



An Africa free from the harmful effects of aflatoxins

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Dear PACA Community Members

VISION:

An Africa free from the harmful effects of aflatoxins.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Regional Workshop on "Aflatoxin Control in Maize Value Chains": 10-11 October 2017, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- ["1st MycoKey International Conference Global Mycotoxin Reduction in the Food and Feed Chain, 11-14 September 2017, Ghent, Belgium.](#)
- ["6th International scientific meeting Mycology, Mycotoxicology, and Mycoses, 27-29 September 2017, Novi Sad, Serbia.](#)

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We are pleased to present this issue of your newsletter with important updates and information. We hope to interest you in the updates on the progress being made in PACA pilot countries. We are witnessing that the coordinated efforts at country level are starting to bear fruit. From the examples of Tanzania and Senegal, we are beginning to see that a single cohesive, government-led and stakeholder aligned country plan can bridge the gap between needed interventions and dedication of resources. It is encouraging to see the potential involvement of the youth as beneficiaries and active players of aflatoxin control. There is little disagreement that the safety and quality standards of African agriculture should be at par with that of global best practices for the sector to be competitive enough to attract agribusiness and youth employment. Read about the side event on this theme at the CAADP Partnership Platform.

Moreover, you will read that the East African Community (EAC) continues to prioritize aflatoxin control in its member states. EAC has been leading efforts at regional harmonization of aflatoxin standards. Read more about EACs coordination mechanism and on-going efforts. EAC is one of the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs), which are the building blocks of the African Union. PACA recognizes the important roles of RECs in aflatoxin control at the grassroots level.

You will also find other interesting highlights. The

Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) Program of the CGIAR has taken an important step by identifying food safety as one of the five flagships of its Phase II strategy. We do hope nutrition focused programs would emulate this recognition that the quantity of food or nutrition interventions alone cannot guarantee food security or nutrition without addressing the silent killers - aflatoxin and other food safety challenges.

In our review of the report from the CTA-PACA desk study on "Improving the Evidence Base on Aflatoxin Contamination and Exposure in Africa- Summary" you can read the conclusions that stood out from the study. Building on that report, PACA and CTA are launching a meta-analysis to further contribute to the evidence base to inform policies, research prioritization and practice for effective aflatoxin mitigation. The first meta-analysis on aflatoxins which would be completed in the first quarter of 2018 is expected, among others, to replace some of the obsolete, arbitrary and at times misleading figures on the impact of aflatoxins. Finally, we hope that the exemplary partnership approach, perseverance and wisdom that led to the recent award to Dr. Ranajit Bandyopadhyay of IITA will inspire many young researchers. Read all of that in this issue.

Thank you for your support to aflatoxin control in Africa.

Amare Ayalew (PhD)
Program Manager,
PACA, AUC

The Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) Awards Tanzania US\$20 Million for Aflatoxin Control



Members of the mission on field visit

Tanzania is to receive US\$20 million support from [The Global Agriculture and Food Security Program \(GAFSP\)](#) to prevent aflatoxin contamination and exposure in the maize and groundnuts food chain as one of the ways to improve food safety and food security in the country.

This news was contained in a [press release](#) by the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) on 30th March 2017, and the budget speech given by Eng. Dr. Charles John Tizeba (MP), Tanzania Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, to the Tanzania Parliament on 19th May 2017.

The Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) is a multilateral mechanism to improve incomes

and food and nutrition security in low-income countries by boosting agricultural productivity. The GAFSP is implemented as a Financial Intermediary Fund for which the World Bank serves as Trustee. The GAFSP has since 2010 announced annually new rounds of grants to fight hunger and poverty in developing countries.

H.E. Mrs. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission, while congratulating the government of the United Republic of Tanzania noted that “fragmented and incremental measures will not adequately address the aflatoxin challenge because it is complex and pervasive. It is my belief that Tanzania will make use of the

GAFSP funding to register meaningful results at the grassroots level, positively impacting on the lives of smallholder farmers who are severely affected by aflatoxin contamination of their staple and cash crops. I also hope that this effort will enable your country to achieve improvements in food control systems and raise overall food safety and quality standards which are vital to make the agriculture sector competitive with far reaching benefits including improved access to market.”

