



USAID ADVANCE NEWSLETTER



Enumerators taking a crop cut on a farm in Atebubu in the Brong Ahafo Region. Photo Credit: Aloysious Aduku Atibilla, USAID ADVANCE South

USAID ADVANCE Conducts Gross Margin Survey In Southern Ghana

The first phase of 2018 gross margin survey took place in USAID ADVANCE southern zone of influence from May 9 to May 31. The survey entails collecting data on production (types of input, agronomic practices and farm expenditures), relationships between outgrower businesses and their outgrowers, field mapping, crop cut, and women's contributions to household health and finance decision making. The survey team reached 315 farmers (215 males; 100 females) in 62 communities across 17 districts in

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USAID ADVANCE Takes Steps to Make Pre-Harvest Agribusiness Event Sustainable

USAID ADVANCE has organized the pre-harvest agribusiness and exhibition events since 2010, bringing value chain actors together to establish business relationships, negotiate and seal deals. To ensure sustainability of the event beyond the project, USAID ADVANCE has handed over the organization of the event to Agrihouse Foundation, a non-governmental agricultural organization.

On April 24, Agrihouse Foundation launched the 2018 event at the Best Western Premier Hotel in Accra. In attendance were the Minister of State in charge of Agriculture, Dr Nurah Gyiele; former First Lady, Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings; The Netherlands Ambassador to Ghana; Representative from World Food Program; USAID Private Sector Team Lead, Pearl Coleman



The Minister of State for Agriculture, Dr. Nurah Gyiele, addressing participants during the launch of 2018 pre-harvest agribusiness event. Photo credit: Francis Kwamena Ainoo, USAID ADVANCE

Ackah; the Managing Director of Yara Ghana Ltd, USAID ADVANCE Chief of Party, Dr. Emmanuel Dormon; representatives of various Farmers Associations; and a host of distinguished individuals in the agriculture sector.

Speeches were delivered by representatives from World Food Program (WFP), USAID, Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), and the private sector. The Executive Director of Agrihouse Foundation, Alberta Nana Akyaa Akosa,

emphasized that the event will provide a platform to bring together commodity buyers, agribusiness service providers and farmers to establish business relationships and discuss contracts and explore other business possibilities.

The Honorable Minister of State for Agriculture assured that the Government of Ghana is determined to make agriculture the engine for growth in Ghana. Acknowledging commitments

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PROFILE CORNER

CHRISTEL TSHIKUDI

Deputy Chief of Party



Christel Tshikudi has 20 years of experience working in the areas of strategic planning, business and financial services and project management in the US, Europe and Africa. She has conducted several trainings and built capacity of NGOs and small businesses in revenue creation, business planning, contract negotiations, financial management and organizational development. She has worked on projects funded by various donors including USAID, US State Department, World Bank, KfW, Global Fund and DFID.

She joined ACDI/VOCA in 2015 as Senior Director and oversaw market systems' projects in several African countries. Since she joined USAID ADVANCE in January 2018, she has supported the team as Deputy Chief of Party in charge of monitoring and evaluation, communications, grants, and regional program coordination. She is helping to strengthen project management systems and has initiated work on systemic change and sustainability. She has a BSc degree in Economics and an MBA. She speaks both English and French.

CECIL OSEI

Technical Director



Cecil Osei joined USAID ADVANCE in March 2018 as the Technical Director, providing technical support to specialists with the view to ensure integration of technical and crosscutting issues to enable upgrading of crop value chains into competitive sustainable business systems.

He supervises a team of seven program specialists who work to ensure that the planned improvements in the maize and soy value chains are based on sound technical and business principles. They identify emerging bottlenecks and develop solutions that will ensure increased competitiveness and sustainability. To accomplish this, the team members are always provoked to think more deeply and differently.

Cecil trained as an agronomist, and has over 28 years of experience in cropping systems research, crop value chains and general agricultural development. Before joining USAID ADVANCE, he worked for CSIR-SARI, Catholic Relief Services, IFDC, and Grameen Foundation. He enjoys watching football and movies.

JOHN LABORDE

Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellow



John Laborde has a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Biology and Biochemistry. He also holds a PhD in Agronomy from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a specialization in production and crop physiology. In 2013, he received funding as a U.S. Borlaug Fellow in Global Food Security to spend 2.5 years in Nepal to conduct research on optimization of conservation agriculture practices among smallholder farmers in the mid-hills of Nepal using a combination of quantitative field research, crop simulation, and statistical and geospatial modeling.

He joined USAID ADVANCE in November 2017 as a Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellow. In this role, he is involved in a wide range of activities in support of the project's technical and M&E teams. These activities include data analysis to elucidate the impact of project interventions on farmer productivity and household hunger, assisting the planning and implementation of the project's 2018 fall armyworm (FAW) interventions, and designing beneficiary surveys to answer targeted questions regarding, for example, the sustainability of outgrower businesses' (OBs) service provision to outgrowers post-project, or the impact of village savings and loans association (VSLA) on farmer productivity and household level finances.

