



Partnership
for Aflatoxin
Control in Africa

Partenariat pour la
lutte contre les
aflatoxines en Afrique

Parceria para o
controlo das
aflatoxinas na África

الشراكة من أجل التحكم في
الأفلاتوكسين في أفريقيا



Aflatoxin Partnership Newsletter

VOLUME II ISSUE I

FEBRUARY 2014

UPCOMING EVENTS

18-20 February |
PACA Steering
Committee
Meeting
Dakar, Senegal

11-13 March |
Regional Work-
shop on the Afla-
toxin Challenge
in Eastern and
Southern Africa
Lilongwe,
Malawi

23-27 March |
CAADP Partner-
ship Platform
Meeting and Com-
memoration of
CAADP @10
Durban, South
Africa

Regional workshop on the aflatoxin challenge in West African States – ECOWAS

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in collaboration with the African Union Commission through the PACA initiative, held a workshop from 18-20 November in Accra, Ghana. The workshop aimed to identify regional priorities to address aflatoxin related issues in the West African region.

Over forty experts from the various sectors of agriculture, trade and health attended this event. Representatives from various countries were also present. The ECOWAS workshop also benefited from the experiences of other Regional Economic Communities like the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) that shared its experience in established structures and mechanisms in implementing and coordinating

SPS capacity development programmes. ECOWAS is one of the most advanced REC in implementing a Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) which has derived from the continental framework, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture



Development Programme (CAADP). The region has also made major advances in addressing food insecurity through various initiatives within the region. Furthermore, ECOWAS has developed several regulatory frameworks on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) issues

as well as others that will provide a competitive edge for the region's agricultural products and attain food security in the region. During the workshop, expert recommendations from all three sectors were made in order to address the aflatoxin challenge in West Africa as well as calling for coordinated efforts to manage the risks to each sector and economic development as a whole.

During the workshop, several cross-cutting interventions were made such as creating public awareness, building capacity in countries, creation of markets for aflatoxin safe commodities, and continuous research. Experts urged policy makers to mainstream aflatoxin issues into the relevant regional and national frameworks.

2014: Year of Agriculture and Food Security launched at the AU Summit

During the July 2012 summit of the African Union, Heads of State and Government declared 2014 as the “Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa” also marking the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

On 30 January 2014, the Year of Agriculture and Food Security was launched at the 22nd AU Summit of Heads of State and Governments. The newly elected AU Chairperson, president of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, noted that this comes at an important time for Africa as the AU discusses the African Agenda 2063 that looks into inclusive growth

and sustainable development on the continent. As most African countries rely on agriculture for their livelihoods, the chairperson emphasized, this year will be a great opportunity to focus on the transformation of the agriculture sector for prosperity, growth and

sustainable development in Africa. As 2014 also marks the 10th anniversary of CAADP, it is a year where all stakeholders will reflect on the successes and failures of CAADP and be able to map out the targets for the next decade. Press Release on [WEBSITE](#)



Aflatoxin Challenge in Eastern and Southern Africa—COMESA

The Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), in collaboration with the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) of the African Union, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other institutions, is organizing a regional workshop on the afla-

toxin challenge in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The workshop’s main objectives will be to sensitize key stakeholders on the aflatoxin challenge in the region, to assess current efforts to mitigate aflatoxins, as well as setting regional priorities.

This will enable COMESA countries to develop regional action plans on aflatoxin control to further strengthen regional and intra-regional trade as well as protect human health. The workshop will be held in Lilongwe, Malawi from 11-13 March 2014.

