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Sorghum and Millet Innovation Lab Announces Selected Projects

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Project funding through the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Sorghum and Millet has been announced. The projects will contribute to improving food security, household resilience and private sector growth in Ethiopia, Senegal and Niger through the enhancement of production and value-added product development.

The 2014 funding recipients were identified through a competitive call for proposals, with 10 projects selected from the 58 proposals received, from the recommendations of the Lab’s external advisory board and dozens of ad-hoc reviewers.

Six projects were selected in West Africa, led by five leader institutions with 16 collaborating institutions, and four projects were selected in Ethiopia, led by three leader institutions and 16 collaborating institutions.

“These projects represent the best ideas and strategies, drawn from around the world, to tackle hunger and undernutrition in some of the world’s most difficult agricultural regions,” said Timothy Dalton, associate professor of agricultural economics at Kansas State University and director of the Lab. “The process will require patience, hard work and dedication, and we’ve assembled a fantastic team to attack these problems.”

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research in Sorghum and Millet is a consortium of cutting-edge research aimed at improving the adaptation and resilience of sorghum and pearl millet to the semi-arid climates of East and West Africa, with a focus on Ethiopia, Senegal and Niger.

Established in July 2013 at Kansas State University, the Lab contributes technologies and knowledge toward the adaptation, resilience and improved profitability of sorghum- and millet-based production systems and value chains through a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as part of Feed the Future, the U.S. government’s global hunger and food security initiative (www.feedthefuture.gov).

The Lab links U.S. and international universities and research organizations in a collaborative effort to build human and institutional capacity in Ethiopia, Niger and Senegal to make sorghum and pearl millet the crops of the future. Additional information regarding the Sorghum and Millet Innovation Lab can be found at http://www.k-state.edu/smil.

Funded projects:

Developing superior functionality in sorghum for food applications to promote sorghum value chain in Ethiopia

Principal investigator: Joseph Awika (Texas A&M University)
Genetic enhancement of sorghum to promote commercial seed supply and grain market development in Ethiopia

Principal investigator: Gebisa Ejeta (Purdue University)
U.S. collaborating institutions: Purdue University, Kansas State University
International collaborating institutions: Ethiopia - Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) (Melkassa Research Center, Sirinka Research Center), Holleta Biotechnology Center, Tigray Regional Program, Oromia Regional Program, Haramaya University
Award amount: $912,703
Focus country: Ethiopia

Genetic improvement of sorghum for resistance to fungal pathogens

Principal investigator: Tesfaye Mengiste (Purdue University)
U.S. collaborating institutions: Purdue University, Kansas State University
International collaborating institutions: Ethiopia - EIAR (Asosa Research Center, Pawe Research Center, Bako Research Center), Holleta Biotechnology Center
Award amount: $842,963
Focus country: Ethiopia

Improved crop genetics and processing methods for increased productivity and nutrition for smallholder sorghum producers in Ethiopia

Principal investigator: Tesfaye Tesso (Kansas State University)
U.S. collaborating institutions: Kansas State University, USDA-ARS, Purdue University, KSU - Hays Research Station
International collaborating institutions: Ethiopia - EIAR (Melkassa Research Center, Sirinka Research Center, Pawe Research Center), Tigray Agricultural Research Institute, Haramaya University
Award amount: $821,421
Focus countries: Ethiopia

Improving sorghum adaptation in West Africa with genomics-enabled breeding

Principal investigator: Geoffrey Morris (Kansas State University)
U.S. collaborating institution: Kansas State University
International collaborating institutions: France - Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD)
Senegal - Institut Sénégalais de Recherches Agricoles (ISRA),
Award amount: $1,090,093
Focus countries: Niger, Senegal

Development of biotic stress-resistant sorghum cultivars for Niger and Senegal

Principal investigator: Bonnie Pendleton (West Texas A&M University)
U.S. collaborating institutions: West Texas A&M University, Texas A&M AgriLife Research
International collaborating institutions: Senegal - ISRA, CNRA, CERAAS
Niger - INRAN
Award amount: $876,284
Focus countries: Niger, Senegal

Sorghum trait development pipeline for improved food and feed value

Principal investigator: Mitchell Tuinstra (Purdue University)
U.S. collaborating institution: Purdue University
International collaborating institutions: Senegal - Institut de Technologie Alimentaire (ITA), CERAAS, ISRA, CNRA
Niger - INRAN
Award amount: $1,044,323
Focus countries: Niger, Senegal

Biological control of the millet head miner in Niger and Senegal

Principal investigator: Malick Ba (ICRISAT - Niger)
U.S. collaborating institutions: Virginia Tech University, IPM Innovation Lab
International collaborating institutions: Senegal - ISRA, CERAAS, University Cheik Anta Diop de Dakar
Niger - University of Maradi, INRAN
Award amount: $638,788
Focus countries: Niger, Senegal

Optimization of the seed ball technology for pearl millet, and agronomic and socio-economic evaluation in the context of smallholder farmers in Senegal and Niger

Principal investigator: Ludger Herrmann (University of Hohenheim – Germany)
International collaborating institutions: Senegal - ISRA, FAPAL (farmer organization)
Niger - INRAN, Fuma Gaskiya (farmer organization)
Award amount: $172,600
Focus countries: Niger, Senegal
Expanding markets for sorghum and millet farmers in West Africa through strengthening of entrepreneur processors and nutrition-based promotion of products

Principal investigator: Bruce Hamaker (Purdue University)
U.S. collaborating institutions: Purdue University
International collaborating institutions: Senegal - ISRA, CNRA, ITA
Niger - INRAN
Award amount: $816,328
Focus countries: Niger, Senegal

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) (www.usaid.gov) is leading the U.S. Government’s efforts to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies.

Feed the Future (www.feedthefuture.gov) is the U.S. Government’s global hunger and food security initiative. With a focus on smallholder farmers, particularly women, Feed the Future supports partner countries in developing their agriculture sectors to spur economic growth and trade that increase incomes and reduce hunger, poverty and undernutrition.

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