The award to Tanzania was based on a proposal “Tanzania Initiative for Prevention of Aflatoxin Contamination Project (TANIPAC)” submitted by the Government of Tanzania in response to the 2016 Call, which was supported by the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) of the African Union and other partners, in the fight against aflatoxin in the continent.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) is the supervisory entity for the project. PACA which assisted in initiating and preparing the proposal is the Technical Advisory entity for the project.

A team from the AfDB undertook a preparatory mission to Tanzania from 5 – 16 June 2017. The mission held different meetings with various stakeholders including officials of the Tanzania Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries (MALF) and other stakeholder institutions. PACA was represented in most of the meetings by Dr. Martin Kimanya, PACA Technical Advisor and Dr. Happy Magoha, PACA Country Officer for Tanzania.

PACA Focuses on the Youth

Aside meeting, “Making African Agriculture More Competitive, Vibrant and Attractive to the Youth through Improved Food Safety and Quality for Boosting Trade and Agribusiness” was held on 31 May 2007, as part of the 13th Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) Partnership Platform in Kampala, Uganda.

The meeting was convened by PACA in collaboration with the CAADP Non-State Actors, the Pan African Agribusiness and Agro Industry Consortium (PanAAC) and the CAADP Youth Network.

The focus on the youth was in accordance with the African Union's theme for 2017, “[Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investments in the Youth.](#)” Africa is the most youthful continent in the world with about 65% of the total population below the age of 35 years and yet still, about 10 million young Africans come into the labor market every year to increase the youth unemployment rate in the [continent](#).

[Agriculture has been identified as one of the potential](#) areas to attract and create job opportunities for the youth, but in order to achieve this, there is need to enhance the competitiveness of African agriculture which continues to be undermined by food quality and



A group picture of the participants

safety issues such as aflatoxin. Agribusiness will flourish with a steady supply of safe and quality raw materials such as cereals, nuts, spices, and animal source foods including milk. Agro-processing will be undermined when the difficulty of meeting aflatoxin standards forces African companies to import crops such as groundnuts from abroad while they are amply produced within the continent.

Dr. Joshua Mutambi, who represented Ambassador Julius Onen, the Permanent Secretary of

Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives in Uganda officially opened the meeting.

He observed that many people on the continent, especially young Africans, view agribusiness as a poor man's occupation with little benefits and as a last resort and commended PACA for the initiative to attract the youth to agribusiness.

Dr. Mutambi added his voice to the urgent need to enhance the competitiveness of African agricultural commodities in order to improve the incomes of farmers and agribusiness players and that could serve as an incentive for the youth to go into the agriculture sector.

Mrs. Erica Maganga, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development Malawi, in her remarks noted that effectively addressing the challenges of aflatoxin will facilitate the achievement of four of the seven Malabo Commitments to achieve agricultural transformation in the continent.

She urged African countries to prioritize food safety and aflatoxin control in their respective National Agricultural Investment Plans and other frameworks to ensure that they dealt with the issue in a more systematic manner.

Two proposed PACA tools, namely, PACA's draft Communications Strategy and draft Knowledge Management Strategy were presented for stakeholder review at the meeting. ■



A cross section of the participants

Senegal Holds Business Meeting to Finance Aflatoxin Mitigation

A meeting on how to finance the National Aflatoxin Control Action Plan (NACAP) for Senegal has been held in Dakar- Senegal. The NACAP is developed by individual countries with support from the African Union through the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) to comprehensively mitigate aflatoxin and address other food safety issues in their respective countries.

An estimated budget of US\$3,717,251 is required to finance implementation of the NACAP over five years. The Government of Senegal has pledged to finance 60% of the budget.

