

# CAVA II Bulletin



VOLUME I, ISSUE 2

April 2015

...Improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers

## CAVA II Conducts Pre-season Training for Service Providers

**A**head of the planting season, the Cassava: Adding Value for Africa, Phase II (CAVA II) project has conducted a pre-season training, to build the capacity of its service providers in Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda who are working directly with smallholder farmers on behalf of the project.

The prime objective of the pre-season training which was held at Federal College of Agriculture, Akure, Nigeria was to empower service providers who will train smallholder farmers on good agronomic practices, and also expose them to new productivity enhancing technologies which will help the farmers to cultivate cassava efficiently.

Speaking at the training which had in attendance service providers from Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda, the Project Director of the Cassava: Adding Value for Africa Phase II, Prof Kolawole Adebayo explained that the Training of Trainers (ToT) programme was in line with the project's objective which is to improve the income and wellbeing of smallholder farmers.

He said: "The training is an important component of the CAVA II project, to support farmers that are planting and selling fresh cassava roots to various value chains. The project tries to create markets for fresh cassava roots that smallholder farmers grow. We know that as we develop new markets, the challenge of wanting to adopt new technologies, correct agronomic practices and the desire to grow cassava in the most productive way, will become more significant.

For that reason, we organised this training exercise for those who will be responsible for training the farmers. The service providers that we are training will not work directly with the farmers, however they will be training



A group photo of the participants at the CAVA II pre-season training

those who will be working directly with the farmers, so that when farmers are cultivating cassava, they will be doing it from the point of knowledge rather than from the point of lack of knowledge."

"The training will also incorporate key messages on effective communication with the smallholder farmers as well as strategies for farm planning. In the course of the year, each of the service providers will be involved in three training programmes: pre-season, mid-season and post-season training. While the pre-season training focused on activities which farmers are expected to carry out before cultivation and in the early days of planting; the mid-season training will expose them to skills to manage their cassava farms and the post-season training will guide farmers on post-harvest and cassava marketing issues."

Dr Richardson Okechukwu from the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) who led the pre-season training, pointed out that IITA's role in CAVA II is to support the project in enhancing the productivity of smallholder farmers. According to him, "IITA's interest is to support the project

in enhancing the productivity of smallholder farmers and all farmers who will be producing the roots that will be going to the various industries in the five intervention countries of the project. So this training that we have started is basically to provide the service providers with key information that they need to take to the grassroots, which will enhance the way cassava is produced. We want to increase farmer's yield to at least 25 percent of what is presently done in the country. So for Nigeria, we will target at least 25 tons per hectare for each farmer who will participate in this activity. For other countries, we want to thrive as much as possible to get 20 tons per hectare and above."

"IITA is playing a key role in providing the right variety for the farmers. They need to know the variety that they need to grow in order to get good yield and also the variety they need to grow in order to get premiums in the various industries that they will be supplying to. Another key aspect is how the farmers manage the agronomy of the crop. This has to do with the time they plant, how they plant and how they manage weeds in their farms. So in this training, the



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Dr Richardson Okechukwu from IITA demonstrates herbicide use

trainers will be trained on how to pass on this information on weed management to the various farmers. If weeds in cassava farms can be managed properly there will be substantial

reduction in cost of production and this is when farmers will make profit." Highlighting the values his institution has added to the project, the Provost of Oyo State College of Agriculture and

Technology Igboora, Prof Jacob Adewale said, The value that our Institution has been able to add is that we have been able to make a shift from production for staple food to production for large scale processors. We have also multiplied TMS 419 which is very rich in starch, as well as Vitamin A fortified cassava."

Equally, the provost of the Federal College of Agriculture, Akure Dr Samson Odedina, stressed on the importance of the pre-season training to the smallholder farmers. "The CAVA II project deals with value chains in the cassava sector such as the high quality cassava flour value chain, the starch value chains and ethanol value chains. As experts, we want to ensure that these value chains are profitable and we want the smallholders to actively participate in the value chains. We want to make sure that the smallholder farmers participate in these value chains productively. We are starting with training the trainers."