News and Information on Aflatoxins

PACA Aims to Develop an Electronic Data Management System for Aflatoxins

UPCOMING EVENTS

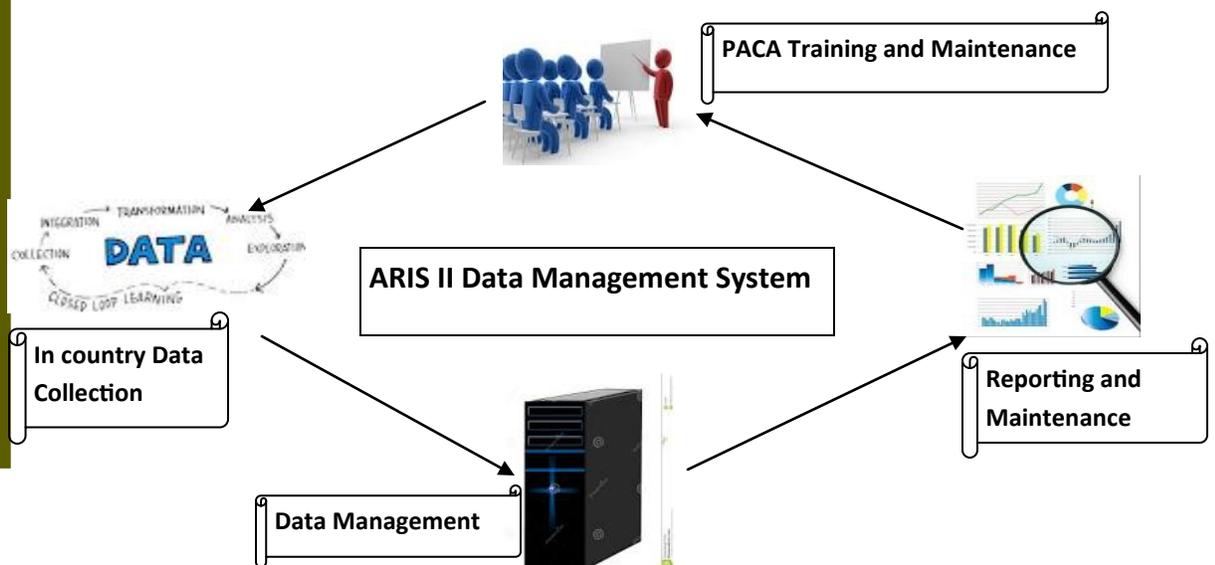
30 June—03 July 2014 |
Aflatoxin Control Measures: a Basis for Improved Health in Developing Countries
Lyon, France

September 2014 |
PACA Partnership Platform Meeting
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

One of PACA’s main roles identified within its Strategy 2013-2022, is to act as an information clearing house. PACA is therefore developing an electronic aflatoxin data management system that will serve as a “one stop shop” for information related to aflatoxins. On the margins of the ECOWAS workshop in Accra, Ghana (*see page 1*), PACA convened a meeting of experts to develop methodology to successfully implement an electronic data management system in AU Member States.

The e-data management system will be used mainly for promoting public awareness, advocacy and communication on aflatoxin prevalence and risk, promoting regional and intra-regional trade, generating evidence to inform interventions, as well as providing information on early warning systems for aflatoxin outbreaks. This system will be hosted by the current Animal Resource Information System (ARIS II) of the African Union Inter-Africa Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR).

ARIS II is a decentralized information management system which enables AU member states to be self sufficient in standardized and swift information flow at all levels. ARIS II allows for different modules to be built (i.e., an aflatoxin module) and fed information. This information will come from existing structures at country and regional levels as well as relevant organizations. Information is gathered and fed into the system at all levels from the farm, district, province, nation as well as regional and others.



MAPAC– The Malawi Programme for Aflatoxin Control

The Malawi Programme for Aflatoxin Control (MAPAC) is a new initiative of Malawi which aims at improving the health and livelihood of its people by effectively managing and controlling aflatoxin in its staple crops such as maize and groundnuts.

Through the use of research, introduction of good practices, development of testing capacities in laboratories, and pushing for good policies, MAPAC tries to develop Malawi's capacity to effectively control and reduce aflatoxin contamination in the key value chains.

Malawi has established a Bureau of Standards (MBS) which is responsible for providing testing of locally manufactured and imported commodities. Tested commodities that have achieved compliance with the requirements of the Bureau will receive a seal. Although in recent years its credibility has decreased, MBS provides testing services to groundnut exporters in the country. A second laboratory has also been established as a national reference laboratory for mycotoxin analysis at the

Chitedze Agricultural Research Station (CARS). This lab is recognized for providing reliable aflatoxin testing to processors and exporters in the country. MAPAC further tries to strengthen the sampling and testing capacities that already exist as well as strengthening the policy frameworks in place. MAPAC is an initiative fully aligned with global, continental, regional and sub-regional strategic priorities such as that of the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa. [Full Report](#)

The AUC and Meridian Institute renew MOU

The African Union Commission and Meridian Institute, USA, have renewed the Memorandum of Understanding that was originally signed by both parties in September 2012 on the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) on January 14, 2014. This day did not only mark the renewal of the MoU but also the signing of a grant agreement to the tune of US\$ 1.2 million between the two parties to support PACA Secretariat operational and programmatic activities in 2014. The MoU and grant agreement were signed by the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture,

Her Excellency Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, on behalf of the AUC, and by Senior Partner of Meridian Institute, Mrs. Barbara Stinson. They both emphasized the importance of this partnership and the continued fight against the aflatoxin problem in Africa. Press Release on [WEBSITE](#)