The meeting, held on Friday 19 May 2017, was attended by stakeholders from the public and private sectors. They included representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Livestock. Also present were representatives of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

The private sector and civil society were also represented by la Société nationale de Commercialisation des Oléagineux du Sénégal (SONACOS) S.A, the Comité Interprofessionnel de l'Arachide (CNIA), the Société d'Aménagement et d'Exploitation du Delta du Fleuve Sénégal et le Falémé (SAED), the Groupement des Producteurs Exportateurs des Graines d'arachide (COPECA) and the Association des Cosommateurs su Sénégal (ASCOSEN).

Mr Babacar Samb, Food Safety Expert, explained that the NACAP was developed based on an AUC-PACA supported study undertaken in 2015 to assess aflatoxin contamination in the maize, groundnut and rice value chains and its effect on the consuming public, as well as, its overall impact on the economy of Senegal.

According to Mr Babacar Samb, the results of the study confirmed [earlier studies](#) that aflatoxin has serious adverse effects on agriculture, trade and the economy as a whole and required integrated interventions, hence the need to develop and implement the NACAP to address the complex challenges.

Mr Ababacar Sedikh Ndiaye, Technical Advisor to the Prime



Groundnut an economic mainstay of Senegal is severely impacted by aflatoxin

Minister of Senegal in charge of Trade commended the development partners for attending the meeting, which was a clear demonstration of their commitment to support the Government of Senegal to implement the NACAP.

Dr Dogo Seck, Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Equipment who chaired the meeting affirmed the commitment of the Government of Senegal to support the NACAP, and further called on the country's development partners to complement the government's effort to address aflatoxin by contributing to the implementation of the NACAP

Mr. Anselme Voudounhessi, an Advisor with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of the African Union Commission (AUC) said the

Malabo Declaration by African Heads of State to increase agricultural productivity will be enhanced if the threat of aflatoxin in the continent is contained.

The Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), of the African Union was represented by Ms. Winta Sintayehu, Program Officer for West Africa region and Mr. Magatte Ndoye, PACA Country Officer for Senegal.

The meeting recommended the organisation of specific meetings with the technical and financial partners to get their individual commitment to the NACAP.

Both AfDB and the FAO representatives commended the organisation of the meeting and expressed commitment to support the Government of Senegal to implement the NACAP. ■



Malawi Strives to find a solution to Aflatoxin through Collaboration



Credit: Willie Kalumula/CIMMYT

Development partners in Malawi support aflatoxin mitigation in diverse ways.

Malawi has stepped up efforts through partnerships and collaborative engagements to find solution to the challenges posed by aflatoxins in the country. It is estimated that the country loses approximately **US\$11 million every year** in potential export leading to low agricultural productivity. Given the mounting evidence on the association of aflatoxin and childhood growth faltering, aflatoxin could be linked to the alarming rate of stunting in children which hovers around 48% according to the [Nutrition Country Profile of Malawi](#), published by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO).

One such collaborative venture is with the IITA, a member of the Malawi Aflatoxin Technical Working Group, which is conducting a trial on possible adoption and commercialization of the aflasafe product, a biocontrol technology, with support from USAID.

A field visit was held on 19 April 2017 by national stakeholders to assess how the trials were performing. The team was led by Mrs. Charity Mosonzo, Deputy

Director of Trade. The Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), was represented by the Country Officer for Malawi, Mr Mphatso Dakamau.

The team first visited the aflatoxin research and training laboratory at Chitedze Research Station (a PACA Partner Lab for the Africa Aflatoxin Information Management System) in Lilongwe, which has been further refurbished by IITA under the [Feed-the-Future Malawi Improved Seed Systems and Technologies \(MISST\) project](#). The team was shown the strains identified as atoxigenic in Malawi and which may be used as bio-control products for the country.

Dr Arega Alene, Country Representative for IITA, disclosed that two different aflasafe products, which were developed using local technologies were being evaluated in farmers' fields for possible scale up to farmers.

Dr Joseph Atehnkeng, Plant pathologist and Project Manager for the MISST-aflasafe component at IITA explained the process involved in the development of the products. He also demonstrated the different methods that could be used to test aflatoxin in grains, which he said will be made available to the public for a "small fee".