### CAVA II, Nigeria Signs MoU with Thai Farms, Allied Atlantic Industries Limited, Greentech

Cassava: Adding Value for Africa (CAVA II). Nigeria recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with three top cassava companies: Thai Farms International, Allied Atlantic Industries Limited and GreenTech Limited.

The idea behind the MoU as revealed by the Country Manager, CAVA II, Nigeria, Prof Lateef Sanni, is to foster the relationship between farmers and factories thereby increasing the incomes of the farmers.

According to Prof Sanni, "the outcome of the MoU is to ensure that the livelihoods of smallholder farmers are actually promoted. Some of the companies pay for cassava roots based on premium. Cassava roots that have high starch content above 20 -25 percent have better price, so the higher the percentage of starch in cassava root, the better the price."

"What we are going to offer as a project is that the company will tell us some of the roots that supply higher starch content, then we will introduce those stems to the farmers.

Once we increase the yield of farmers within the unit area where they are

planting, the implication is that they will have almost one quarter to half of expected profit as additional profit and that will enhance their livelihood."

The Supply Chain Manager, Thai Farms International, Mr Leke Aranju, who spoke on the benefits of the MoU explained that it will enable the company to get consistent supply of cassava roots. He said: "Thai Farms currently utilises about 160,000 tons of cassava roots per day, so the MoU will enable us to get

consistent supply. Then it will also benefit Thai Farms in the sense that CAVA II will train the farmers on how to increase their productivity. If they can improve their agronomic practices and improve their varieties, there is hope that their tonnage will increase. In summary the MoU will guarantee consistent supply, good quality and good price." CAVA II is currently work-ing on signing more MoUs with other large factories.



CAVA II Nigeria team signing an MoU with AADL



## Cassava Farming is Becoming Profitable for My Family- Joy Odyek



Joy Odyek and Harriet Akech working at Adyaka Farms

Although Joy Odyek has been a cassava farmer for over twenty years, she has never looked at the fibrous root crop as a source of income for her family. The 43 year old farmer who lives in Akere village, in Apac district of Northern Uganda, with her husband and five children depended on cassava for food, particularly during the drought season when harvest is poor.

She reveals, "We mostly grew cassava for food, and it was always helpful whenever there was a drought in the village because our home always had some food. Unfortunately, our farming was always disturbed by either too much sun or rain and we never really harvested enough good quality crops for sale at the market."

Joy's perception about cassava production completely changed shortly after she got a job in a cassava processing farm in Apac district. She said, "I learned from a neighbour that a farmer from a neighbouring village, Mr Sam Opio was looking for workers to peel cassava for him. "I thought the owner of the farm planned to sell the cassava freshly peeled, but when I started working the farm, I was amazed. Firstly, there was so much cassava to peel, and it wasn't even being sold fresh. The peeled cassava was being processed into cassava chips."

She went further to explain, "I joined a

team of seven peelers, and together we peel up to 1000 kilos of cassava daily at the site. I earn about four thousand two hundred (UGX 4,200) shillings whenever I peeled, which is very helpful for catering to my family's daily needs. Within the two months I have worked at Adyaka Farm, I have seen the farm manager buying cassava roots from some community members and I too want to be able to earn money from the sale of cassava. My husband and I hope to be able to expand our acreage in order to grow more cassava and fulfil this dream, which we can see as a great opportunity."

Having seen the opportunities that abound in cassava production, Joy brought one of her daughters, Akech Harriet to Adyaka Farm to learn new skills in produce marketing and cassava production.

She said: "We have both agreed that this is a good opportunity for her to earn money and gain skills in business. I am training her to develop her produce marketing skills and I hope that she will find a way to prosper from this opportunity. Indeed, I hope that all my children can come here some day and learn how to work smart. I want them to become wealthy. Although this is not so much money, I see it as a good start for them to learn and be mentored in ways of becoming prosperous. I am grateful to God for the opportunity that has been brought to me and my family."

