



COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Issue 1, March 2015

Agricultural Production Survey: *Tracking Feed the Future Results in the Northern Zone of Influence*

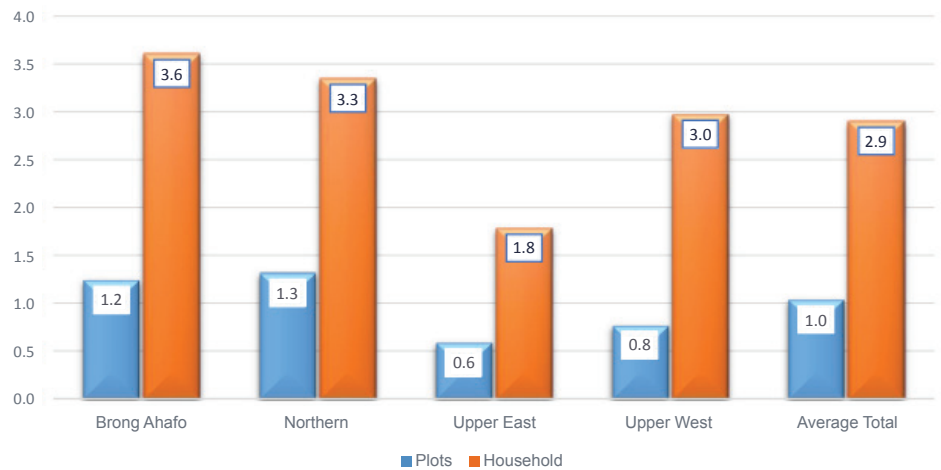
During 2013/2014 METSS carried out an Agricultural Production Survey (APS) with 527 household respondents from 24 districts above Ghana's 8th parallel. The results from this survey add to a baseline for tracking the performance of Feed the Future production indicators in the northern zone of influence (ZOI). That said, the APS also has considerable utility for the entire Ghanaian agriculture sector regarding production measurement and tracking.

The APS used a *farm diary* methodology to collect bi-weekly data for a period of 10 months (June 2013 to March 2014). The farm diary method is proven to have a high degree of accuracy as farm inputs and outputs are frequently reported, minimizing challenges associated with farmer recall. Nearly sixty extension agents of the Government of Ghana, each assigned 11 households, acted as enumerators and supervisors for this methods successful implementation.

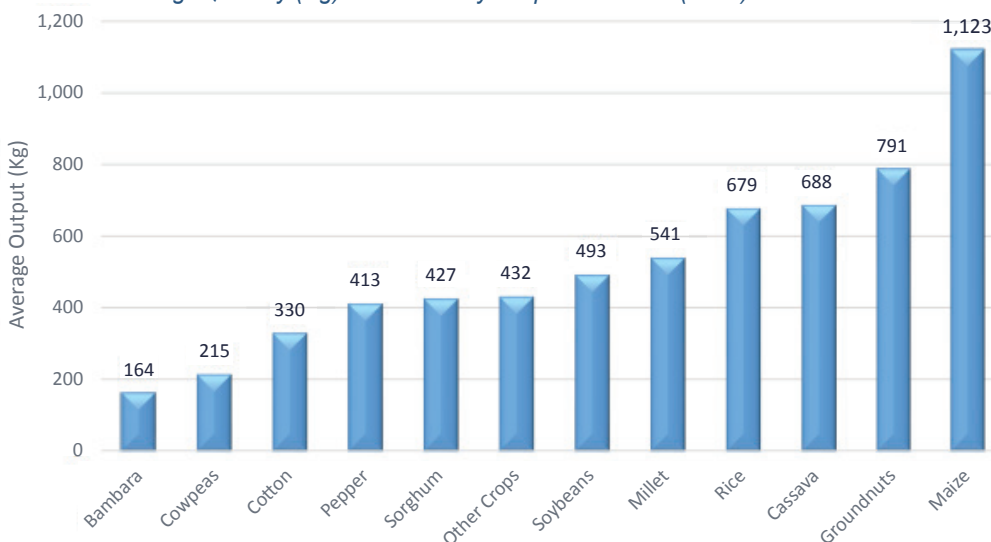
The analysis of production activities was based on 1,467 farm plots that were identified by the 527 household respondents, as farmers often allocate a single crop to a specific plot. The survey results indicated that most farmers had an average of three farm plots, with plot size ranging from 0.04 to 16.2 hectares (ha) with an average plot size of 1 ha. Note that only 30 of the 1,467 plots were larger than 10 ha. The orange bars on the above graph indicate the average household land holding, this was nearly triple the size of farmed plots on average across all household respondents.

