - Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Program (ECOSAP), Bamako, Mali; Program Specialist – Social Aspects and Communication, Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), Bamako, Mali; and Exchanges and Management Specialist, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service – International Cooperation Division, Washington, D.C. Her e-mail address is okeita@ifdc.org.

Dr. Victor A. Clottey accepted the position of Postdoctoral Scientist on November 1, 2007, and will serve as Coordinator – Agricultural Intensification in Sub-Saharan Africa (AISSA) with posting to Accra, Ghana. Dr. Clottey holds a Ph.D. in agricultural sciences from Timyriazev Agricultural Academy in Moscow. His previous work experience includes serving as Cluster Adviser (Ghana) for IFDC's agribusiness project "From Thousands to Millions" under SAADA; Research Scientist, CSIR-SARI, Nyankpala; National Coordinator – AgSSIP Cotton Research Program, Ghana; and Research Extension Linkage Committee (RELC) Coordinator for Zone 2, Ghana. Dr. Clottey's e-mail address is vclottey@ifdc.org.

Mr. John Shields began serving as Interim Director, Research and Market Development Division (RMDD) on February 25, 2008. Mr. Shields replaces Dr. Thomas W. Crawford, Jr., former Director, RMDD. Mr. Shields has worked with IFDC since its formation and has more than 45 years of experience in fertilizer research, development, production, marketing, and executive management posts. He has held executive positions in both public and private corporations, including 15 years of international experience. He retired from TVA in 1993 after 30 years in various management and leadership positions in economic development, chemical fertilizer R&D, and technology transfer both nationally and internationally.

Changes in Staff Assignments

Dr. Georges Dimithè, Policy Economist Expert, Africa Division, was posted to Abuja, Nigeria, on October 15, 2007.

Completion of Assignments

Mr. Mustapha Naimi completed his assignment as Agricultural Systems Modeler – Decision Support Systems effective September 30, 2007.

AFADA Helps Transform Albania's Agriculture

The Albanian Fertilizers and Agribusiness Dealers Association (AFADA) was founded in 1993 to help restructure Albania's agricultural sector after the collapse of the communist government and to improve the business lives of Albanian farmers. The project was originally implemented by IFDC and funded by USAID.

"AFADA's success, not only in Albania but in the entire Balkan Region, was a stimulus for the creation of an umbrella association, the Association and Business Management Center [ABMC]," says Tritan Cako, Executive Director for AFADA and ABMC. Both organizations share the same building and work together in a complementary way under Cako's management.

The members of the association are committed to market development, technology transfer, and provision of quality products to their farmer clients. Accomplishments include: privatization of the fertilizer, seed, and crop protection product (CPP) markets; reduction of import tax for agriculture inputs from 15% to 5%; and sales of 82,000 tons of fertilizers in 2007, despite the high fertilizer prices worldwide. Since 1993, the association has provided to its members more than $85 million in loans with a 98% repayment rate.

The association offers fertilizers, CPPs, quality seed, animal feed, samplings, greenhouse supply materials, construction materials for agriculture, spray pumps, and flour mill equipment. Exporting products have become joint ventures for many members. AFADA's turnover in 2007 was $22 million.

A credit union was established by AFADA in 2000. Association members may put their savings in the credit union and also have quick access to loans (up to $50,000) at lower interest rates than the banks offer. To date, the AFADA credit union portfolio for loans is $450,000.

AFADA members are now affiliated with many large international companies including Pioneer, Syngenta, DuPont, Bayer, Ciba-Geigy, and Monsanto. Many AFADA dealers are distributors, and country representatives for these companies' products.

"AFADA's success has stimulated the development of other agriculture industry associations, not only in Albania but also in other Eastern European countries, and in many developing countries," Cako says.

Services provided by the two organizations are:

- Connections with a database of more then 150 AFADA entrepreneurs throughout Albania.
- Secretarial, communication facilities, interpreters, and specialists.
- A full-time procurement office.
- Banking liaison assistance.
- Business planning support.
- Market assessment assistance.
- Liaison with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food concerning licensing of products.
- Information on Albanian tax codes.
- Information on port and customs clearance.
- Assistance in preparing advertisements and radio/TV promotions.
- A monthly newsletter, "Agri-Business," which provides information, achievements, studies, and research articles for the agriculture sector and advertisements for the businesses of members.
- Supervision of demonstration plots using company products. Computer simulation models (wheat and maize) based on soil and meteorological data. Farm management studies that will guide members through the economy of the Albanian farmers.
- Participation in regional meetings for dealers.
- Participation in local and international events including fairs and shows, conferences, and seminars.

Bajram Cenaj, center, owns a seed and fertilizer retail store in Tirana. (Photo by Tritan Cako)

F&SAD Strengthens Agri-Input Use in West Africa

The Fertilizers and Sustainable Agricultural Development (F&SAD) project aims to improve access to and efficient use of agricultural inputs, particularly fertilizers, in West Africa. The project is funded by the International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA) and USAID and coordinated by IFDC's From Thousands to Millions (1000s+) project based in Mali. 1000s+ links farmers to profitable markets.

Teaching correct weight control in Burkina Faso.

"F&SAD facilitates innovation from the grassroots, originating from smallholder farmers, local entrepreneurs, bankers, and extension agents," says Dr. Arno Maatman, Chief of Party of IFDC's Strategic Alliance for Agricultural Development in Africa (SAADA). "The project is inspiring many local actors and national stakeholders to demonstrate the benefits of improved transparency, stronger coordination, and more professionalism in agribusiness."

In 2007, F&SAD trained producer organizations, input dealers, and their associations in the knowledge and efficient use of agri-inputs in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo. After the training, marketing agents from the Association of Professional Producers (AOPP), the Network of Agri-Inputs Operators of Mali (ORIAM), and CropLife Mali organized workshops for their member organizations. As a result, 51 subcontracts were established between producers and agri-input dealers, involving 2,000 tons of NPK and 1,000 tons of urea.

"This shows how F&SAD helps organizations collaborate to improve planning and market intelligence," Maatman says.

F&SAD also develops policy recommendations and strategies for ensuring adequate agri-input supply and financing mechanisms, and helps producer and dealer associations establish demonstration plots.

IFDC 2008 Training Programs

Strengthening Regional Trade in Agricultural Inputs in Africa: Issues and Options

Date – June 16-19, 2008
Location – Lusaka, Zambia

Overview of Fertilizer Production

Date – July 14-23, 2008
Location – Muscle Shoals, AL and Tampa/Orlando, FL, U.S.A.

Agro-Input Dealer Development in Africa

Date – August 11-15, 2008
Location – Arusha, Tanzania

Application of Decision Support Tools for Fertilizer Recommendations and ISFM

Date – October 6-17, 2008
Location – Accra, Ghana

Fertilizer Granulation and Micronutrients

Date – November 3-7, 2008
Location – Bangkok, Thailand

IFDC–An International Center for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development
P.O. Box 2040
Muscle Shoals, Alabama, U.S.A. 35662

PRINTED MATTER

NONPROFIT
ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
FLORENCE, AL
PERMIT #525