Adyaka Farm is a beneficiary of the CAVA II project, being implemented by the Africa Innovations Institute in Uganda. The farm employs smallholder farmers at all stages of processing cassava chips. Apart from Joy Odyek who currently works in the farm, rural women from surrounding villages of Ilera-Akere, Amin teng and Akere; form the core group that peels and washes the cassava roots. Young people in the district are also involved in the chipping, transportation, drying and packaging processes on site.

Adyaka Farm offers both its staff and surrounding communities the opportunity to sell fresh cassava roots (FCR) to the processing site at a price of one hundred (UGX 100) shillings.

In comparison to other casual labour employment opportunities in the surrounding community, which are occasional and earn local farmers a minimum wage of about one thousand five hundred (UGX 1500) shillings per session, the budding Adyaka Farm business model is a breath of fresh air to farmers in dire need of daily opportunities to earn income and grow in business.

The farm, which was originally operated on an internal sourcing business model for cassava root supply is now shifting to an out-sourcing model. Though currently the farm is sourcing roots from a community with a limited supply of roots, Afrill is working with the farm management to establish a sustainable out-grower business model that ties together all stages of the process, from sourcing and production of ample quality declared planting material by participating farmers to development of beneficial financial linkages that would strengthen the value chain in favour of all value chain actors under the CAVA II project.

*"... I earn about four thousand two hundred (UGX 4,200) shillings whenever I peeled, which is very helpful for catering to my family's daily needs..."*



## AfriII Builds New Partnership to Transform Uganda's Cassava Sector



CAVA II Uganda team, signing MoU with VECO EA

The Africa Innovations Institute (AfrII) has officially joined hands with the Vredeseilanden Country Office East Africa (VECO EA) under the second phase of the Cassava: Adding Value for Africa (CAVA II) project, in a bid to jointly catalyse the emerging cassava industry in Uganda. The two organisations have agreed to work together to enhance each other's capacity in the areas of cassava processing, value addition, quality assurance, market linkages, business/investment models, product development, equipment fabrication and linkage to financial institutions. AfrII has agreed to provide technical support to VECO EA's beneficiary Small Holder Farmers (SHFs) and Community Processing Groups (CPGs), particularly Kameke ACE and Nankoma ACE in eastern Uganda in the processing of High Quality Cassava Chips and Grits (HQCC/G). The farmers shall also develop skills establishing drying technologies, quality assurance mechanisms,

successful business models and standards certification, which the institute has been successful in promoting among its beneficiaries.

VECO EA on the other hand shall strengthen the Institute's ability to support cassava processing equipment fabricators and cassava drying constructors to develop and pilot artificial drying technology for cassava processing. The new partnership is based on a mutual interest of both parties to ensure that there is a sustainable development of inclusive cassava value chains in their areas of operation and the rest of Uganda, while remaining relevant to the needs of SHFs, processors and end users.

Both parties intend to utilise the available Ugandan, regional and international markets to enable the farmers to generate and increase their household incomes in order to align with the Uganda government's plan to improve the household incomes especially of SHFs and women through the production of a commercial crop.

## CAVA II Ghana Trains Cassava Processing Group on HQCF Production



Cassava processors being trained on HQCF production

A workshop intended to train cassava processing groups on High Quality Cassava Flour production and packaging was organised by the Cassava: Adding Value for Africa, phase II (CAVA II) under the Food Research Institute in Ghana.

The training workshop was organised by CAVA II, Ghana in collaboration with Skill Development Fund and Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (SDF COTVET), one of the funding agencies that is supporting processing groups in Ghana. The objective of the training was to give the entrepreneurs a grounding in the production of cassava based products such as HQCF, garri and agbelema. The participants were exposed to food safety and hygiene training; and product packaging.



Product packaging training in Ghana

CAVA II Ghana aims to scale-out and scale-up development of High Quality and Industrial Grade Cassava Flour value chains that will demand a total of 129,245 tons of fresh cassava roots from smallholder farmers in the country within five years.

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