



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
الإفلاتوكسين في أفريقيا

Aflatoxin Partnership Newsletter

VOLUME IV ISSUE I I

MAY - JULY 2016

Dear PACA Community Members:

We are pleased to present this issue of your newsletter with important updates and information.

With excitement, we introduce to the PACA Community the first group of PACA Country Officers, who recently began work in The Gambia, Malawi and Nigeria. Likewise, hiring of officers is expected to be finalized in July/August 2016 for Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda. PACA Country Officers will work to accelerate implementation of aflatoxin control activities at country level toward more tangible results.

It may be of interest to PACA Community members to know more on the role of the PACA country officers and how their work will support the great efforts of different stakeholders. The Officers serve as a representative of PACA in their respective pilot country. Their main focus will be to manage partnerships to derive implementation of national aflatoxin control plans for wholesale change in aflatoxin control. Recall the national plans are comprehensive, based on thorough studies and consultations; they guide PACA community members to contribute to coordinated aflatoxin control efforts. Working towards common goals will enable any stakeholder to leverage and complement others for synergy and improved impact. I would like to reiterate that fragmented efforts at aflatoxin control, spanning over half a century, did not do much to mitigate the complex aflatoxin problem, especially in Africa. It is worth noting that PACA's country presence will be the leanest with just a single officer. However, each officer is hosted in a relevant government ministry and works closely with the National Aflatoxin Control Steering Committee, a multi-sectoral coordination body involving government, private sector, research institutions, development partners and civil society.

More specifically, the Country Officers will coordinate country level studies, align stakeholders and play an active role in the development, implementation and progress monitoring of country plans, as well as documenting learnings and knowledge products. They also will coordinate the communication and visibility efforts of PACA and various stakeholders. The PACA Secretariat heartily welcomes on board the first three country officers. Please read their profiles as well as other relevant aflatoxin news articles in this issue.

Thank you for your support to aflatoxin control in Africa.

Amare Ayalew (PhD)

Program Manager, PACA

The United Republic of Tanzania Convened Aflatoxin Mitigation Business Meeting

The Government of Tanzania through the support of the AUC-PACA and national consultants at Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST) conducted a situation analysis and developed an Aflatoxin Mitigation Action Plan which is now owned by the Government and mainstreamed into the Tanzania Agriculture Food Security Investment Plan (TAFSIP).

To ensure effective implementation of the main-

streamed action plan, AUC through PACA supported the United Republic of Tanzania to design a funding strategy and convene a business meeting in Dar es Salaam on 12 May 2016. The business meeting provided a platform for key stakeholders including government line ministries, The East African Community, donors and private sector to agree on a resource mobilization /funding strategy and implementation road map that will facilitate sustainable and predictable funding for im-

plementing the aflatoxin control action plan.

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives opened the meeting which comprised of approximately 40 delegates. The meeting took stock of the current aflatoxin mitigation activities being funded in the country and participants applauded the efforts the Government of Tanzania is putting in place to ensure that the action plan is partly funded through the National Budgeting processes.

The PACA Tanzania Country Officer, once instituted, will work with all stakeholders using the resource mobilization strategy as a guide to mobilize funds required for implementing identified activities in the Tanzania Aflatoxin Control Action Plan.



Gambia Validates its National Aflatoxin Control Action Plan

The Gambia validated its National Aflatoxin Control Action and Investment plan in a stakeholders' meeting on 28-29 June 2016 in Banjul. The plan was developed based on the situation analysis commissioned by PACA and validated in October 2015. This is a comprehensive plan which is expected to be mainstreamed in the upcoming review of Gambia National Agriculture Investment Plans well as the National Development Plan from 2017-2022. The meeting was officially opened by Mrs. Rohie Bittaye Darboe, Deputy Permanent Secretary from the Office of the President, who emphasized that the fight against aflatoxins requires a multi-stakeholder effort within the Gambia and abroad. She also assured the



audience of the government's commitment to work with the various stakeholders to ensure the implementation of the National Aflatoxin Control Action Plan.

The plan has eight thematic areas that addresses awareness creation and advocacy; risk analysis; research and technology; policies, legislation and standards; trade and market infrastructure; financing, investments and resource mobilization; capac-

ity building; and stakeholder coordination and monitoring. The workshop was attended by heads of organizations, development partners and experts from the various sectors in The Gambia. A business meeting involving government, private sector and development partners will be held in September 2016 in order to enhance investments towards implementation of the plan.

Malawi Validates an Aflatoxin Communications and Awareness Strategy

The Government of Malawi is implementing the Malawi Program for Aflatoxin Control (MAPAC) through the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism with support from other Key Ministries and Stakeholders. The MAPAC has identified key priority areas including Public Awareness, Advocacy and Consumer Education. Since 2015, Malawi (a PACA Pilot Country) has been developing an Aflatoxin Communications and Awareness Strategy. The Strategy identifies harmonized messages to be delivered to target groups and

the communication tools to be used for delivering these messages. The overall objective of the strategy is to create a deeper awareness and understanding of aflatoxins in the wider context of food safety in Malawi.

