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FEED THE FUTURE INNOVATION LAB FOR LEGUME SYSTEMS RESEARCH

March 2024



The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research fosters dynamic, profitable, and environmentally sustainable approaches that contribute to resilience, productivity, and better nutrition and economic opportunities. The lab is managed by Michigan State University.

From the Management Office

Regional Stakeholder Convenings to be Held in April to Focus on Central American, East African and West African Legume Value Chains



The Legume Systems Innovation Lab will hold the remaining three regional stakeholder convenings (RSC) to address gaps in regional legume value chains in Africa and Central America. The gaps identified will drive funding priorities which will be released as request for proposals (RFP) in the upcoming months.

On **Wednesday April 10th** participants of the legume value chain in **Central America** are invited to join the day-long virtual RSC event. The target countries are Guatemala and Honduras. The event will be held from 9:00-4:00 Guatemala and Honduras time via zoom. Registration is required and can be completed at this [link](#).

In **East Africa**, the RSC will be held on **Tuesday April 16th**. The target countries include Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania. The event will be held from 9:30-4:30 CAT via zoom. Registration is required and can be completed at this [link](#).

The final RSC will be held on **Thursday April 25th** for the **West Africa** region. The target countries include Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal. The event will be held from 9:30-4:30 GMT via zoom. Registration is required and can be completed at this [link](#).

The program expects to fund legume research projects aligned with the Legume Systems Innovation Lab goals of best agronomic practices and services, targeted varietal scaling and development, inclusive inputs and market systems, and climate change adaptation and mitigation as they relate to legume value chains.

Interested parties working in any aspect of the legume value chain in the Legume Lab focus countries are encouraged to participate in this interactive event. Your expertise is needed to drive gains in this valuable food system forward.

First Regional Stakeholder Convening Brings Legume Value Chain Stakeholders from Southern Africa Together to Identify Systems Gaps

Over 70 Southern Africa legume stakeholders recently gathered for an in-depth virtual conversation on the bean value chain in Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia. The event was organized by the Legume Systems Innovation Lab and the International Centre for Evaluation and Development (ICED).

The attendees heard from experts on gender, climate change, seed sectors, and value chains as they relate to Southern African legume systems. In the afternoon, the attendees broke into groups to dive into these topics to identify and address gaps noted within these systems.

The Legume Systems Innovation Lab will continue to engage attendees as they work to develop funding priorities for Southern Africa legume systems. Funding opportunities are expected to be announced by May.

To view a recording of the event click the link below.

[Link to recording](#)

In the Field

Project Final Reports

The Legume Systems Innovation Lab awarded competitive and commissioned project grants to support research activity during the first five years of the lab. These projects, now concluded, have submitted final technical reports which we will feature in our monthly newsletter. This month we feature a project that worked to quantify the scope and scale of cowpea products in Mali and Senegal.



Quantifying the Scope and Scale of Nutritious Cowpea Products in Local Markets of West Africa

Led by Dr. Veronique Theriault, Michigan State University

West Africa is the global locus of cowpea production. Across the region, cowpea products provide critical nutrients and cash income to smallholder farmers. Yet, little is known in quantitative terms about the scale and scope of cowpea products supplied in local markets and demanded by households. Apart from information on production and area by region, little information exists on cowpea in Mali and Senegal.

The project's research in Mali and Senegal closes the information gap by building a quantitative inventory of cowpea products supplied and demanded in local markets. The inventory recorded characteristics of products, vendors, and markets. In Mali, about 400 vendors were interviewed across 26 markets in the five southern regions. In Senegal, about 1,000 vendors were interviewed across 100 markets in all 14 regions.

The inventory was conducted in collaboration with the national market information systems in both countries. Findings indicate that grain vendors, especially in the wholesale segments of the value chains, are predominantly men, whereas cowpeas are processed mainly by women. A wider range of processed cowpea products are available in Malian markets than in Senegalese ones.

In Mali, five processed cowpea products are commonly sold in markets: Sho-froufrou (doughnuts), accra (doughnuts), fari (pancake), cooked cowpea grains, and cowpea balls, whereas, in Senegal, ndambe (stew prepared with cowpea and eaten with bread) and akara (fritter) are the two main cowpea-based products sold in markets. The project makes several suggestions for further engaging diverse private and public sector actors, including women-led small-scale enterprises, in cowpea-related business opportunities.

Findings from the cowpea market assessment informed the household food consumption survey design, which was implemented by the USSGB in Mali and ISRA/BAME in Senegal. About 540 and 650 urban and rural households were interviewed about food consumption in three southern regions of Mali and all 14 regions of Senegal. Findings indicate that grains remain the most common form of cowpea products purchased by households for home consumption.

Cowpea consumption also contributes positively to the diet diversity of households. A significantly greater share of households consumed cowpea in the last seven days compared to the previous 24 hours. Although it is less likely to be consumed daily, cowpea remains an important food staple in the Malian and Senegalese diets. The project identifies incentives for inclusive market systems to deliver nutritious products to urban and rural households across seasons.

Several capacity-building approaches were used. Through continuous mentoring and active participation in the project activities alongside co-PIs and market technicians, students in Mali and Senegal gained their first field experience. Researchers from local institutions refined their research skills by learning about and implementing new methods and participating in intensive short training.

In addition to a series of informal meetings throughout the project, the final workshops allowed local partners to showcase their results and engage in policy dialogue with private and public stakeholders, leading to key recommendations to develop further the cowpea value chains, notably through

a better integration of cowpea-based products into the menu of school canteens in Senegal.

The project team contributed to generating and disseminating new knowledge by producing several outputs, including four unique datasets, two peer-reviewed journal articles, eight research papers, 19 presentations, seven Master theses, and over a dozen reports.

[Read the full report](#)

In the News

Recent Project Publications

Chinji, M., Hamabwe, S., Kuwabo, K., Mugovu, I., Thole, R., Mazala, M., Osorno, J.M., McClean, P., Jochua, C., Urrea, C., Mukuma, C., Chisale, V. and Kamfwa, K. (2024), **Introgression and Stability of Common Bean Weevil (*Acanthoscelides obtectus* [Say]) Resistance in Diverse Market Classes From the Andean Gene Pool of Common Bean**, *Legume Science* 6: e223. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/leg3.223>

Featured Legume of the Month

Green Snap Beans



Green snap beans are young pods of green beans. They are also commonly known as french or string beans. They can be eaten raw or prepared using many different cooking methods.

A good source of vitamins A, C and K, snap beans also contain folic acid and fiber. According the [USDA](#), one cup of snap beans is just 31 calories. Try adding these nutritious beans to your diet.

Cooking with Green Snap Beans...

SESAME GINGER GREEN BEANS

This recipe from North Dakota State University Extension calls for blanching snap beans until tender then sautéing them in a glaze of olive oil ginger, honey, soy sauce, sesame oil, and sriracha sauce.

After the glaze begins to thicken, gently stir in green peas and season with salt and pepper. Top with sesame seeds.

A great side dish for any weekday meal!



Get the Recipe

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Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research | Michigan State University,
Justin S. Morrill Hall, 446 West Circle Dr. Room 321, East Lansing, MI 48824

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