



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
الافلاتوكسين في أفريقيا

Aflatoxin Partnership Newsletter

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Dear PACA Community Members,

We are pleased to present this issue of your newsletter with important updates and upcoming events. Recently, Tanzania became the first country to mainstream its evidenced based national aflatoxin control action plan through the Tanzania Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan and the Agriculture Sector Development Program. The decision of Tanzanian stakeholders to mainstream aflatoxin as an integral dimension of the national strategies and programs in all sectors is a leap forward in aflatoxin mitigation efforts. As this process is finalized, Tanzania will be the first country to have a comprehensive government-led national plan that is owned by all key stakeholders. The country plans are important tools in our ability to contain the aflatoxin problem. As the saying goes “if you fail to plan, you plan to fail”. The country plan approach is also vital to achieve consistency, coherence and peer-to-peer learning across countries. However, the plans are not the end on their own. We invite stakeholders to join hands in the implementation of the evidence-based aflatoxin control plans in African countries. The plans offer intervention areas for practically all members of the PACA Community.

The PACA Secretariat also continued its support to pilot countries for creating empirical evidence on the aflatoxin challenge, gaps and opportunities, and best practices that can effectively inform policy and interventions. Such situational analyses were completed in Tanzania and Uganda and are underway in other pilot countries. Nigeria will initiate the study in quarter 3 of 2015.

Recall that in 2014, COMESA and PACA initiated a regional scoping study looking at policies, regulations and standards on aflatoxin in the COMESA region as well as existing aflatoxin testing capacities such as laboratory facilities and technicians. PACA just initiated a similar study in the ECOWAS region. The ECOWAS regional study will feed into the discussions of the upcoming regional workshop on “revamping the groundnut value chain through aflatoxin mitigation”. Read more about the workshop in this issue.

Recently, the African Union Commission (AUC) has announced five exciting and inspiring positions to strengthen the PACA Secretariat at the AUC Headquarters. We would greatly appreciate if you could widely circulate the position announcement through your networks: <http://www.au.int/en/dahrd/vacancies>. The deadline for applying for any of the five positions is 12 June 2015

Thank you for your support to aflatoxin control in Africa.

Amare Ayalew (PhD)

Program Manager, PACA/AUC

PACA engages Nigeria as the sixth Pilot Country

After Uganda, Malawi and Tanzania in the Eastern and Southern Africa, Senegal and the Gambia in the ECOWAS Region, Nigeria comes on board as the 6th PACA pilot country. Aflatoxins are an important issue for the Nigerian agricultural and trade sectors but also for the overall economy and public health.

The initial situation analysis conducted by Abt Associates Inc. on behalf of PACA demonstrated the extent of the aflatoxin problem in Nigeria. In addition, one-in-two ECOWAS inhabitants live in Nigeria. Nigeria ranked top in the next tier of countries in the multi-criteria based pilot country selection process that was carried out with RECs and other stakeholders in 2014. Nigerian government has confirmed to jointly work with the AU Com-

mission as one of the sixth PACA focus countries.

In Nigeria, aflatoxin contamination of crops is a very serious problem and the costs of inaction related to aflatoxin control in the country are high, and are manifested largely as human health impact. It is estimated that in Nigeria, 7,761 liver cancer cases out of 10,130 liver cancer cases reported in 2010 can be attributed to aflatoxin contamination.

Maize, groundnut, sorghum, rice, cassava, and yam are aflatoxin-prone staples consumed in various forms by households in Nigeria. Such regular consumption of contaminated crops increases exposure levels among the population.

The PACA Secretariat works closely with ECOWAS and local country stakeholders to support the preparation, execution, and

oversight of government-led, and stakeholder aligned country plan. The country plan in Nigeria will be executed through the following four stage process:

Stage One: Gather evidence to inform the plan

Stage Two: Develop, validate and finalize the country plan

Stage Three: Build government capacity to implement the plan

Stage Four: Monitor progress and advocate

Through this process, the African Union Commission will support member states in a consistent manner while promoting peer-to-peer learning and experience sharing to achieve high degree of performance.