On 10 June 2016, approximately 30 Stakeholders including PACA Secretariat, AUC, National stakeholders including Civil Society, Academia and Research Institutions, Private Sector, Farmer Organizations, Communication Specialists, and Consumer Organizations met in Lilongwe to validate the Aflatoxin Communication and Awareness Strategy of Mala-

wi. The Strategy is accompanied by a Skills Development (capacity building) plan for stakeholders along the value chains and a well costed Implementation Plan.

The Communication Strategy which is aligned to the PACA Strategy and EAC Communication Strategy will provide a step-by-step plan through which sustainable awareness creation, advocacy, and skills development (training) on aflatoxin mitigation could be rolled out in Malawi and provides a best practice for other Countries to learn from and build on.

Strengthening the Nigeria National Food Control System and Safety: Nigeria's Food Safety Bill Reviewed by Stakeholders

Nigeria, one of PACA's pilot countries, has adopted its National Policy on Food Safety and its Implementation Strategy in March 2016. In line with the Food Safety Policy, under the project "Strengthening the Nigeria National Food Control System and Safety", the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UNFAO) supported the Nigerian government in drafting a national food safety and quality bill as well as an institutional reform policy for its food safety system. The project aimed at contributing to sustainable improvements in national food security as well as supporting the implemen-

tation of the National Policy on Food Safety and Control in Nigeria.

The proposed bill and institutional reform, which were presented, reviewed and validated from 7-9 June 2016 in Abuja, Nigeria, looked at all food safety issues including aflatoxins. PACA presented on the magnitude of the aflatoxin problem, its impact on the

country and its current support to the Nigerian government in strengthening the food control system focusing on aflatoxins. PACA's support to Nigeria is well aligned with the broader food safety and quality bill of the country and is expected to contribute to the overall improvement of the food safety system in Nigeria.



PACA to Convene the 2nd PPM with Focus on Implementation-Progress Tracking and Sustainability

The PACA Partnership Platform is the foundation of the PACA structure with broad membership base of diverse partners who have a stake in aflatoxin control in Africa. In October 2014, PACA held its first Partnership Platform Meeting under the theme “Working together to accelerate actions to reduce the harmful effects of aflatoxin in Africa” where more than 190 people from all over the African continent and abroad participated. The platform is an innovative forum for information sharing, identification of systemic challenges to aflatoxin prevention and control, and co-creation of solutions. The PPM is held every two years. PACA is organizing its second Partnership Platform Meeting under the

theme “Tracking commitments, sustaining implementation for results and impact” from 11-13 October 2016 in Kampala, Uganda.

The main objective of the second PPM is to build on the 1st PPM’s outcomes and recommendations and focus on implementation progress, results and impact at various levels. Unlike the first PPM which focused on stock taking of aflatoxin control efforts and planning, the 2nd PPM is expected to shift the discussions to reviewing implementation progress and results. The PPM will also explore options for sustainable implementation of activities beyond PACA support in the six pilot countries and other aflatoxin mitigation initiatives. The PPM will draw lessons from

the challenges and successes recorded in the past couple years to chart a way forward. While assessing the implementation progress of aflatoxin control on the continent, the PPM will also recognize programs and individual champions who have been able to advance the aflatoxin control agenda in Africa.

The PPM will bring together experts, policy makers, farmers, various organizations and institutions, development partners and others involved in aflatoxin control efforts across Africa. For more information, please visit our website at: <http://www.aflatoxinpartnership.org/?q=node/442>. To register, please go to survey monkey at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2016_PACA_PPM

PACA Hires Country Officers in Three of its Pilot Countries

PACA Secretariat is pleased to announce that PACA Country Officers are now hired for Malawi, Nigeria and The Gambia. PACA has been working with its pilot countries in the development of a national aflatoxin control action plan. The implementation of the national plans is the single most important activity for the countries in order to mitigate the aflatoxin problem. PACA hires country officers in each of its pilot countries to coordinate activities at the national level and put implementation of the national plans on track. We are genuinely pleased to introduce the three PACA Country Officers to the Community.

Nigeria: Mrs. Stella Denloye

Mrs. Denloye is a Nigerian scientist who has worked in the public sector for 35 years. Before joining PACA, Mrs. Denloye had recently retired from the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) of Nigeria after serving in various capacities including Director of Laboratory services. Mrs. Denloye has extensive experience in laboratory quality control of food, pharmaceuticals and chemicals. In 2013, she led the first team of laboratory staff towards realizing ISO 170225 laboratory accreditation of the mycotoxin and pesticide residues laboratory units of NAFDAC Central Laboratory. As the Director of Laboratory Services, she managed 7 laboratories in different parts of Nigeria. Mrs. Denloye will be the PACA country officer for Nigeria, hosted by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.



