



Concept Note

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

01-02 September 2015

Dakar, Senegal

Theme: *Call for Action to enrich livelihoods and economies*



BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation



Preamble

Aflatoxins are highly toxic fungal metabolites produced by certain strains of *Aspergillus flavus* and related species in cereals, nuts and oilseeds and could naturally contaminate diverse foods and feeds. Aflatoxins are known carcinogens and adversely affect human and animal health. Aflatoxins are also associated with childhood stunting and immunosuppression.

Aflatoxins have proven to be a major barrier in linking African farmers to markets, as they prevent commodities from meeting international, regional and local regulations and standards governing agricultural trade and food safety. The widespread occurrence of aflatoxins could undermine regional integration and the establishment of continental free trade areas in agricultural commodities. Aflatoxins contribute to large post-harvest losses in many crops further contributing to food insecurity and economic loss in Africa. Tropical regions between 40°N and 40°S of the equator, which includes the entire African continent, are chronically affected by aflatoxins.

Recognizing the threat to consumers and economies in Africa, African governments, the private sector, farmers' organizations, funding organizations and civil society groups identified the need for an Africa-wide approach to mitigating and managing the aflatoxin problem. During the 7th Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) Partnership Platform Meeting, the African Union Commission was urged to oversee the establishment of a Continental Sanitary/Phytosanitary (SPS) Working Group to mainstream SPS matters in the CAADP framework and establish an Africa-led partnership to control aflatoxins. Through this call, the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) was launched, and then endorsed by the Joint Conference for Ministers of Agriculture and Ministers in November 2012, as a program of the African Union Commission under the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture. PACA is an innovative consortium that aims to coordinate and support aflatoxin mitigation and management across the agriculture, health and trade sectors in Africa. PACA's mission is 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's ultimate goal is to protect human lives by minimizing exposure to aflatoxins, and to contribute to a prosperous Africa by addressing the economic and developmental impacts of aflatoxins.

Background and rationale

Importance of groundnut in West Africa

Groundnut is one of the most important legume crops of tropical and semiarid tropical countries. It is cultivated between 40° N to 40° S of the equator and is a major source of vegetable protein, oil and animal feed. Currently, developing countries are the main producers

of groundnuts contributing approximately 90 percent of the total world production.¹ In Africa, Nigeria, Sudan, Senegal, Chad, Ghana, Congo, and Niger are the main groundnut producers.²

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 West African countries. Most smallholder farmers are highly dependent on groundnut production as it generates 60 percent of rural cash income.³ In the Gambia, 45 percent of the agricultural land is allocated for groundnut production and its export constitutes 66 percent of the earnings from agricultural export. The entire value chain employs nearly 70 percent of the active work force. In Senegal, 80 percent of producer's cash income and export earnings come from groundnut production.⁴

The decline of the groundnut value chain in West Africa

Presently, Nigeria and Senegal account for nearly 45 percent of the total African production followed by Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Although yields in Africa have increased from 600-800 kg/ha in the 1980s to 900-1050 kg/ha from 2000-2009, drought and erratic rainfall during maturation prevent realization of potential yields and better quality produce.⁵

Since the 1960s, groundnut production and export from the West African region has been declining mostly due to aflatoxin contamination of groundnut and groundnut products. Groundnut is one of the most susceptible crops to aflatoxin.⁶

Each year, it is estimated that the African continent loses USD 450 – 670 million in lost export due to aflatoxins. According to the World Bank in 2013, reducing aflatoxin contamination could potentially add nearly USD 300 million annually to the Senegalese groundnut export. Many countries in the region are facing similar challenges with aflatoxins.⁷

The main importers of groundnut have set strict sanitary and phytosanitary requirements particularly for aflatoxin that many countries in Africa are unable to achieve. This significantly affects the export potential of many West African countries as shown in the declining export of groundnut and groundnut products (oil and oil cake) in the region (Figs. 1,2,3).

¹Vara Prasad, Vijaya Gopal, Hari D. Upadhyaya. SOILS, PLANT GROWTH AND CROP PRODUCTION- Vol.II- "*Growth and Production of Groundnuts*"- P.V

²Vara Prasad, Vijaya Gopal, Hari D. Upadhyaya. SOILS, PLANT GROWTH AND CROP PRODUCTION- Vol.II- "*Growth and Production of Groundnuts*"- P.V.

³BR Ntare, F Waliyar, M Ramouch, E Masters and J Ndjeunga, eds. 2005. Op cit

⁴Fana, Sylla 2010. "Revitalization of the Groundnut Sector in West Africa (Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Senegal)." Global Agricultural Information Network Report.