PACA welcomes Nigeria as a focus country and looks forward to success in implementing the country activities and mitigating the aflatoxin problem.

Tanzania validated national aflatoxin control plan informed by evidence generated through PACA supported situational analysis

Tanzania benefited support from PACA to develop its comprehensive National Aflatoxin Control Plans informed by Country-led Situation Analysis and Action Planning (C-SAAP) for aflatoxin and food safety. In 2012, the Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority (TFDA) and Abt Associates, through the support of PACA, conducted an aflatoxin situation analysis on two key crops of concern, maize and groundnut. PACA provided additional support to Tanzania to prepare a supplemental report to the 2012 assessment. The new study is meant to capture recent findings and update the aflatoxin prevalence data to ensure that the current data (base-line data) are considered in the assessment to inform development and implementation of a comprehensive national plan. In October 2014, the United Republic of Tanzania embarked on con-



ducting the C-SAAP through national consultants housed at the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST) and other institutions. The C-SAAP supplemental report includes new data on aflatoxin prevalence for maize and groundnuts, additional information about a third key crop of concern, rice, and a reassessment of the economic impacts of aflatoxin on health, trade and agriculture. In addition, the supplemental report incorporates new information about Tanzania's food safety system that was provided as part of a scoping study on afla-

toxin policies and regulations in the COMESA region. The supplemental report identifies existing programs that can integrate aflatoxin control measures, avoid duplication of effort and provide the necessary input to align aflatoxin control with broader food safety and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) issues.

The C-SAAP supplemental report which includes a draft action plan was validated by the Mycotoxin Steering Committee (MSC) of Tanzania on 15 April 2015. The MSC reviewed the gaps in aflatoxin mitigation efforts and provided additional action areas for addressing aflatoxins in the country.

Tanzania Validation — continued



On 20-21 May 2015, Tanzanian stakeholders including representatives of ministries, private sector

and academia agreed to mainstream the national aflatoxin control plan into the Tanzania Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan (TAFSIP) and the Agriculture Sector Development Plan. This shows that the overwhelming empirical evidence on the impacts of aflatoxins on the socio-economy made a strong case on the need for action for

the good of the people of Tanzania. The 'mainstreaming' forum benefited from the commitment of senior directors of the ministries of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives (including the CAADP Focal person), Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Education, among others.

The 11th CAADP Partnership Platform: Overview on PACA's Contribution to Result Areas of the Malabo Declaration

PACA Secretariat participated in the 11th CAADP Partnership Platform which was held in March 2015 on the theme "Walking the Talk: Delivering on Malabo Commitments on Agriculture for Women Empowerment and Development". PACA seized the opportunity to share how its activities are aligned with the Malabo Declaration Commitments and how it can contribute to implementation of the commitments. The Malabo Declaration

made seven specific commitments to achieve accelerated agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods. One of the Commitments is to triple intra-Africa trade in agricultural commodities and services by 2025 and fast track establishment of the continental free trade area. The Implementation Strategy and Roadmap (IS&R) for translating the Malabo Declaration into concrete actions has a set of 11 strategic action

areas (SAAs).

PACA will contribute to the attainment of strategic action area on Market infrastructure, regional trade and integration, and value chains development, particularly contributing to the sub-theme: "Harmonize trade regimes, measures and standards, and remove non-tariff barriers (NTBs) within and across regional trade blocs (RECs), and domesticate and implement regional and continental trade agreements at national level."

The 11th CAADP Partnership Platform: Overview on PACA's Contribution to Result Areas of the Malabo Declaration – Continued

Specifically PACA will contribute to the following:

- ◆ Narrow the gap in SPS capacity: Employ aflatoxin control as an entry point to build food control systems and narrow down the disparity in SPS capacity of AU Member States
- ◆ Support “universal” food safety standards: Support countries in developing models for dealing with food safety issues in the informal and formal markets. Countries can trade freely among each other when they give adequate emphasis and invest in universal food safety standards. Currently, many countries enforce safety and quality standards in products destined for the international market.
- ◆ Promote alignment and collaboration across countries: Organize Continental and Inter-Regional convenings to share new developments and best practices, and resolve specific challenges/bottlenecks across countries and regions.
- ◆ Mainstreaming aflatoxin control and food safety into country strategies: Engage RECs and other stakeholders to mainstream aflatoxin into continental frameworks (e.g., CAADP) to ensure aflatoxin issues are integrated into national priorities and that there is consistency and congruency across frameworks, regions and countries.
- ◆ Knowledge Management: Serve as a continental knowledge hub by identifying, documenting, and disseminating best practices and effective technologies. The Africa Aflatoxin Information Management system (AfricaAIMS) targets harmonized data collection and making credible information available.
- ◆ Development and implementation of country government-led, and stakeholder aligned aflatoxin country plans: PACA supports development of evidence based plans as well as their implementation and progress monitoring.



Small Industries Development Organization towards women empowerment in agriculture sector through building capacity for aflatoxin control in Tanzania

By Mr. Joan Steven, Small Industries Development Organization

The Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO) has been contributing to women empowerment in Tanzania by offering trainings on postharvest handling of agricultural produce and Food Processing including aflatoxin prevention and control. The parastatal organization SIDO aims at creating and sustaining indigenous entrepreneurial base through the promotion, support and development of SMEs by providing them business development and financial services with focus on productive sectors that contribute to wealth creation.

In Tanzania, SIDO has a program known as Women Entrepreneurship Development Programme (WED) which promotes productive

employment and gender equality with the focus on poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihood. It contributes to the empowerment of Tanzanian Women, employment generation and income distribution.

In Morogoro region particularly, women have been empowered through technical and business training skills in postharvest handling of agricultural produce. This training focused on food processing specifically for blended flour and cereal products but it also addressed Good Agricultural practices (GAP), Good manufacturing practices (GMP) and Good hygienic practices (GHP), packaging and HACCP implementation programs.

In managing Aflatoxin in the Morogoro region (Tanzania), SIDO conducts trainings, seminars and workshops, and provides advisory to food processors on effects of consumption of affected



Photo ©: by SIDO

products. They also teach on how to overcome the problem through identification of potential sources and corrective actions in production line.

More than 100 women in Morogoro Urban, Mvomero, Kilosa and Morogoro Rural have benefited from SIDO training on Postharvest handling of agricultural products from 2013 to 2015. Some of their products like spices, Sunflower oil, blended flour and peanut butter have attained market in Dar es Salaam Supermarkets and Distribution stores.

SIDO works together with PACA partners in Tanzania in the areas of capacity building for stakeholders.



Photo ©: by SIDO

The First African Symposium on Mycotoxicology successfully held under the theme “Reducing mycotoxins in African food and feed” and concluded by establishing the African Society of Mycotoxicologists

The African Union Commission based Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) collaborated with the first African Symposium on Mycotoxicology (ASM) which was held in Livingston, Zambia from 26th to 28th May, 2015. The ASM provided an ideal platform for information exchange amongst African and international experts, industry and other stakeholders. The symposium also created an environment for forming/strengthening partnerships and collaborations. The symposium's theme “Reducing mycotoxins in African food and feed” is fully aligned to PACA's mission to support agricultural development, safeguard consumer health and facilitate trade by catalyzing, coordinating and increasing effective aflatoxin control along agricultural value chains in Africa. PACA supported this initiative which ultimately aimed at enhancing awareness on the importance of mycotoxin control to food and feed safety, human and animal health

and the economic development of African countries. The symposium was concluded by establishing the African Society of Mycotoxicologists and elected Dr. Brad Flett as President and Prof. Sheila Okoth as Vice President of the Society.

The PACA Secretariat congratulates ASM's leadership and invites PACA community members to provide support to the ASM Secretariat in carrying the burden of responsibility to establish a well functioning society that centers on serving the people of Africa.

