

# FEED THE FUTURE ADVANCE II PROJECT NEWSLETTER



Hon. Gyiele Nurah (left) Minister of State in charge of Agriculture, and Hon. Salifu Saeed (Northern Regional Minister), together with Mrs. Pamela Bowen, Country Lead, MADE Programme cutting the sod during the preharvest event in Tamale. (Photo Credit: Agrihouse Foundation)

## 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Pre-Harvest Agribusiness Conference and Exhibition Event in Tamale.

From October 25 to 27, 2019, staff of USAID-funded Feed the Future Ghana Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement Project (FTF ADVANCE II) and executives of 10 outgrower business (OB) networks supported by the project participated in the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Pre-Harvest Agribusiness Conference and Exhibition Event at the Aliu Mahama Sports Stadium in Tamale of the Northern Region.

Under the theme “Market Access: What is the structured and sustainable pathway?”, the event brought farmers, aggregators, equipment dealers, financial institutions, input dealers, insurance companies, processors, buyers, researchers, government officials, students, telecommunications companies, trade associations, transporters, development partners, civil society actors and the general public.

The three-day event attracted about 2,100 participants to interact, share expertise and strike business partnerships to promote growth in Ghana’s agricultural sector. The 10 OB network executives from Karaga, Yendi, Gushegu, Nalerigu, Jirapa, Wa, Kusaug, Bawku, Sissala, and Mamprugu Moagduri were able to establish business relations with value chain actors including buyers, and input dealers, and shared their OB network profiles.

In his keynote address at the opening ceremony, Hon. Gyiele Nurah, Minister of State in charge of Agriculture, lauded the Pre-Harvest event. He said, “*This event has become an important annual national Agric event that all of us usually look forward to because of the increasing prospects of good yields and good business that it continues to offer year in year out. I am confident that this year’s experience will not be different from our expectations and needs. An event like pre-Harvest is contributing to the realization of our collective dream of increasing agricultural productivity and achieving food security.*”

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## VSLAs Engage in Cooperative Farming to Build their Resilience

Two village savings and loans associations (VSLAs) in Kulunkpegu, a farming community in the Yendi Municipal District of the Northern Region, have engaged in cooperative farming as part of their efforts to sustain the running of their savings to support their members farms with seeds during planting season.

The groups known as *Gub Kati Mali*, which means “Together We Can” and *Somsim Vela* meaning “Supporting is Good” are made up of 25 members each (20 females, 5 males) who farm between two to eight acres of maize and soyabean.

According to members of both groups formed in 2015, the benefits that they received from the USAID-funded FTF ADVANCE II propelled them to save money for their share outs and use their social fund to start an acre of maize cooperative farm together in 2018.

The proceeds from the groups cooperative farms that will be harvested this year will be partly shared among members of both groups and partly used to re-invest for the next planting season. Since the inception of OB networks, the project has developed training needs assessment tools to enable these networks to develop short-, medium-, and long-term plans to promote their businesses, which will increase their likelihoods to access loans from financial institutions.

Majeed Sana, leader of the *Gub Kati Mali* group, recounted the instances that led to their encounter with FTF ADVANCE II. She disclosed how they were processing sheabutter on a small scale and wanted to progress in their farming activities until they decided to engage the district agriculture extension officer for training, who in turn led them to FTF ADVANCE II. “*Before we were introduced to ADVANCE, we did not know how to row plant, space out our crops, apply fertilizer,*

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Cross-section of participants during the opening ceremony of the pre-harvest event in Tamale (Photo Credit: Agrihouse Foundation)

## 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Pre-harvest Agribusiness Conference and Exhibition Event in Tamale ...cont'd from page 1

*I can assuredly tell you all that within the nine years the Pre-Harvest event was added to our national strategic efforts to develop agribusiness, the event has made its own significant contributions to what we have achieved so far, especially the perceptible turn-around we are experiencing in recent time in the northern regions.*

*However, what events like the Pre-Harvest does with its unique congregation of farmers, buyers, processors, transporters, input dealers, equipment dealers, financial institutions, telecommunication companies, policy makers and financial facilitators is to ensure that multiple solutions to challenges are inevitably made available in a way of providing information, business opportunity through networking, interaction, access to the latest machines and tools at a competitive price and a host of opportunities”.*

The project facilitated linkages between OB networks and winners of the Kosmos Innovation Center (KIC) AgriTech challenge during the event and further presented OB network executives the opportunity to engage young entrepreneurs from KIC to discuss how to access innovative services for the management of their networks to the benefit of their members.