PACA Hires Country Officers in Three of its Pilot Countries – Continued

The Gambia: Ms. Ndey Ceesay



Ms Ceesay is a Gambian national with more than a decade experience in the public sector. She has worked for the Ministry of Trade and Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration & Employment in the capacity of Acting Director for Investment and Industry until 2015. She has extensive experience as a principal economist engaged in the establishment of the Gambia Investment & Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) as well as the development of the pre-requisite GIEPA Act 2010. She was also directly involved in the successful conclusion of Gambia's first Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMW) Policy document. She was a member of the tripartite team that successfully established the Gambia Government-Commonwealth Agro processing pilot project – Banjulunding Processing Plant. Ms. Ceesay will be the PACA country officer for The Gambia, hosted by the Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA) of the Gambia.

Malawi: Mr. Mphatso Dakamau

Mr. Mphatso Dakamau is an Agricultural Economist with vast experience in multi-stakeholder platform facilitation, project management, public private partnership formation and engagement, and advocacy. Before joining PACA, he served in different senior positions in organizations such as the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship, Farmers Union of Malawi and Opportunity International Bank of Malawi. He holds a Master of Science Degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Malawi. Mr. Dakamau will be the PACA Country Officer for Malawi operating from the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade.



News and Information on Aflatoxins

EAC Validates an Aflatoxin Prevention and Control Strategy and Action Plan

The East African Community (EAC) and its partner States have identified aflatoxin as a priority challenge to agricultural and economic development in the region. In this regard, the 27th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the EAC in August 2013 directed the EAC Secretariat to initiate a project on aflatoxin prevention and control taking into consideration the multi-sectoral and multi-faceted nature of the impacts and effects of Aflatoxin.

In 2014, the EAC and partners States developed a Regional Aflatoxin Prevention and Control Strategy and Action Plan (2017-2021). The strategy and action plan was informed by research through a series of thematic technical papers developed with the research and policy community. The Strategy and Action plan is aligned to Global and Continental Goals and



Frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the African Union Agenda 2063, and Malabo Declaration of African Heads of States and Government -2014The EAC Secretariat, a member of the PACA Steering Committee, ensured that the Regional Aflatoxin Prevention and Control Strategy is aligned to and speaks to the PACA Strategy 2012-2023). The validation workshop of the EAC Aflatoxin workshop took place in Kampala, Uganda from 28-30 June 2016 and included EAC partners States, the African Union Commission - PACA Secretariat, the Private Sector Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC); the East Afri-

can Farmers Federation (EAFF), USAID and IITA (who are also members of PACA Steering Committee).

It is to be recalled that, based on a PACA supported regional consultation, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) developed the strategic ECOWAS Aflatoxin Control Action Plan and got it validated by its policy organs in November 2015. Through a similar approach, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) is in the process of developing its regional aflatoxin control strategy. The regional aflatoxin control strategies are developed to guide coherent and coordinated actions for effective aflatoxin mitigation at country level.

FARA Holds its 7th Africa Agriculture Science Week and General Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda

The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) held its 7th Africa Agriculture Science Week and FARA General Assembly from 13-16 June 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda. The meeting is the principal forum for all stakeholders in African agriculture science, technology and innovation to take stock of their collective achievements over the past few years. This is also an opportunity to craft a common agenda in order to achieve their collective targets over the next few years.

The theme of the workshop was: “Apply Science, Impact Livelihoods” where it was organized under the following sub-thematic areas:

1. Institutional systems and policies for making science work for African agriculture;
2. Sustainable productivity growth, value chains and profitable agribusinesses;
3. Human capital development and the Youth;
4. Sustainable financing of Science, Technology and Innovation for African agriculture; and
5. Megatrends in African Agriculture.

The meeting was co-organized with various stakeholders including sub-regional institutions, continental organizations as well as international research institutions, academia

and many others. The event focused mainly on the operationalization of the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa at the country level.

The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) and the BECA-ILRI Hub in collaboration with the Rwanda College for Veterinary Medicine (CAVM), FARA and PACA co-organized a side event on “Strengthening Systems to Optimize Agriculture and Nutrition Outcomes (SOANO) in Africa” on 13 June 2016. The role and impacts of aflatoxins on the private sector as well as the mycotoxin-nutrition research platform of the BecA ILRI Hub were discussed.

Strategic Grain Reserves Should Test Produce for Aflatoxin, Concluded the Africa Grain Reserve Conference

The Africa Grain Reserve Conference which was held in Nairobi, Kenya on 13-15 June 2016 brought together governments, grain traders, researchers, international organizations and storage technology companies as well as the African Union Commission. The main proponents of the conference GrainPro and the African Union Commission through the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), co-sponsored the conference with the Schooner Africa Fund, Abt Associates and AGCO/GSI and organized it in partnership with Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Farm Concern International (Kenya), and the World Food Preservation Center.