The objectives of the Symposium were to:

- ♦ Assess the occurrence and impact of mycotoxins on African food and feed chains;



- ♦ Discuss and facilitate the mitigation of mycotoxins on the continent;
- ♦ Coordinate scientific research efforts on mycotoxins on the continent;
- ♦ Strengthen continental and international collaboration and networking; and
- ♦ Establish an African Society of Mycotoxicology (ASM)

PACA presented preliminary results of studies undertaken in pilot countries. The studies shed light on the economic impact of aflatoxins on various sectors and proposed solutions in three pilot countries in eastern and south-

News and Information on Aflatoxins

PACA Announces New Positions

The PACA secretariat currently focuses on supporting African countries and working jointly with diverse stakeholders through three categories of activities at the continental, regional and national level. In order to support the identified roles and activities as well as strengthen the current secretariat, the African Union Commission (AUC) has announced five new positions at the AUC Headquarters. The positions are: Senior Communication Officer, Knowledge Manager, Policy Advisor, Strategy and Operations Princi-

pal Officer, and Technical Advisor. The job descriptions are available at <http://www.au.int/en/dahrd/vacancies>, on PACA website or the links below. The deadline for applying for any of the positions is 12 June 2015. Applications should be submitted through the AUC E-recruitment Website <http://www.aucareers.org>.

Senior Communication Officer: <http://www.au.int/en/content/senior-communication-officer-1>

Knowledge Manager: <http://www.au.int/en/content/knowledge-manager>

Policy Advisor: <http://www.au.int/en/content/policy-advisor>

Strategy and Operations Principal Officer: <http://www.au.int/en/content/strategy-and-operations-principal-officer>

Technical Advisor: <http://www.au.int/en/content/technical-advisor-0>



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PACA's Upcoming Regional Workshop on Revamping the Groundnut Value Chain in West Africa through Aflatoxin Mitigation

In most West African countries, groundnut is an important crop used in various forms. It is a basic food and cash crop. Its production, marketing and trade are major sources of employment, income and foreign exchange in many countries of the region. Unfortunately, since the 1960s, groundnut production and trade have been declining due to various factors amongst which the most critical is aflatoxin contamination. The countries could unleash their groundnut sector's potential if they effectively tackle the aflatoxin challenge.

PACA will co-organize a workshop in the West Africa Region on 1-2 September 2015 to provide a platform where various stakeholders from Africa and across the globe will come together to chart a roadmap to collectively address the aflatoxin challenge in the region as well as to identify practical solutions for reviving the groundnut value chain.

The specific objectives of the workshop will be to:

Assess the current policy landscape of West African States in relation to aflatoxin control and trade as well as identify gaps

Identify technology solutions and practices for aflatoxin management that respond to the needs of West African countries and explore investment opportunities and drivers for scaling technologies in the region

Strengthen cooperation of national, regional stakeholders in aflatoxin management

Share experiences on adoption of technologies and best practices to boost productivity and export

PACA is working closely with various institutions to ensure broader perspectives and stakeholder engagement.

Upcoming Events

7th PACA Steering Committee Meeting

03-04 September 2015

Dakar, Senegal

Regional workshop on "Revamping the groundnut value chain of West Africa through aflatoxin mitigation"

01-02 September 2015

Dakar, Senegal

PACA to enhance capacity of media professionals to better deliberate on aflatoxin risk communication

Public awareness, advocacy and communication play a great role in aflatoxin prevention and control along the agricultural value chains. PACA is organizing a 'media training' on 14-15 October 2015 at African Union Commission Conference Centre in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia. One of the major challenges to mitigating aflatoxins on the continent is the widespread low level of awareness of the aflatoxin issue across stakeholders from farmers, consumers, processors, agricultural extension workers to

health professionals and policy and decision makers. The low awareness level severely hampers attempts to improve aflatoxin management by restricting avenues for adopting and implementing best practices/interventions.

Effective risk communication is needed to make a compelling case to policy makers, investors and other stakeholders on the socio-economic and health benefits of aflatoxin mitigation and control. Aflatoxin risk communication may be amplified further by the volumes of in-

formation made available to the public, but more importantly by the accuracy and content of information. The media can play an important role in raising awareness through its access to reach various stakeholders.

In this regard, PACA initiated a training series for media professionals; the first edition will be held in October 2015.

**"AFRICA FREE FROM THE HARMFUL
EFFECTS OF AFLATOXINS"**

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