The team also visited Mchinji district and engaged farmers on the trial with the Aflasafe and most of them were positive about the products, based on the trial results.

Mrs Musonzo said the government was keenly following the developments and progress being made in the development of aflasafe in Malawi because it will play a significant role in reducing high levels of aflatoxins in maize and groundnut production in the country and that could stimulate trade opportunities with markets that are strict on aflatoxin levels.

She also opined that aflatoxin-free produce for local consumption will improve the health and nutrition standards of Malawians and help to minimize the health related challenges such as stunting and diseases associated with aflatoxin, like liver cancer. ■



The team on field visit

Credit: Times Group

Aflatoxin Control: Part of Food and Nutrition Security Strategy for Nigeria

The Agricultural Sector Food Security and Nutrition Strategy for Nigeria has been launched, with aflatoxin control highlighted as a food safety priority area for improving food security at the national, community and household levels.

The 10-year Agricultural Sector Food Security and Nutrition Strategy; 2016-2025 is expected to combat malnutrition and food insecurity in the country.

The strategy identified aflatoxin reduction through biocontrol as one of the four key nutrition sensitive interventions for scaling up nutrition in Nigeria, that will save 183,000 lives annually and avert more than three million cases of stunting among children under five.

The launch was a collaboration between Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition which is being supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the UK Department for International Development (DFID)

Prof. Abubakar Hafiz, the Deputy Governor of Kano State who launched the document on behalf of Chief Audu Ogbeh, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, expressed regret over the poor level of food safety in the Nigeria.

He called for the establishment of a National Food and Nutrition Commission to mobilise resources as well as coordinate the implementation of the document.

Prof. Sandy Thomas, the Director of the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, said the strategy would help support policy makers in the country to make informed decisions.

She was also of the view that it will help Nigeria to meet the 2015 World Health Assembly target for stunting if the strategy is well implemented.

Dr. Philippa Momah, a representative of the 'Scaling Up Nutrition' (SUN) Movement in Nigeria, advocated for partnerships among relevant stakeholders; private and public, to implement the strategy. Mrs. Stella Denloye, PACA Country Officer for Nigeria participated in the launch.■



Dignitaries displaying copies of the strategy

Food Safety: Flagship of the A4NH Phase II Strategy

Agriculture can do much more than reduce hunger and poverty: it has an enormous potential to significantly improve the nutrition and health of people around the world. This premise is the foundation of the [CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health](#) (A4NH). Launched in 2011 and now entering its second phase, A4NH is an integrative research program with research in food systems, biofortification, food safety, integrated agriculture-nutrition program and policies and agriculture-public health. A4NH starts with and focuses on food consumption and demand, rather than supply.

Understanding the complexities and nuances of food safety will be key to A4NH's success in its second phase. While this development challenge has always been part of the program's research portfolio, growing urgency and awareness has made it so central to A4NH's mission that Food Safety has been identified as one of five Phase II Flagship Research Programs. "We are seeing greater demand for fresh foods along with increasingly complex value chains, and while high in nutrients they can also be high in the pathogens that are responsible for most cases of foodborne disease," noted A4NH Director John McDermott. "Food safety is growing in importance, and addressing it must be a priority."

Researchers in the [Food Safety Flagship](#) are focusing on two issues: supporting value chains to make available safe, fresh, nutritious, foods such as milk, meat, fish, and leafy vegetables; and reducing aflatoxins in staple crops in Africa.

The World Health Organization reports foodborne diseases have a health burden comparable to malaria, HIV/AIDS, or tuberculosis. This obstacle to development also carries significant economic threats, with farmers throughout Africa investing in staple crops they then cannot sell due to aflatoxin contamination, a toxic substance produced by moulds that infest crops, for example.