Benjamin Awuni, chairman of Tininyangi OB network in Nalerigu in the Northern Region, recounted that his participation in the event enabled him to learn about new innovations in agriculture and informed him on the appropriate actors to contact for deals. He said, *“The pre-harvest allowed me to engage some companies on establishing possible future business relations with members of our network. What I have experienced here today, I am going to share with all network members so that we can start forging for partnerships and contracts with some of these companies. I am glad I was able to share our OB network profile with them and exchanged contacts with them as well.”*

## FTF ADVANCE II showcases open data kit (ODK) software at the 2019 African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF).

From September 3 to 6, FTF ADVANCE II staff participated in the 2019 African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) at the Accra International Conference Center to showcase the project’s smart digital innovations developed to facilitate data collection on the services that outgrower businesses (OB) render to their smallholder farmers.

The AGRF, which is considered the world’s most important and impactful forum for African agriculture, pulled together stakeholders in the agricultural landscape to take practical actions and share lessons that will move African agriculture forward under

the theme **“Grow Digital – Leveraging digital transformation to drive sustainable food systems in Africa.”**

This year’s forum saw over 2,400 delegates from 89 countries, including the President of Ghana, H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo and other heads of state and prime ministers, ministers of agriculture, central bank governors, development partners, representatives of farmer organisations, youth entrepreneurs and other critical stakeholders, to discuss and commit to policies, programmes and investments in order to achieve an inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation.



CJ Hall (left) with Pearl Coleman Ackah (middle) and Gevorg Adamyan (right) during AGRF in Accra, Ghana. (Photo Credit: Eric Sunu)

At the forum, President Akufo-Addo called on african heads of state to prioritize the need to develop systemic policies that seeks to deal with the challenges of agriculture in their respective countries. President Akufo-Addo also noted that technology was defining future food security, and for that matter, it was important for Africa to leverage the digital revolution to make agricultural impact.

He said, *“Digitalization is a revolution that is here with us and has surely come to stay. Africa has no excuse but to make the most of it. Our responsibility, whether as leaders of our families, our institutions, our companies, or our countries, is to tap into this new resource and opportunity at our disposal, to make this our time for agricultural transformation across the continent.”*

ACDI/VOCA’s CEO and President CJ Hall, Executive Vice President Gevorg Adamyan, Chief Financial Officer Kevin Haggerty, USAID/Ghana Private Sector Team Leader Pearl Coleman Ackah, ACDI/VOCA Ghana Country Representative Emmanuel Dormon and

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## Staff Corner

The USAID-funded Feed the Future Ghana Agricultural Development Value Chain and Enhancement Project (FTF ADVANCE II) has a production and capacity building team whose role is to lead the strategic execution of the project's agricultural production activities on maize and soybean using the best available technologies at the local and regional level. This team is composed of a team lead, the production and capacity building specialist, and five production and capacity building officers (PCBOs).

The responsibility of the production and capacity building team is to support the zonal outgrower business networks in the Feed the Future zone of influence by optimizing their members' productivity and linking them with other value chain actors to expand opportunities and address production constraints. This team also works with other team members to devise tailored strategies to build production capacity in northern Ghana.



**Charles Yaro**

Production & Capacity  
Building Specialist

**Charles Yaro** is the production and capacity building specialist based in Tamale in the Northern Region who manages five PCBOs in the implementation of project activities in the field.

Charles holds a Master of Science degree in horticulture and Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture technology from the University for Development Studies in Tamale. His hobby is watching animal documentaries.



**Samuel Asinvim**

Production & Capacity  
Building Officer

**Samuel A Asinvim** is a PCBO based in Wa within the Upper West Region who works with Wa and Jirapa OB network with a total membership of 40 outgrower businesses who support 14,682 smallholder farmers in the in Wa East, Daffiama Bussie Isa, Nadowli/Kaleo districts of the Upper West Region.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture technology from the University for Development Studies, Tamale. Samuel enjoys reading and watching wrestling.



**Joseph Kansaki**

Production & Capacity  
Building Officer

**Joseph K. Kansaki** is a PCBO based in Tamale in the Northern Region. He works with Yendi and Gushegu OB networks with a total membership of 27 OBs who support 13,622 smallholder farmers located in the Yendi, Gushegu and Mion in the Northern Region.

Joseph holds a Master of Philosophy degree in post-harvest technology from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, and a Bachelor of Science degree in agricultural technology (agronomy option) from the University for Development Studies, Tamale. He loves to read, watch football and spend time with his family.



