

**Agenda for the First Meeting of the
Sweetpotato Support Platform for West Africa
6 July, 2010
Training Center
CSIR-Crops Research Institute, Fumesua, Kumasi, Ghana**



Facilitator: Esi Amoaful, Nutrition Department, Ghana Health Service

Time	Activity	Responsible
OPENING SESSION		
8:30	Registration	CRI/CIP
9:00	Welcome + introductions	Esi Amoaful/Participants
9:10	Welcome remarks	Hans Adu-Dapaah - CRI
9:20	Overview of The Sweetpotato for Profit and Health Initiative	Jan Low – CIP
9:40	Launch of the Sweetpotato Support Platform for West Africa	A.B. Salifu – Director General, CSIR
9:50	Launch of the catalog of Orange-fleshed Sweetpotato Varieties	William Boakye Acheampong – Regional Director, MOFA
10:00	Health Break and Group Photo including sweetpotato products) at CIP office & OFSP video	
10:30	Field visit – Biotech lab, Hybridization block and Seedling nursery	J.N. Asafu-Agyei –CRI Marian Quain –CRI
SUPPORT PLATFORM MEETING		
11:20	Sweetpotato products and uses for West Africa – Perspectives of a food scientist	Ibok Oduro – KNUST Evelyn Adu-Kwarteng – CRI
11:40	Current status of the production and marketing of sweetpotato in Nigeria	Nnamdi Echendu – NRCRI Malachy Akoroda - UI
12:10	Sweetpotato experiences from Burkina Faso: Creating and meeting demand for orange-fleshed varieties	Ann Tarini-Hien – HKI
12:30	SASHA and the Sweetpotato Support Platform: Breeding and Seed Systems support for West Africa. Lessons learned from E. Africa.	Ted Carey, CIP
1:00	Lunch	
2:00	Working groups discuss the SSP – West Africa. How do we develop it as an effective tool for the region?	Group 1: Harrison Dapaah- WUE Reporter: Marian Quain - CRI Group 2: Lone Badstue - HKI Reporter: Malachy Akoroda – UI
3:30	Working groups report to group and group discussion of the way forward	Esi Amoaful - GHS
4:30	Close	

**SWEETPOTATO FOR PROFIT AND HEALTH
INITIATIVE**
**MINUTES/REPORT OF THE FIRST SWEETPOTATO SUPPORT
PLATFORM FOR WEST AFRICA HELD AT THE CSIR-CROPS
RESEARCH INSTITUTE (CRI) - 6TH JULY, 2010.**

OPENING SESSION

PROPOSED TIME FOR MEETING: 8:30am

Registration of participants commenced around the same time.

TIME MEETING STARTED: 9:11am

ROLL: Below are list of participants.

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	ORGANISATION/CONTRY
Hans	Adu-Dapaah	CRI-Kumasi
Evelyn	Adu-Kwarteng	CRI-Kumasi
Malachy	Akoroda	Nigeria
Esi	Amoaful	Accra
J.N.	Asafu-Agyei	CRI-Kumasi
Ernest	Baafi	CRI-Kumasi
Asamoah-obeng	N.	CRI-Kumasi
Joseph	Awoodzie	CRI-Kumasi
Henry	Asumadu Dr.	CRI-Kumasi
Awere	Dankyi	CRI-Kumasi
Isaac	S. Baing	CRI-Kumasi
Agnes	Ankomah	CRI-Kumasi
Stephen	Asante	Tamale
Lone	Badstue	Kenya
Elvis	Baidoo	Accra
William	Boakye Acheampong	Kumasi
Ted	Carey	CRI-Kumasi
Harrison	Dapaah	Kumasi
Nnamdi	Echendu	Mampong
Tom	Gambrah	Kumasi
Joseph Nii	Lamptey	CRI-Kumasi
Jan	Low	Kenya
John	Mahama	Western Region
Ibok	Oduro	KNUST
Leonard	Oruko	FARA-Accra
Marian D.	Quain	CRI-Kumasi
A.B.	Salifu	Accra
Lydia	Sasu	Accra
Ann	Tarini-Hien	HKI-Burkina Faso
Aboubacar	Toure	Accra

ABSENT WITH PERMISSION: none

OPENING PRAYER: Mrs. Lydia Sasu.