A key area of A4NH research is helping policymakers understand not just the scope of the problem, but also the benefits and returns on investments of solutions. With efforts complementing PACA's emphasis on aflatoxins in groundnuts, maize and dairy value chains, work in

this area has been an A4NH priority. "A4NH's work on aflatoxins highlights our efforts to provide policymakers with the tools and resources they need to implement successful agricultural strategies for improving nutrition, health, and incomes" commented Ranajit Bandyopadhyay, Principal Scientist at IITA and Cluster Leader for Aflatoxin Mitigation in A4NH, who brings in A4NH perspectives to PACA as a member of the Steering Committee.

Policymakers and investors are increasingly interested in food safety. Earlier in 2017, government officials in Vietnam met with A4NH researchers and others to mark the launch of a government commissioned report outlining ways to [better manage food safety risks in that country](#). In May, A4NH co-convoked a workshop with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, titled "[Better Targeting Food Safety Investments in Low and Middle-Income Countries](#)," bringing together policymakers, researchers, donors, and others to discuss the challenges impeding access to safe foods. Three major issue themes emerged: the importance of collaboration and knowledge sharing across disciplines, challenges of risk misperception and consumers' need for information when weighing risks and hazards, and the acuteness of the problem for the health of small children. While solutions need to be tailored to situations, all three issues need to be tackled. PACA and A4NH have co-organized several events, the latest being [a special session and a symposium](#) on aflatoxins in March at the 1st All-Africa Post-Harvest Congress and Exhibition, Nairobi.

With collaborations and conversations like this, there is cause for optimism in the struggle for food safety. "There is much work to be done, but the dedication of A4NH researchers, partners, and others working in this field points towards progress on this very serious challenge," noted Delia Grace, Animal and Human Health Program Leader at ILRI and A4NH Food Safety Flagship Leader.

To learn more about A4NH, please visit www.a4nh.cgiar.org, or follow on Twitter @A4NH_CGIAR.

[This article is a contribution of the A4NH Team]

“Improving the Evidence Base on Aflatoxin Contamination and Exposure in Africa”: A Summary

CTA
Working Paper
16/13

Improving the Evidence Base on Aflatoxin Contamination and Exposure in Africa

Sheila Okoth

Series: Agriculture and nutrition



No single technology or intervention has been identified as a standalone strategy for aflatoxin mitigation to warrant wide-scale adoption in Africa. This is one of the several major conclusions and recommendations of a study [“Improving the Evidence Base on Aflatoxin Contamination and Exposure in Africa”](#).

The study was authored by Sheila Okoth, Professor of Mycology at the University of Nairobi and published in November 2016 by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) in partnership with the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), as a “Working Paper” of the cooperation.

The CTA is a joint international institution of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and the European Union (EU) with the mission to advance food and nutritional security in member states. It defines its “Working Papers” as work in progress that may not have been formally peer reviewed. They are published to elicit comments and stimulate discussion

Other notable conclusions and recommendations of the report are as follows:

- No country is immune from aflatoxin and African consumers and livestock remained at risk;
- A Wide range of commodities that are

produced in Africa and traded domestically, regionally and internationally are contaminated with aflatoxins;

- The challenge of controlling aflatoxin contamination persists, with continued negative effects on socio-economic development notwithstanding the vast knowledge;
- Significant investments have been made in the control of aflatoxin, especially by the research, academic and donor community with varying measures of success;
- The variety of cereals and other crops (roots and tubers, spices, legumes) that are contaminated are essential staple foods for a majority of Africans;
- Reports of death resulting from severe aflatoxin poisoning have been recorded in both humans and animals in Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda;
- Awareness of aflatoxins and the associated risks among African consumers and value chain actors (e.g. farmers, traders) is low except areas where outbreaks have occurred and mostly among educated populations;
- Investing in public education by designing and implementing an effective communication strategy along value chains must be a priority for countries;
- Consumers and buyers (processors, traders, exporters) in higher economic levels are willing to pay a premium for aflatoxin free products and not the poor;
- Adoption of GAPs and controlling moisture content during storage and transportation can effectively control fungal growth and aflatoxin contamination;
- Farmers should be the primary target group in the fight against aflatoxin contamination in Africa with knowledge, technologies and incentives;
- Use of pre-harvest innovations that depend on the manipulation of the fungal population ecology (e.g. Aflasafe™), and reproduction and gene manipulation (e.g. breeding for resistance) to control aflatoxin is promising;
- Weak governance and legislative framework is a major drawback in the fight against aflatoxins;
- Country governments should be encouraged to invest in building certified and accessible infrastructure for training manpower, and testing and grading commodities;
- Businesses should be motivated to do self-regulation; and
- Harmonization of legislation within trading blocks and strictness in upholding the rules will contribute to the mitigation of aflatoxin contamination. ■