The conference recognized the role of grain reserve

agencies in price stabilization and in averting catastrophic food shortages. There has been wide recognition that strategic grain reserves play a vital role in ensuring the food security of their people by distributing food to regions most in need and reducing large fluctuations in staple commodity prices.

However, although many national governments across Africa are storing grain in large quantities, often the results leave much to be desired. From insect infestation to mold invasion, inadequate storage facilities lead to large grain losses for many countries, while also hampering efforts to improve national food security for the poorest families.

Anne Mbaabu, Head, Markets & Harvest Management at AGRA, said post-harvest loss is "the most unanswered and ignored challenge" to food

insecurity in Africa, representing more than US\$4 billion in lost value every year. "Governments, cooperatives and farmers need to have better access to appropriate storage facilities and access to new technologies to reduce losses," said Mbaabu. One of the major food safety and storage issues addressed at the conference is the high prevalence of aflatoxin in maize and other staple commodities. The conference noted the importance of aflatoxins as poisonous and cancer-causing fungal compounds that can lead to stunting in children and severe health problems in adults. They occur at harvest and are regularly found in improperly stored commodities such as maize, cassava, millet, rice, sorghum, and wheat. In addition, when contaminated grain is processed, aflatoxins enter the general food supply where

Strategic Grain Reserves Should Test Produce for Aflatoxin, Concluded the Africa Grain Reserve Conference – Continued

they have been found in both pet and human foods.

“Aflatoxin contamination across food systems undermines the gains made in improving production systems in the developing world,” said Amare Ayalew, Program Manager of PACA. “A major part of the solution to the aflatoxin challenge lies in adequate handling and storage of grains. Increased understanding of challenges and opportunities of grain reserves in the African context will go a long way to mitigating aflatoxin contamination in strategic crops.”

“In the past, grain reserves have been instrumental in stabilizing food prices, managing disasters, and protecting poor with social safety nets programs,” said Shahid Rashid, Senior Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute. “The challenge has been imple-

menting a grain reserve system in a socially optimal way.

However, thanks to technological advancements, the feasibility of setting up an efficient grain reserve, with links to agricultural price policies and social safety nets, is now better than ever before. “

“We believe that solving the problem of post-harvest losses and securing safe, long-term storage for grains will have a major positive impact on the financial lives of small holder farmers as well as the health of their communities and environment,” said Cynthia Ryan, Director of the Schooner Africa Fund. “GrainPro is committed to improving large-scale storage, reducing food losses and protecting African consumers from the serious health consequences of high aflatoxin levels,” stated Philippe Villers, President of GrainPro. “We believe the conference is an

important step in combating hunger and poverty, particularly in the face of climate change. We are excited about the opportunity to learn from each other and improve grain reserves.”

To improve the lives of all Africans, the Conference urged Governments and Strategic Grain Reserve agencies to take advantage of its findings. These include that protecting people – especially children – against aflatoxin is insufficiently addressed and a major moral and economic issue; government grain reserves should test for aflatoxin when receiving grain and before distributing it. Moreover, Strategic Grain Reserve agencies have the opportunity to significantly improve performance on reducing grain losses, particularly in the face of climate change.

The Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) releases its 2015 annual report

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) program releases its 2015 annual report. The A4NH, led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), helps in achieving the CGIAR's Strategy and Results Framework, particularly the system-level outcome on improving food and nutrition security. The Annual report looks at the program's achievements, progress and new developments. A4NH works on enhancing nutrition with multi-sectoral engagement as

well as improving food safety in informal value chains. The program is now entering its second phase (2017-2022) and focusing on activities that are enhancing agricultural contributions to improved nutrition and health. The 2015 report also highlights the ongoing efforts on the continent on aflatoxin control such as the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), and many others. A4NH aims to continue with critical research on aflatoxins which will include mapping of hotspots and risk assess-

ments, building capacity of national partners and farmers to use existing technologies, and testing consumer perceptions and strategies for improving food safety. A4NH contributes to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals # 2 which aims at ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture. For further reading please visit A4NH website at: <http://a4nh.cgiar.org/2016/07/15/aligned-to-improve-nutrition-and-health-announcing-a4nhs-2015-annual-report/>.

Upcoming event:

2nd PACA PPM , 11-13 October 2016

Kampala, Uganda

CONTACT US:

Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA)
Dept. of Rural Economy & Agriculture
African Union Commission

PO Box 3243
Addis Ababa W21K19
Ethiopia

www.aflatoxinpartnership.org

"AFRICA FREE FROM THE HARMFUL
EFFECTS OF AFLATOXINS"