PURPOSE OF MEETING AND INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS:

Esi Amoaful, the facilitator highlighted on the purpose of the meeting by referring the participants to the handout containing the agenda. This was followed by self introduction of participants, which incidentally begun with Dr. Jan Low and ended with Dr. Ted Carey, the two CIP pillars present.

WELCOME ADDRESS: Dr. Hans Adu-Dapaah

He stressed on CSIR-CRI place in the national economy as a key and dependable national agricultural research institution in Ghana's agenda to become a middle income country. This was followed by the organizational structure of the institute and said that CSIR-CRI is currently the largest of the 13 Institutes of Ghana's Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), which co-ordinates scientific research for national development. The vision and the mission of CSIR-CRI which are to become a centre of excellence for innovative and quality agricultural research for development, and to develop and disseminate appropriate technologies for high and sustainable food and industrial crop production were also highlighted. CSIR-CRI's core research and development activities which are directed to meet the needs of clients (farmers, consumers, agro-based industries including the private sector), and other stakeholders through development of quality, client/market-targeted crop varieties for direct consumption and industrial processing through innovative and participatory research and development and dissemination of appropriate, impact-oriented and cost-effective technologies for high and sustainable crop productivity were also mentioned.

Briefing participants on sweetpotato research at the institute, he mentioned the four projects currently under WAAPP in addition to CIP's Support Platform. This was followed by strides made on the crop's improvement and hinted that eight varieties have been released since 1998 with at least two more in the pipe-line to be released.

Touching on the Sweetpotato Platform, he stressed that SASHA is a charity for Mama Africa since it has come to support Africa's effort at food security and rural income generation and therefore, requested participants support and encouraged them all to give of their best to support the project. He ended with the usual Ghanaian hospitality 'Akwaaba' and wished participants fruitful deliberation.

APPOLOGIES:

No apologies were brought to the attention of participants.

OVERVIEW OF THE SWEETPOTATO FOR PROFIT AND HEALTH INITIATIVE – Dr. Jan Low.

The house was briefed on the genesis of the SASHA Project which begun from phased process seeking input from stakeholders through field visits, multi-disciplinary theme papers, internet survey, and a series of five workshops, which led to publication of a working paper published on 6 major themes – Breeding, Seed

systems, Crop Management, Nutrition, Value Chains, Partnerships. The seven major constraints identified and prioritized, which were lack of timely availability of adequate quantities of disease-free planting material, varieties with limited yield potential in specific agro-ecologies and quality characteristics that do not meet demands of specific target groups, damage due to the sweetpotato weevils in drier zones, limited demand and inadequate market, poor agronomic practices, limited awareness of decision makers about potential contribution of the crop to poverty and malnutrition reduction due to inadequate evidence base, and need for a critical mass of informed stakeholders with good information exchange to maximize investment return were also highlighted.

Participants were also briefed on the major focus on the Sweetpotato Support Platform, which is to organize the work around research for development platforms that integrate and support the work of institutional partners in each sub-region. The major focuses were giving as:-

- **Provide technical backstopping**, which includes special emphasis on supporting AGRA supported Phd programs in breeding and AGRA support national breeding programs
 - Eastern & Central: Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia
 - Southern : Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia
 - West: Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso
 - More limited support for Madagascar, Angola, Burundi
- **Assure clean germplasm exchange**
- **Assure gender-sensitive design and implementation**
- **Assure comparable data collection** between countries engaged in the breeding and germplasm exchange
- **Facilitate information exchange**

DISCUSSIONS

∩ Mrs. Lydia Sasu gave the presenters her compliments and pledged her support to disseminate the technology and information obtained in sweetpotato to other farmers.

∩ Mr. William Boakye Acheampong wanted clarification on non-sweet sweetpotato.

∩ Esi Amoaful requested for some tubers of *Apomuden* for participants who may be interested.

LAUNCH OF SWEETPOTATO SUPPORT PLATFORM FOR WEST AFRICA

The West Africa Sub-regional Support Platform was launch by The Director-General of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research-Ghana, in the person of Dr. A. B Salifu. He begun with his school day life story in which a song his school had practiced very well to sing at inter-school singing competition was sung equally very well by another school before they were offered the podium to do their song. By this story, he praised the earlier presenters for singing his song for the occasion equally very well. He however emphasized on the importance of sweetpotato in terms of its energy/ha/day and its ability to grow in diverse environment. He echoed on the achievement of CRI and stressed its strategic importance to the national economy. With these words, he duly launched the Support Platform.