Members of the REWGA pose in front of the IITA aflasafe factory in Ibadan

East African Community furthers its pursuit of Aflatoxin Prevention and Control

The East African Community Secretariat is not relenting in finding a solution to the challenges of aflatoxin in the region, 4 years after the 27th Meeting of Council of Ministers had launched a multi sectoral aflatoxin control programme in August 2013.

Aflatoxin contamination of food and feed is one of the challenges posing a threat to the East African Community. The **East African Community (EAC)** is a regional intergovernmental organisation of 6 Partner States: the Republics of Burundi, [Kenya](#), Rwanda, South Sudan, the [United Republic of Tanzania](#), and the [Republic of Uganda](#), with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. Some of these countries have reported deaths among their population due to consumption of aflatoxin

contaminated foods.

Pursuant to the Directives of the 27th Meeting of Council of Ministers, the [East African Community Regional Experts Working Group on Aflatoxins \(REWGA\)](#) was established in March 2014 to help address Aflatoxin along the food and feed value chains in the region.

REWGA's role is to create public awareness, training, research and development as well as setting of appropriate standards and regulations to ensure that products comply with both regional and international market requirements. These proposed activities of the REWGA have been developed into a project called The Multi-Regional Aflatoxin Abatement Project (MRAAP) Project.

The efforts of REWGA have since been supported by various partners

including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Regional Office for East Africa, the Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA).

Under the aegis of the REWGA, a 16 member team from the EAC paid a working visit to IITA headquarters in Ibadan, Nigeria, between 20-22 March 2017 to explore and understand how biocontrol (Aflasafe technology) can be used to control aflatoxin, and how that technology can be successfully exported to the countries of the East African Community (EAC).

The team also visited Ijaye, a farming community where farmers are using Aflasafe to assess how the farmers were using the product and also determine from them whether it has been useful.

Development Partners in Uganda show Interest in Aflatoxin Management

Some major Development Partners (DPs) in Uganda have begun showing interest to support the aflatoxin problem in the country.

One of such is the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission in Uganda, which convened a stakeholder meeting on the theme “*Development of Biological Control for Aflatoxins Mitigation in Uganda*” to draw attention to a concerted effort to address the threats of aflatoxin to the agriculture, health and trade sectors of Uganda. Participants at the meeting, which was held on 16 June 2017 in Kampala, included the various USAID mission activity units in Uganda, the National Agricultural Research Organisation, the International Institute for Tropical (IITA), the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries and Non-state actors.

Some of the discussions focused on the need to put in place a strategy to communicate aflatoxins to the public, communities and farmers in order to raise awareness and propel action (solutions) from the government and stakeholders.

Participants also took stock of the state of aflatoxins in the dairy sector in Uganda and how the effects could be minimized.

Dr. Ranajit Bandyopadhyay, Principal Plant Pathologist at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), highlighted the technicalities in the development of aflasafe as an efficient biological agent for the control of aflatoxins.

Ms Grace Akao, PACA Country Officer for Uganda delivered a primer presentation on aflatoxin and its effects on agriculture, health, trade, nutrition and education, which she

explained was a complex problem that needed coordinated solutions by all stakeholders in the country.

The meeting concluded with a number of commitments, chiefly, the Government of Uganda will partner with the USAID mission to facilitate the work of the Uganda Mycotoxin Mitigation Steering Committee, which has the improvement of food safety and mitigation of aflatoxin in the country as its prime objective.