ENCOURAGING YOUTH PATRONAGE IN AGRICULTURE

Prince Danso, 27, Role Model for Ghanaian Youth to take up Farming as a Profession



Prince Danso taking stock of agrochemicals in one of his input shops. Photo Credit: USAID ADVANCE South

Despite numerous strategies adopted by the Ghanaian government and other agricultural stakeholders to attract the youth into agriculture, most young people in Ghana shy away from farming with the perception that farming is tedious, belongs to the elderly, and does not bring sufficient income. Therefore, when USAID ADVANCE discovered 27-year-old Prince Owusu Danso's engagement in commercial farming, the project took a special interest to support him.

Prince Owusu Danso is the youngest outgrower business (OB) owner out of 373 OBs and has been working with the project since 2015. After completing his technical education in 2007, Prince started his own farm at Ejura in the Ashanti Region. He cultivated one-acre maize farm with seeds and fertilizer bought on credit. From that one acre, he harvested 0.8 MT. Happy with that yield, Prince

increased his acreage to two the following year.

After eight years of hard work, Prince now has a 45-acre maize farm and works with 254 smallholder farmers who cultivate about 1,167 acres of land across six communities in the Ejura Sekyeredumase District and to whom he provides fertilizer and weedicides on credit. Though Prince was making improvements in his farming business, he acknowledges that since receiving USAID ADVANCE's support in 2015, he has been able to take his business to a higher level. The project trained him and his smallholder farmers on best agronomic practices including row planting, use of certified seeds, and

“I recently completed a 16-bedroom house at Ejura and taking care of the education of four siblings. I have become a role model for the young men in Ejura who approach me to learn from my experience. Farming is not only for old people, young people like you can also go into it.” —

Prince Owusu Danso, USAID ADVANCE-supported outgrower business owner in the Ashanti Region

proper application of fertilizer as well as other agrochemicals. The project also provided him with a Samsung Galaxy Tab and a Pico projector, which he uses to profile his farmers, teach them good agronomic practices, and keep records. The project also assisted him in preparing a business plan and linked him to Esoko Limited and Ignitia Ghana Ltd to receive weekly text messages on agronomic tips, market prices of commodities and weather information to better

schedule his planting and harvesting. In 2015, the project connected him to two buyers, Spice Farms and Akate Farms, both poultry farms. He supplied 10 MT of maize valued at GHC135,000 (\$ 30,134) to Spice Farms in 2015. In 2016, Prince supplied 6.5 MT of maize to four end-markets in Ejura and Bibiani at a total value of GHC 80,000 (\$17,857.1)

Recently, Prince established three input shops and engaged three youth to manage each shop. He also established a mobile input service delivery system and purchased two motor bikes for the youth he is working with.

Because of the project's training, Prince's smallholder farmers realize high yields, which enables them to repay his services. Lucy Fabea, one of Prince's smallholder farmers in Ejura narrates: “I have benefited a lot from USAID ADVANCE through Prince. Previous yields used to be between 600 and 800 kgs of maize per acre but with the use of improved seeds and adoption of good agronomic practices, I had 1500 kgs per acre in the 2017 farming season.”

Prince is working to establish one-stop farm service center where his farmers will access tractor services, inputs, and extension education at all times. He is also promoting the rearing of small ruminants by his young farmers to serve as another source of income for them. With the project's support, Prince will buy air time on Today's Radio station in Ejura to educate and encourage more youth to take on agriculture.



An enumerator undertaking crop cut on a farm
Photo Credit: Aloysious Aduku Atibilla, USAID ADVANCE South



Enumerators mapping a field with GPS device
Photo Credit: Aloysious Aduku Atibilla, USAID ADVANCE South



Enumerator collecting data from beneficiary farmers in Ejura in the Ashanti Region. Photo Credit: Aloysious Aduku Atibilla, USAID ADVANCE South

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the Sunyani, Techiman and Ejura Zones. At the survey's onset, the project trained six enumerators and project staff during three days and covered topics on crop cut methodology, GPS field mapping, and questionnaire administration. Field data collection followed the training immediately.

The data verification process took two forms: 1) Supervisors of various teams verified data collected by enumerators from the field before submission to M&E officers for the second level of data

verification, and 2) The M&E Coordinator and GIS Specialist verified data from the supervisors, highlighting data inconsistency, missing values and wrong data attribution.

One of the challenges the project faced in the field was that some sampled farmers planted different crops for the major season awaiting to plant maize in the minor season, and this made their fields non-eligible for the survey. The survey teams replaced them with those who planted maize. During the

survey, the project observed that fall armyworm had affected some farmers' fields although the rate of severity was lower in Ejura compared to Sunyani and Techiman zones.

The second phase of the gross margin survey in the South will take place in July when crops are expected to be ready for harvest at which point the project will determine farming productivity. Analysis and results of the gross margins will be available in December 2018.

USAID ADVANCE Takes Steps to Sustain Pre-Harvest Agribusiness Event ...cont'd from page 1

made by AFGRI (representative of John Deere in Ghana), Ecobank, Interplast and Yara Ghana towards the program; the minister challenged the private sector to prove that they believe "Agriculture is the future mainstay of our economy and most economies in Africa."

The eighth pre-harvest agribusiness conference and exhibition will take place at the Tamale Sports Stadium in the Northern Region from October 3 to 5 under the theme: "Transforming Agricultural Production in Northern Ghana: The role of modern agro-based industries." USAID ADVANCE will support Agrihouse Foundation to make the event a success.

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