LAUNCH OF THE CATALOG OF ORANGED-FLESHED SWEETPOTATO VARIETIES

This task was performed by the Regional Director of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Mr William Boakye Acheampong. He also stressed on the importance of the crop in both indigenous and industrial food and specifically mentioned a product 'potargurt', which is a made in Ghana yoghurt made from sweetpotato, which is highly patronized. He pledge his Ministry support to the project and encouraged all participants to support the project as well. With these he accordingly launched the catalog. This was preceded by Health break and Group photo (including sweetpotato products) at CIP Office.

AT CIP OFFICE

Participants inspected exhibition of sweetpotato products developed by the CSIR-CRI. Mrs. Evelyn Adu-Kwarteng took participants through the exhibition platform. Participants enjoyed tea break and a 17 minutes documentary on orange-fleshed sweetpotato in Mozambique concurrently. Prior to this, the CIP office was commissioned by the Director-General of the CSIR-Ghana.

FIELD VISIT

Shortly after the Health break was followed the field visit which took participants to the Tissue Culture laboratory and the Crossing Block. Marian D. Quain and Dr. J. N. Asafu-Agyei took participants through the Tissue Culture laboratory and the Crossing Block respectively. Participants were briefed on what goes on at the laboratory on sweetpotato research which includes optimizing protocol for higher planting material multiplication rate, germplasm conservstion, and production and dissemination of disease free planting material which alone can increase crop yield by 30%. Due to the nature of the cutting and culture rooms, only five participants were voluntarily elected to visit there. The rest then followed Dr. Asafu-Agei to the Crossing Block. He briefed participants on the population lines at the Crossing Block – orange-fleshed, white/yellow fleshed and low sugar clones. He went on to provide participants with information on the targeted traits which are High dry matter, high beta-carotene content, resistance to SPVD and weevils, non-sugary or low sugar, and early bulking/maturing varieties. Controlled pollination was demonstrated to the participants after, which they visited the seedling nursery.

DISCUSSIONS

∩ Two questions stood in the name of Dr. Aboubacar Toure of AGRA. These were

1. How many local varieties will be used in the pre-breeding?
2. If self sterility/incompability exist, why then do you remove the female part from the male flower during crosses?

SUPPORT PLATFORM MEETING

This session begun with presentations on “Sweetpotato products uses for West Africa – Perspectives of the food Scientist” by Prof. I. Oduro of KNUST and Evelyn Adu-Kwarteng of CRI all from Ghana. These were followed by presentation on “Current status of the production and marketing of sweetpotato in Nigeria” by Nnamdi Enchendu (NRCRI) and Malachy Akorada (UI) of Nigeria, and Sweetpotato experience from Burkina Faso: Creating and meeting demand for oranged-fleshed varieties by Ann Tarini-Hien (HKI). The last presentation before

launch was on “Breeding and seed systems support for West Africa, Lessons learned from East Africa” and was giving by Dr. Ted Carey.

DISCUSSIONS

- ∩ The delegate from the CSIR-Food Research Institute also recounted the enormous potential of sweetpotato and encouraged participants to work assiduously to tap it.
- ∩ Mrs. Lydia Sasu requested special place for Rural Women as collaborators for the project.
- ∩ Dr. J. N. Lamptey wanted to know what goes into pest and disease control in Burkina Faso?
- ∩ Two other questions stood in the name of Mrs. Lydia Sasu
 1. What are Scientists doing to help farmers to control virus?
 2. What are scientists doing to help farmers in vine conservation?
- ∩ Mr. Isaac Baning wanted to know why Apomuden from Bangladesh is not susceptible to the SPVD but Jewel from USA does?

Participants then break for lunch and resumed after an hour for the workshop on Support Platform.

WORKING GROUP REPORT

The respective reports for Group 1 and Group 2 were presented by Prof. M. Akorada and Marian D. Quain. In all, two issues were common in both Groups report were advocacy and promotion.

A. O. B

Prof. M. Akorada informed the house that since according to the Tissue Culture expert, the use of disease free planting material can increase crop yield by 30%, members should note and embraced the practiced.

