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FEED THE FUTURE INNOVATION LAB FOR LEGUME SYSTEMS RESEARCH

December 2020



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

Holiday greetings and wishes for a healthy new year Reflecting on 2020



As I look back in reflection at 2020, I could have never predicted the year we have all experienced. To say 2020 was unprecedented is an understatement.

In January 2020, the Legume Lab was full of steam, wrapping up the review of innovative legume projects and awarding competitive grants which would become the backbone of our research and capacity development efforts. We were empowered as legume researchers from all corners of the globe convened in Saly, Senegal in late February to engage in a conversation on how to contribute to the global strategy for identifying the best technologies for legume system scaling and impact.

By mid-March we all felt the cloud of COVID-19 hover over us and we entered a new era. Travel halted. Work shifted from fields, research centers, and offices to spare rooms and dining tables in our homes. Masks became our new

accessory. What we had all hoped would be a short inconvenience, nine months later has become our new normal.

The Legume Systems Innovation Lab's first concern was and always will be the health and safety of all. Given this safety-first mandate, I have been inspired by the resilience and resolve of our global legume community. Team members found new ways to safely and efficiently continue to move work and research forward while taking care of one another.

As the pandemic continues to tug at every part of daily life, my wish for you this holiday season is health. I am hopeful that through science and innovation, the new year will bring an effective and safe solution to COVID-19 and mitigation of its effects globally. Thank you for your dedication, your resolve and your impact.

Stay safe,
Barry Pittendrigh
Legume Systems Innovation Lab Director

From the Field

Staying GREAT online - Innovations to reach bean breeders on the the run



Farming and food production continue as in-person activities, as they must, even in times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In tandem, our cross-country collaborations on bean breeding must also continue to find safe ways to work while ensuring local pandemic health and safety guidelines and recommendations are followed.

Rising to that challenge, the [Gender Responsive Researchers Equipped for Agricultural Transformation \(GREAT\)](#) team, working closely with colleagues at the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research, created a pilot initiative to adapt GREAT's normally multi-week, in-person training format to a shorter set of highly customized learning and working sessions, all online.

The resulting workshop on "Gender Responsive Plant Breeding" was literally created "on the run" for the Legume Lab Bruchid Resistant Bean Team. Read more about this training and its outcome by clicking the [Read more](#) button below.

[Read more](#)

In the News

Stories, blogs, papers & publications by legume lab researchers and their colleagues

Cowpeas lost and found - women traders play a critical role

By **Andrea Allen and Veronique Theriault**

Listed among the *Lost Crops of Africa*, cowpea had remained globally obscure until recently. Grown in large quantities across West Africa, cowpea can be consumed at different stages in its development and can be processed into value-added products. Cowpea has the potential to become the next superfood for alleviating hunger in Africa. The pace of research on cowpea production has quickened since early 2000s, but information beyond that continue to lag.

In response to that lag, Dr. Veronique Theriault, from Michigan State University along with colleagues have launched their innovative investigation of “Quantifying the Scale and Scope of Nutritious Cowpea Products in Local Markets” in Senegal and Mali.

This research will fill the key gap from farms to consumers, by generating empirical evidence on the scale and scope of cowpea products traded in key hubs and satellite markets; changes in consumer preferences; opportunities for cowpea product expansion and implications for private sector engagement.

Click on the [Read more](#) button to read the full article and to understand where gender analysis and women traders enter the picture.



Cowpea beignets are a popular treat in markets throughout West Africa.

[Read More](#)

Featured Legume of the Month

RED LENTILS



Lentils are a nutritional powerhouse. They can be found in a variety of colors and names. Each type of lentil has different characteristics which is helpful to know when deciding which type of lentil to use in a recipe.

Red lentils are often used in recipes which require a lentil that breaks down easily. This occurs when the outer skin of the red lentil breaks and it splits. These lentils are good for baking as their consistency is mushy and thick.

Cooking with Red Lentils...

Cherry almond red lentil granola bars

Did you know that a half a cup of cooked red lentils contain 12 grams of protein and only 150 calories? And, they are an important ingredient in this recipe for Cherry Almond Red Lentil Granola Bars from [Pulses.org](https://pulses.org).

This gluten and vegan free recipe contains almonds and almond butter, dried cherries, flax, coconut, applesauce, maple syrup, oats, vanilla and (of course) red lentils. Store the bars in an airtight container or if they last longer than a few days (which we doubt they will), pop them into the freezer following the directions provided.

Whip up a batch today by following the recipe at the link below.



[Get recipe here](#)

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Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research**

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