It was agreed that the USAID mission will organise a follow-up meeting to address challenges and opportunities in the management of aflatoxins in Uganda.

The Uganda Enabling Environment for Agriculture (The Feed the Future - USAID) will develop briefs on the status of Aflatoxins in Uganda to continuously update the USAID Mission. ■



A cross section of the stakeholders at the meeting

Dedicated Work of a Plant Pathologist in Aflatoxin Control and Plant Health Recognized

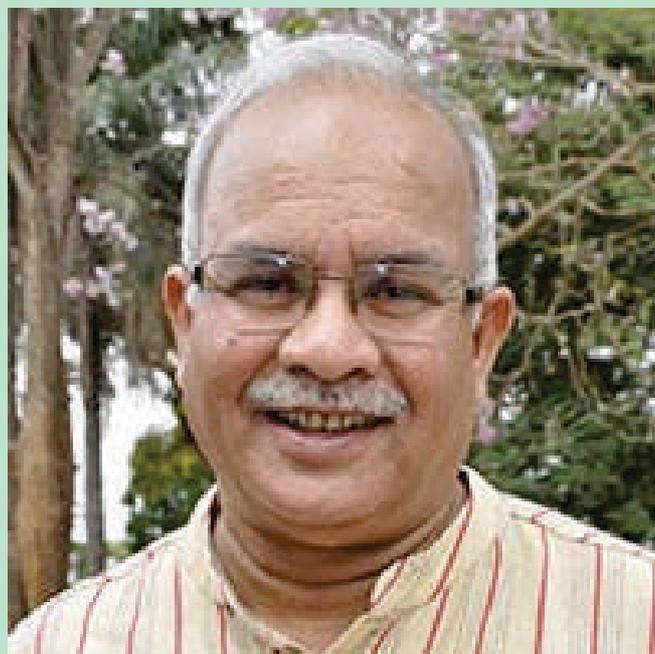
Dr. Ranajit Bandyopadhyay, a senior plant pathologist with the [IITA](#) is among distinguished plant pathologists selected by the [American Phytopathological Society \(APS\)](#) as one of [The 2017 APS Award Recipients](#) in honor of his significant contributions to the science of plant pathology.

[Dr. Ranajit](#) who also leads the [Aflasafe project](#) at [IITA](#), is being conferred with “Excellence in International Service Award” by the APS. The “Excellence in International Service Award” is a special annual recognition, conferred on one outstanding member of the APS for significantly contributing to the development of the science of plant pathology outside his/her home country.

Dr. Ranajit is a Member of the Steering Committee of the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) of the Africa Union (AU).

In a similar feat, an article entitled [Biological control of aflatoxins in Africa: current status and potential challenges in the face of climate change](#) by Dr. Ranajit [et al](#), was adjudged the “Best paper of the year 2016” by the World Mycotoxin Journal.

A foreword published in the [World Mycotoxin Journal, 2017; 10 \(1\): 1-3](#) by Hans P. van Egmond,



Editor-in- Chief, states “ I am pleased to let you know that this timely published open access article was selected by the journal's Editorial Board as 'Best paper of the year 2016'! My sincere congratulations go to Ranajit Bandyopadhyay and his co-authors for this excellent contribution”.

Dr. Ranajit in recent years has received various awards and recognitions. He and Peter Cotty of the United States Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) were jointly named as 'Change Agents for Research and Development for Aflatoxin Mitigation' in 2016 by PACA

Dr. Ranajit and his team have trained a cadre of African scientists who are now leading the research and dissemination of the aflasafe technology in different parts of Africa, laying the foundation for sustainability.

Dr. Ranajit has been an active part of initiatives on research, technology transfer, commercialization and scaling-up of the aflatoxin biocontrol technology in 11 African nations. Congratulations, Dr. Ranajit Bandyopadhyay ■



Dr. Ranajit in a discussion with stakeholders on the field. Credit IITA