**Wuni Farouk**

Production & Capacity Building  
Officer

**Wuni Farouk Mubarick** is a PCBO based in Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region and works with Kusaug and Nawun Sungti OB network with a total membership of 30 OBs who support 9,696 smallholder farmers, including safe spraying service providers located in Bawku West, Bawku Municipal, Garu, Tempene and the Mamprugu Moaduri District in the Upper East and North East Regions. He holds a Higher National Diploma in general agriculture (postharvest technology) from Sunyani Technical University and a plant doctor certificate from the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International, Ghana. Farouk enjoys listening to news, reading and watching football.

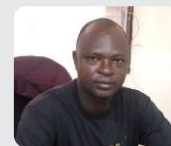


**Webadua Kenneth**

Production & Capacity  
Building Officer

**Webadua Kenneth Akwei** is a PCBO based in Tumu in the Upper West Region and works with the Sissala Area OB network with a total membership of 36 OBs who support 11,267 smallholder farmers in the Sissala District of Upper West Region.

He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in agriculture technology from the University for Development Studies in Tamale. Kenneth enjoys riding his motorcycle and watching football.



**Simon Gaab**

Production & Capacity  
Building Officer

**Simon Gaab** is a PCBO based in Tamale and works with Beimoni, Tininyangi and Northern OB networks with a total number of 64 OBs who supports 15,850 smallholder farmers in Karaga, North East and Tamale metropolitan in the Northern Region. Simon holds a Bachelor of Science degree in agricultural engineering, Higher National Diploma in agricultural engineering from the Tamale Polytechnic, and a Certificate in education from the University of Winneba Kumasi campus. He enjoys listening to gospel and reggae music and reading.

## VSLAs Engage in Cooperative Farming to Build their Resilience

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Some members of the two VSLAs in Kulunkpegu in the Gushegu District, Northern Region (Photo Credit: Marian Roberts)

control pest and weed, level our land before planting and even appropriate time for harvesting. But the project built our capacity, taught us all the best farming practices and gave us susu boxes to enable us to save and share out when farming season is about to start. Also, during share out, ADVANCE came in with input dealers to give us the opportunity to buy improved seeds, fertilizers and chemicals,” Sana noted.

Salamatu Iddrisu, also a member of the Somsim Vela group, added “We never thought as peasant farmers that we are capable of saving money until ADVANCE showed us the way. We are now enjoying the benefits because one can request for loan to support the family in times of educational or health emergencies. Also, for farming season, we are able to request for loans to invest into our farms and access inputs and ploughing services.”

They disclosed that, in 2018, they were able to raise an amount of GHS 4,000 each during a cycle to invest in agro-input purchased during the production season.

The groups mentioned access to tractor services and to markets as being their greatest challenge. In order to address their inability to access tractor services appropriately, the group expressed their desire to register and set up as MTN Mobile Money merchant so that they could obtain transactions commissions that will add to their savings to acquire a used tractor for themselves.

Abdullahi Wasiu, secretary of the Gub Kati Mali group said, “If we are able to sign up for a MoMo account and run one as a business, we will be able to generate additional savings to be able to acquire a tractor for our group someday.”

## FTF ADVANCE II showcases open data kit (ODK) software at the 2019 African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) ...cont'd from page 2

FTF ADVANCE II Chief of Party Christel Tshikudi also participated. The project’s Monitoring and Evaluation Manager Eric Sunu manned the USAID Feed The Future booth, where he showcased and explained the impact and functionalities of the project’s digital data management innovations, for example, smartcards, open data kit and quick response cards, developed to facilitate data collection and efficient management of outgrower businesses.

Participants who visited the Feed The Future booth showed great interest in the smart digital innovations that FTF ADVANCE II operated. Four organizations (Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania, TRIAS West Africa, PETKUS Technologie GmbH and MFA AgriTech) further expressed the desire to follow up with the project for details and adoption. “It’s amazing how you could use these simple technologies to solve such a big problem in farmer data collection. I will definitely consider your smart innovation” said Emmanuel Yakah of PETKUS Technologie GmbH.



CJ Hall (second left) together with Emmanuel Dormon (first left), Christel Tshikudi and Gevorg Adamyan (extreme right) at Feed the Future booth during the AGRF in Accra (Photo Credit: Eric Sunu)

The AGRF presented a remarkable platform for new partnerships, knowledge sharing, and participants’ commitment to policies and programs that will lead to future investments.



Emmanuel Dormon (right) together with Grace Sebugah, USAID/Ghana Programme Management Specialist (middle), and Kris Ozar, Country Representative, Catholic Relief Service (left) (Photo Credit: Eric Sunu)

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