⁵<http://www.cgiar.org/our-research/crop-factsheets/groundnut/>

⁶Fana, Sylla 2010. "Revitalization of the Groundnut Sector in West Africa (Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Senegal)." Global Agricultural Information Network Report

⁷ IITA, Tackling killer aflatoxins in African food crops, European Initiative on Agriculture Research for Development (EIARD), 2013.

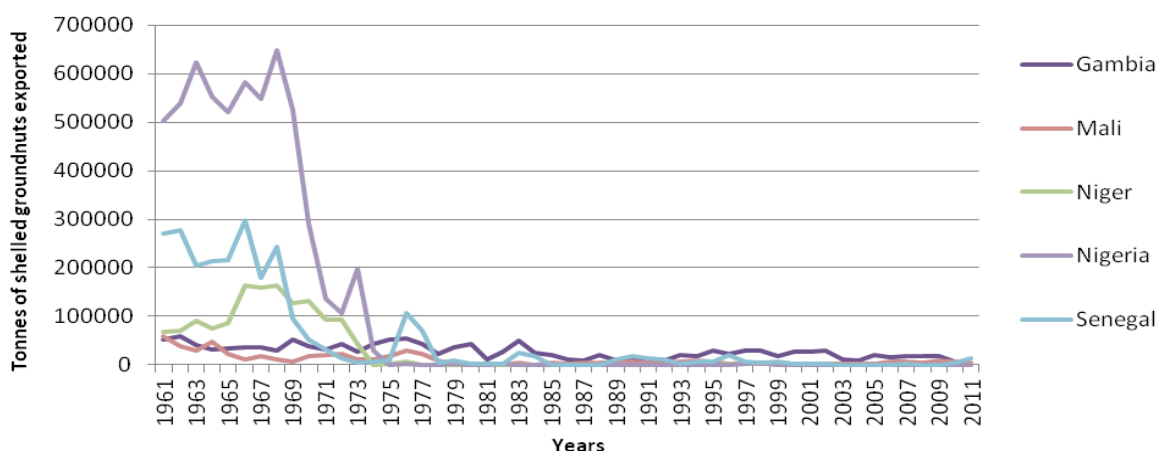


Fig. 1. Export of shelled groundnuts by West African Countries, 1961 – 2011 (Data: FAO STAT, 2015)

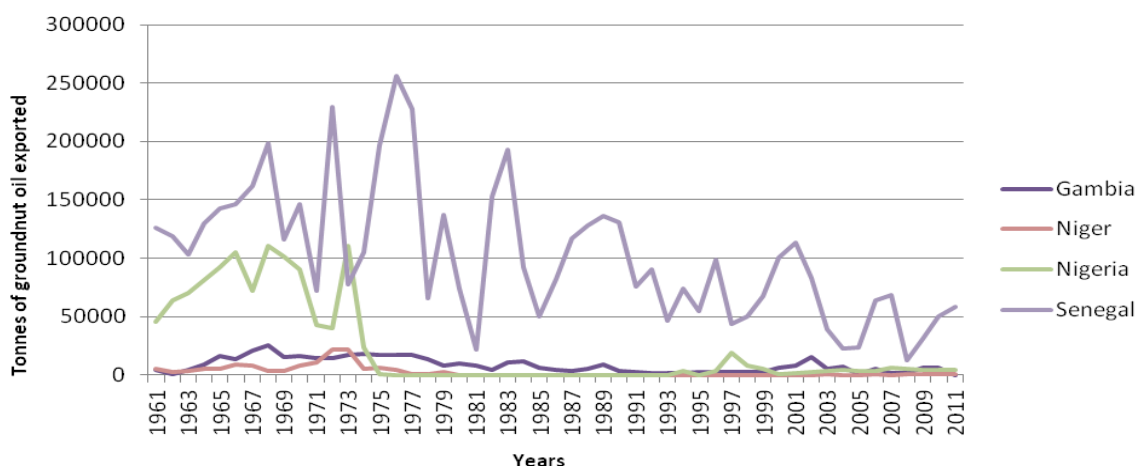


Fig. 2. Export of groundnut oil by West African Countries, 1961 – 2011 (Data source: FAO STAT, 2015)