The APS focused on three key value chain crops (maize, rice, and soybeans), however, respondents also provided information on other crops of importance. The graph below shows that, across all 1467 plots, maize yielded the most, followed by groundnuts, cassava and rice. APS article continues on page three...

Avg. Plot Size and Household Land Holding by Region, 2013



Avg. Quantity (Kg) Harvested by Crop for all Plots (2013)



In This Issue

- RING + SPING+ METSS = DATA
- The Development Partners Matrix Tool
- Working to Keep Lights On: An M&E Working Group for the Energy Sector
- Agricultural Production Survey Continued...
- Better Data: Bridging the Digital Divide!
- METSS in 2015!
- GIS Support Coming Online

RING + SPRING + METSS = DATA

The USAID Strengthening Partnerships, Results and Innovation in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) and Resiliency in Northern Ghana (RING) projects recognized a need to collect baseline data to track their impact. As a result, USAID agreed to have METSS manage this significant undertaking and a questionnaire was co-designed between the three partners then digitalized with the help of Ghana's Voto Mobile Limited.



Photo: Enumerator training in Tamale, Feb. 2015

The 14 indicators that the baseline seeks to take stock of are primarily focused on the nutritional status of the households, particularly young children under 5 years of age, as well as internal food allocation behavior, water, sanitation, hygiene and household knowledge of aflatoxin.

A sample size of 3,800 households located in 25 districts of the Northern and Upper East Regions were selected and METSS organized a 5-day training for 40 supervisors and enumerators. They will spend March visiting pre-determined enumeration areas to collect data. Notably, the Ghana Health Service provided weighing scales and infantometers for measuring a child's height and weight.

After the data is collected it will be verified with the support of Kansas State University, and a final report ready for circulation by the end of April 2015.

Development Partners Matrix Tool

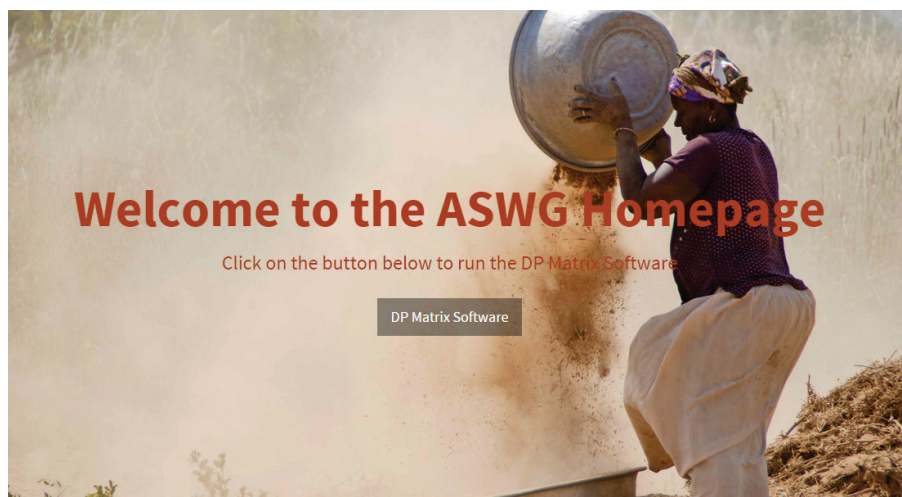


Photo: Mockup of an ASWG Website to Host the DP Matrix Tool

Stakeholders of Ghana's Agricultural Sector Working Group (ASWG), namely MoFA with support from the USAID METSS project, have been compiling data on agricultural investments across the sector from as far back as 2002.