NEXT MEETING: It was agreed that this will be communicated later to participants since the two earlier proposed dates which were first and second week of December, 2010 will not favour Ghanaian participants and Dr. Jan Low respectively due to other equally engagement during those times.

VOTE OF THANKS: Esi Amoafu

CLOSING PRAYER: Dr. J. N. Asafu-Agyei

CLOSING TIME: 5:00pm

RECORDER: Ernest Baafi (CRI)

Summary for working group discussions – Group 1

Question posed by Jan:

1. How do we as a group organize ourselves to make progress on the support platform

Areas to consider:

- Advocacy work
- Knowledge sharing
- Networking, collaboration and sharing idea

The need for accurate data and information about SP should be made available. The platform should be the source of information on sweetpotato the information should be accurate.

How to get good data should be a goal. Data provided should make room for sharing so that contributors can update information.

In terms of food security the Government should be talked to as advocacy work to have their input. There were two volunteers to carry out advocacy for Sweetpotato. Nigerian representative proposed the use of extension officers to reach the farmers.

Advocacy namely:

- POLICY
- FARMERS
- CONSUMERS (WOMEN)

The platform should also be able to help move the research findings from the laboratory to the end-users. This would call for resources mobilization.

The traditional forms of consuming SP should be refined and also innovative products should be developed. Elvis Baadio would like to be on the product development subgroup.

Varietal development is also key. With this come

- capacity building,
- development of technology for farmers
- strategy to reach the farmers as well as develop products that can reach the market.

This needs information sharing this needs to have efficient monitoring and evaluation system. There is the need to consider policy for germplasm exchange within the subregion. It was indicated that there are no barriers to exchange of germplasm. The platform should thus provide information on germplasm for sharing.

The need for harmonization of policies for the subregion would be necessary. The East Africa has a system the platform can be involved in the harmonization of policies for germplasm exchange. During exchange of materials, care should be taken not to transfer diseases and the plant quarantine services should play a key role. Materials supplied should come out of quarantined and should be certified.

As materials are distributed, systems should be in place should ensure that farmers get the materials. The absence of RTIMP was stressed. This called for demand creation campaign.

Sweetpotato is being ignored and the research results should be packaged for various groups eg. Policy etc. research should come up with economic benefits of sweetpotato production. Other projects in W/A working on SP should share information.

WHAT SHOULD WE PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS

1. Awareness creation
2. Capacity building
3. Collection of data
 - a. Identification of areas on production
 - b. Baseline information
4. Production of planting materials of the released varieties
 - a. Private sector involvement in clean vine production

As advocacy develops the private sector can be involved in the future in tissue culture for planting material production

Develop value chain and look at market development and have resources mobilized. Link with WAAPP for the development of socio-economic studies .

Activities should look as CORAF/WECARD agenda. ROPPA activities should also be considered to involve the rural woman.

KNOWLEDGE PORTAL (designed for the whole sweetpotato community)

1. Contributors wanted to
2. Have links,
3. Emphasis on the grey literature,
4. Information on best practices for utilization,
5. Basic knowledge on how to manage sweetpotato
6. Send in a question and have answers sent to you
7. FAQs
8. Establishment of market with users at the country level
 - a. Country production levels
9. Organize the portal to separate scientific information from end-user information
10. List of sweetpotato projects
11. Funding agencies working on sweetpotato
12. Information on researchers other processors working on sweetpotato

AGRA may have opportunities for soil and marketing related research activities

How do we break the barriers about the Sweetpotato consumption?

Need to meet supply demand such as in the central region and the Volta region. The need to the production of the vines was stressed.

The knowledge platform could provided information on planting material production areas and supply information on contact persons.

Nigeria indicated the cost of maintaining planting materials from one season to the next and this indicated the need to establish a sustainable seed system. Irrigation facility is key for maintenance.

Market development will enable farmers to invest in planting material and there are practices and new systems are being developed. The binding constraint and healthy planting materials need to be addressed. Nigeria has a high demand.

Need to have training for researchers and extension personnel on the sweetpotato crop. RTIMP invite the extension officers to training sessions.

Information on processed products being used in the other countries

Monitoring and evaluation system should ensure women are involved. The gender roles should be identified and where the need be more of the rural women farmers are involved in sweetpotato production.

HOW IS SWEETPOTATO INTERGRATED INTO MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEM?

SUMMARY of Plenary discussion

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