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FEED THE FUTURE INNOVATION LAB FOR LEGUME SYSTEMS RESEARCH

May 2022



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

Local Farmers and Food Processors to Benefit from Bean Value Chain Projects in Malawi and Zambia

It is estimated that approximately 100,000 smallholder farmers in Malawi and Zambia will benefit from two projects recently launched seeking to improve the common bean value chain through increased production, processing and value addition and access to readily available markets.

The Alliance of Biodiversity International and the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (The Alliance) will implement the projects, namely, **"Transforming Seed Systems to Respond to Bean Variety Demand Through Multistakeholder Platforms in Malawi"** and **"Improving Income and Nutrition Security Through Development and Commercialization of Consumer Preferred Processed Legume-based Products in Malawi and**

Zambia" in partnership with various stakeholders. The projects are managed by the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research.



Some of the bean-based products displayed at the launch ceremony.

The project's joint launch ceremony, held April 20-21 in Lilongwe attracted researchers, scientists, scholars, and public and private sector officials working in the common bean sector in Malawi and Zambia. Of the 55 participants, 18 were female.

Speaking at the launch, Jean Claude Rubyogo, Bean Programme Leader & Director, Pan Africa Bean Research Alliance and Principal Investigator of the Multistakeholder Seed Platform project said, "These two projects have come to solve the problems affecting the common bean value chain in southern Africa especially from production to consumption — in order to increase job and business opportunities."

He added that an investment in the improvement of the common bean value chain is important because beans are at the center of nutrition and food security for millions of people globally.

Working in partnership to promote nutritious diets

Globally, beans are the most affordable source of protein for millions of people. Bean varieties are micronutrient rich in iron and zinc, packed with fiber and vitamins, including vitamins D6 and 12. They mature early and are beneficial to the soil through nitrogen fixing.

Dr. Patrick Chikongwa, Director of Animal Health, and Livestock Development in the Malawi Ministry of Agriculture shared, "these two projects have the potential of improving food security and increasing income for women and youths in this country. We expect a lot of impacts, especially empowerment of rural farming communities through targeted income-generating activities in the value chain."

"The government of Malawi is excited that these projects will complement the existing national agricultural priorities and will help establish innovative and

sustainable bean seed systems based on farmer seed demands while working with both public and private sectors.” He added.

To learn more about these projects, visit the Legume Systems Innovation Lab [website](#).

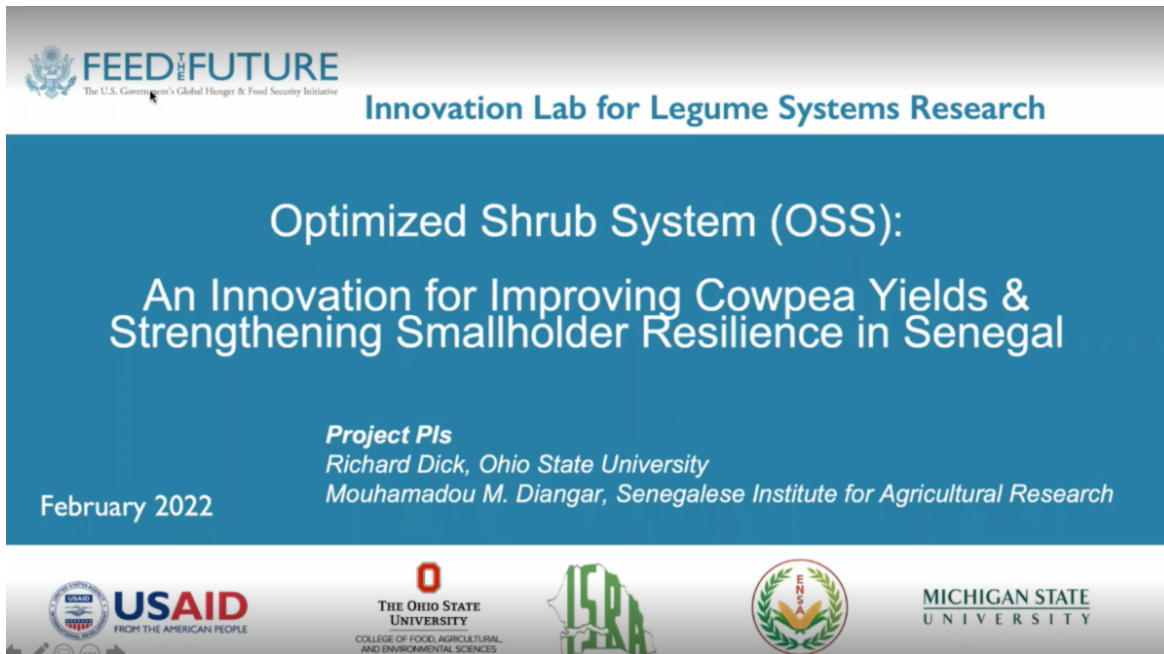
GLOBAL VIRTUAL CONVENING 2022

Over 100 global legume researchers and stakeholders attended the two-day public forum virtual event in March which featured Legume Systems Innovation Lab project research updates.

Each month we will highlight a recorded presentation from one of these research projects.

This month we feature the project, **"Optimized Shrub System: Improving Cowpea Yield and Strengthening Smallholder Resilience."** The project is led by Dr. Richard Dick, Ohio State University and works in Senegal.

Click on the image below to view the presentation on YouTube.



In the Field

West and Southern Africa Researchers Complete Two-week Grant Writing Workshop

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research hosted 40 legume researchers working in eight African countries in virtual workshops on science communication focused on building their grant writing skills.

The two cohorts of 20 researchers each, attended a two-week workshop led by science communications expert Mark Bayer, of [Bayer Strategic Consulting](#) based in the U.S.



Researchers working across the legume value chain from Benin, Ghana, Mozambique, Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia, Burkina Faso, and Senegal attended the virtual workshop.

The researchers were taught effective strategies for communicating their research to donors and stakeholders in creative, compelling, and engaging ways designed to command the attention of their audience. Using the skills learned, each participant worked to develop and hone a 90 second research pitch evaluated by Bayer who provided individual feedback and coaching throughout the process.

The workshop also includes a seed grant competition which provides the participants an opportunity to apply their new skills in a five-page written proposal. The Legume Systems Innovation Lab will award a total of six grants for legume research in Southern Africa (3) and West Africa (3). Winners of the starter grant competition will be announced in June.

Featured Legume of the Month

Great Northern Beans

Great Northern is a white, medium to firm texture bean variety with a



kidney shape that hold up well during cooking. They are a mild tasting bean.

The bean is high in iron, potassium, and phosphorus. A one cup serving is 209 calories and contains 15 grams of protein and 12 grams of fiber.

Cooking with Great Northern Beans...

Three Sisters Soup

Looking for a hearty and filling soup? Try this recipe from Michigan State University Extension.

Great Northern beans along with butternut squash and corn provide a unique blend of flavors and textures.



Substitute vegetable broth for the chicken broth and you have a great vegetarian option for the entire family. Complete the meal by serving with warm crusty bread and a green salad.

[Get the recipe here](#)

For More Information on the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research

[Visit our website](#)



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