This important initiative has resulted in a co-created Development Partners Matrix Tool that will host detailed data from donor projects across the sector including: the location of projects; focus area; crop type; value and duration.

The digital tool is form based and will allow users to select criteria based on their individual needs and build distinctive reports accordingly. The DP Matrix tool will be available for public use shortly.

Working to Keep Lights On: An M&E Working Group for the Energy Sector

One of the most critical infrastructure services needed for any economy to thrive is the supply of secure and reliable energy. In Ghana, recent years have seen both a decline in supply and rise in demand. Ghana has an estimated installed capacity of 2,845 MWs, however, 'dumsor dumsor' indicates that demand is not currently being met.

Given both the need for energy and sector wide challenges, the United States Government and its Partnership for Growth (PFG) initiative is supporting Ghana's economic growth with a target of 5,000 MWs installed capacity and over 90% access country wide by 2016. USAID's Power Africa initiative and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) have similar ends in mind.

Considering the number of initiatives and amount of investment set to flow into Ghana's energy sector, it is necessary to ensure that performance indicators can be easily tracked and harmonized as much as possible. Given this, an Energy M&E working group, coordinated by METSS, was inaugurated in November of last year.

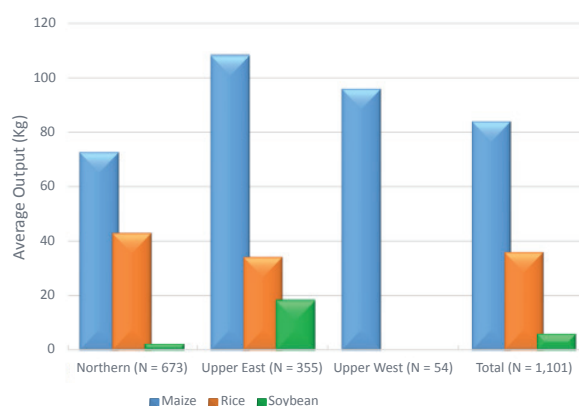
The mission of this group – spurred on by USAID, PFG, MCC and Energy Sector leaders from the Government of Ghana - is to serve as the paramount shared instrument to support the continued development of Ghana's Energy Sector through common indicator development, data collection and collective analysis. For instance, the group seeks to collectively track generation capacity, electricity access rates, per capita consumption, off grid generation, transmission and distribution losses, clean energy, and the development of energy sector policies.

Since the inaugural meeting multiple sessions have been held to drive the groups mission forward and considerable effort made to track system wide progress. The group is chaired by Jabesh Amissah Arthur, CEO of Bui Power Authority and the Chairman of the PFG-Joint Country Action Plan (JCAP) Secretariat.

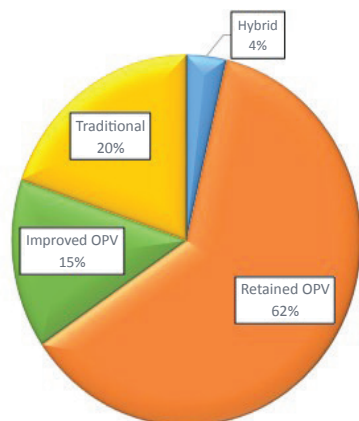
Agricultural Production Survey Continued...

Regarding the adoption of fertilizer technologies, the APS indicated the average quantities of fertilizer application by crop and region. The graph to the right shows that during the 2013 growing season, while the Government of Ghana's fertilizer subsidy program was ongoing, there was a heavy application of fertilizer on maize crops in all the regions of Northern Ghana. Soybean's on the other hand, which are not perceived as a crop that requires fertilizer, showed little application.