PACA Presents at the Global Forum for Innovations: Middle East and Africa Focus

On February 02-05, 2014, the Global Forum for Innovations in Agriculture (GFIA) convened a high level meeting in Abu Dhabi, UAE on revolutionizing global agriculture through innovations. GFIA is a global forum where agricultural innovators, business leaders and other stakeholders are brought together to exchange ideas on finding solutions to feeding the world in a sustainable manner. The conference was attended by more than 3,200 participants from over 62 countries including 20 government delegations. The conference had 150 speakers with more than 100 exhibitors worldwide. HE Rashid bin Fahad, UAE Minister of Environment and Water, inaugurated GFIA with a welcome address on behalf of HH Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE, Minister of Presidential Affairs,

and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority. The conference was attended by key individuals such as the CEO of the CGIAR Consortium who, in a keynote speech, expressed the reality that aflatoxin is costing African farmers over \$450 million USD per year in lost exports. He emphasized the importance of employing technologies with great potential for reducing aflatoxin contamination such as aflasafe. This technology, which has the capacity to reduce aflatoxin contamination by up to 90 percent, has been developed by CGIAR and is being made available to farmers. Furthermore, during a panel discussion on “Africa: the Frontier for Arid Farming”, the Director General of International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) reiterated the importance of recognizing aflatoxin as a major problem. He also emphasized



the important role for resistant varieties and agronomic practices in helping the groundnut sector of some African countries to revive and resume exporting the crop to bigger markets. Dr. Amare Ayalew, Program Manager for the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), was invited to GFIA as a speaker where he presented PACA and how it is waging war against aflatoxins in Africa. He also highlighted the aflatoxin challenge in Africa and PACA’s approaches to addressing this vexing problem and to promoting innovations. Read more about PACA’s presentation on [WEBSITE](#)

The effects of aflatoxins on animals

Aflatoxins, highly toxic compounds produced by species of *Aspergillus Flavus* and *Aspergillus parasiticus*, are known carcinogens that are also associated with immunosuppression, stunting, and retardation in humans. These toxic compounds not only affect humans through consumption of contaminated food but also affect livestock. Dr. Oladele Dotun, a Veterinarian at the Animal Care Laboratory in Nigeria, presented his laboratory's findings on the effects of aflatoxins on animals during the



FRIABLE LIVER WITH MULTIPLE STREAKS OF PALOR IN CHRONIC AFLATOXICOSIS IN LAYERS

ECOWAS workshop in Accra, Ghana. According to Dr. Oladele, research has shown that aflatoxins cause infertility, abortions, and delayed onset of egg production in birds as well as sudden losses in egg production in actively laying birds. Furthermore, loss of appetite, skin discoloration or even yellowish pigmentation on skin can be observed in fish. Dr. Oladele emphasized the negative impact and massive losses encountered by farmers due to

mortalities, egg production losses, delayed weight gain in birds and fish. In order to reduce the impact of aflatoxins on humans and animals, Dr. Oladele recommends that producers should ensure minimal contamination with toxic strains at pre- and post-harvest levels by applying a biocontrol product: Aflasafe®. Aflasafe® reduces aflatoxins significantly. Dr. Oladele also recommends training of farmers on proper drying methods as well as good farming practices. Presentation on [WEB-SITE](#)



ASCITES (FLUID ACCUMULATION IN ABDOMINAL CAVITY) IN CATFISHES



FISTULATION OF PROVENTRICULAR SEROSA, LEADING TO LEAKAGE OF INGESTA IN LAYERS

Pictures provided by Dr. Dotun Oladele

Malawi Farmers Association Working with Farmers to Control Aflatoxin

The National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM), in collaboration with the private sector and other stakeholders, has been taking the lead in promoting interventions for aflatoxin mitigation in Malawi. Understanding that aflatoxin mitigation starts at the farm level, NASFAM promotes best agricultural practices at pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest levels. NASFAM is also engaged in creating aflatoxin awareness and training to smallholder farmers as well as development of traceability systems, quality management, storage and processing. Although peanut production in Malawi has been growing over the last

few years, post-harvest technologies such as shelling and storage are not readily available. Smallholder farmers are forced to shell the nuts by hand. In order to make the shelling by hand easier, farmers soak the unshelled nuts in water which increases moisture level in the nuts resulting in possible aflatoxin contamination. In light of this, NASFAM has taken the initiative to provide mechanical shelling



technologies to farmers. This initiative is still in progress and adoption levels are minimal. In addition, NASFAM's new traceability and quality management system ensures that each bag containing groundnuts and accepted at a buying point undergoes quality checks and has a traceability tag that links it back to the farmer. NASFAM is also providing services and training to smallholder farmers on drying systems, moisture detection as well as sampling and testing at different levels. NASFAM continues to work with farmers to mitigate the aflatoxin risk and its impact on the livelihoods of the Malawian population.

Some mechanical shelling technologies promoted by NASFAM to prevent wet shelling of nuts.

Photo credits: Aubrey Chinseu

"AFRICA FREE FROM THE HARMFUL
EFFECTS OF AFLATOXINS"

AFLATOXIN PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

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