Avg. Quantity (Kg) of Fertilizer Applied by Crop, 2013



Distribution of Seed Type Used for all Plots, 2013



Notably, fertilizer and chemical costs accounted for 45% of overall production costs, followed by land preparation at 43% and seed/variable costs at 12%.

Four categories of seed were identified by the respondents: hybrid, traditional, retained open-pollinated vegetables (OPV) and Improved OPV. The pie chart to the left indicates that the use of retained OPV far outweighed other seed types at 62%, whereas hybrid seeds only accounted for 4%.

The full APS report will be available in March 2015 and a knowledge sharing strategy is currently being developed to ensure the valuable data and analysis translates to field level impact.

Better Data: Bridging the Digital Divide!

During 2014 the USAID Agriculture Technology Transfer (ATT) project began collecting data to measure its progress towards Feed the Future indicators. As field data started streaming in it quickly became evident that traditional excel spreadsheets were not sophisticated enough to capture, store and analyze the data in a meaningful way. In addition, manual data entry using the excel format was time consuming and provided numerous opportunities for human error. With this challenge in mind, ATT reached out to METSS' computer programming team for assistance to develop a comprehensive database that minimizes the chance of human error dramatically and simplifies reporting.

After several meetings between the two project teams, a database was developed, tested, and installed in ATT's Tamale office. A training of ATT staff took place, and the database has now completely replaced the excel-based system and has enabled the USAID ATT project to track and monitor the project's progress with greater accuracy and efficiency.

The database also simplified data harmonization processes and has allowed for the comparison of results across USAID Feed the Future projects.



Photo: Welcome screen for the new USAID ATT Database

With standardized reporting formats and pre-populated data from districts and communities, the database will become a onestop shop for the monitoring and evaluation of project activities. The next step is to improve data collection in the field by creating digital interfaces for direct entry into the new database allowing for real-time access to project performance measurements.

This successful ATT – METSS collaboration has set the stage for other Feed the Future projects. Likewise, as more projects adopt this approach it will become possible to easily compare, contrast and aggregate results across the USAID portfolio of projects in Ghana.

METSS in 2015!

In January of this year I joined the USAID/Ghana's METSS project as the Director of Operations, and am I delighted to be back in Ghana having previously been based in Northern Ghana for almost four years on the USAID ADVANCE project. As for the USAID METSS project, we have undergone one or two changes in our new phase, which began in May 2014. That said, METSS, with its talented and dedicated staff, will be ramping up the support services provided to USAID and its partners in 2015.

METSS will continue to deliver monitoring and evaluation support to implementing partners of which there are now over 20 that fall under the USAID/Ghana office of Economic Growth. Our research and special studies team will provide new research and analysis to promote evidence-based decision making. Our capacity building aspects support the Agricultural Sector Working Group of MoFA.

Our last and newest team supports knowledge management, learning and communications for improved cross-project collaboration, with the intention to share information, disseminate findings and learnings, and apply them to future programming.

As 2015 rolls on METSS has an ambitious work plan geared towards delivering results in Ghana. For example the 2015 midline Population Based Survey (used to track Feed the Future results); the collaborative baseline survey between USAID RING, SPRING and METSS projects; and other activities that leverage greater impact for all.

Here is wishing us all an impactful year in 2015!



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Implemented Through:



KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Agricultural Economics

GIS Support Coming Online

Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies are used to store, edit, analyze, share, and display geographic / spatial information. Since 2012 METSS has been working towards a comprehensive GIS application to support USAID and its partners make sense of data collected in the zone(s) of influence to better support evidence based decision making. METTS' GIS application will allow users to create interactive queries, analyze spatial information, edit data, and present the results in a mapped format.

The full GIS application will be made available online by June 2015.

Maps and other research reports can be found in the Research and Resources section of our METSS website, hosted by Kansas State University:

www.metssghana.org

Number of USAID Implementing Partners by District in the Northern Zone of Influence, 2015