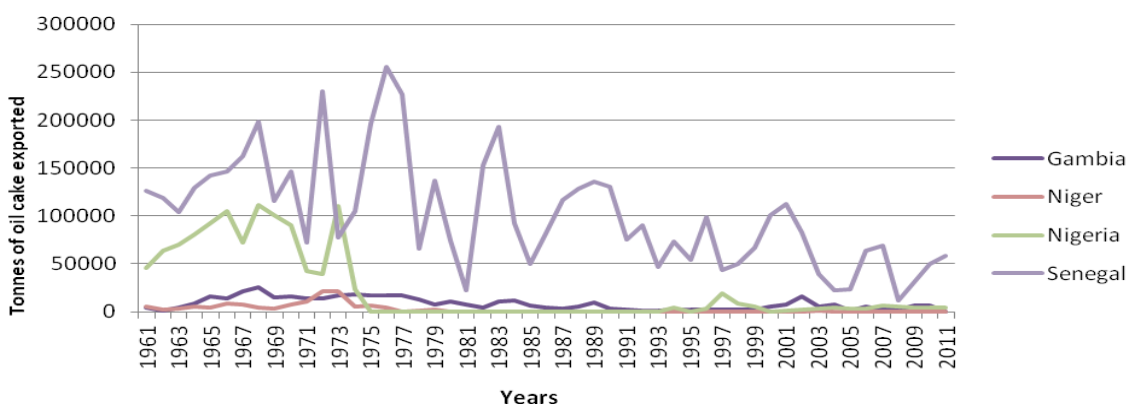


Fig. 3. Export of groundnut oil cake by West African Countries, 1961 – 2011 (Data: FAO STAT, 2015)

Need and opportunities for action

Although the aflatoxin problem has negatively impacted the groundnut value chain in West Africa for more than 60 years, we now have an opportunity to seize back the former success of this vital crop value chain. By implementing technologies (existing and new), building on institutional arrangements, and taking a value chain management approach (including soil management, sowing of quality seeds and other good agricultural practices, enhancing farmer, processor and consumer knowledge about aflatoxins, using good storage practices and conditions, creating useful alternative uses for contaminated kernels, and establishing market incentives and enabling policies) the groundnut industry has an opportunity to flourish once again.

PACA's multi-pronged approach to address the aflatoxin issue at the continental level is well recognized. In 2013, PACA Secretariat developed the PACA Strategy, 2013-2022, through extensive consultation with diverse stakeholders from across Africa and abroad. During a strategy development workshop, stakeholders identified comprehensive Strategic Thematic Areas and Key Results Areas where the PACA community and the PACA Secretariat would work in a collaborative march towards an Africa free from the harmful effects of aflatoxins. This was followed by crafting of a strategic direction and focused program of work for the PACA Secretariat.

In November 2013, the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) in collaboration with PACA, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the Forum for Agriculture Research in Africa (FARA), West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF), and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) organized a regional workshop to address the aflatoxin issue in the ECOWAS region. The workshop identified challenges and intervention areas and technical, institutional, and policy opportunities to address the aflatoxin challenge in West African States. The workshop led to the development of the ECOWAS Aflatoxin Control Action Plan (**ECOACAP**).

Following the November 2013 meeting on addressing the aflatoxin issue in the ECOWAS member states, this workshop focuses primarily on the groundnut subsector and West African countries with high potential of groundnut production and export. The workshop aims to assess the current situation in countries, identify gaps and provide concrete solutions such as creating an enabling environment for investment in aflatoxin technologies, enforcement of standards and regulations, reducing production losses through aflatoxin mitigation, promoting private sector engagement and others. Despite the importance of the groundnut sector to West Africa and the need for holistic approach to address the aflatoxin issue to revive the sector, efforts at engaging stakeholders across relevant sectors and interest groups are woefully inadequate. A forum where various stakeholders such as the private sector, policy makers, producers and importing countries come together to collectively come up with practical solutions for revamping the groundnut value chain through aflatoxin mitigation is therefore urgently needed.

Meeting Objectives

1. Share perspectives on the state of the aflatoxin challenge in groundnut value chains in West Africa and opportunities for intervention
2. Discuss the current policy landscape of West African States in relation to aflatoxin control, food safety as well as trade and identify actions to address gaps
3. Discuss current technological practices for aflatoxin prevention and control and explore new options
4. Review and validate the ECOWAS Aflatoxin Control Action Plan as a step towards facilitating adoption in the region
5. Identify new, and strengthen existing partnership opportunities among national, regional and international stakeholders in aflatoxin management and agree on strategies for mobilizing required investments to support priority activities.

Workshop structure and approach

The workshop will combine plenary sessions and small group discussions. Participants will focus on interactive discussions and co-creation of solutions. Participatory methods will be used to foster dialogue and sharing and harnessing the knowledge and experience of participants, and thereby collectively charting the “HOW” West Africa can overcome aflatoxin barriers for improved competitiveness of its groundnuts sector.

Meeting Participants

Workshop participants include experts and policy makers of ECOWAS member states, SMEs and corporate food industry, research organizations and academia, development partners, Regional Economic Communities, government ministries from agriculture, trade and health, farmers’ organizations, the private sector, civil society, and the African Union, among others. A few selected participants from regions outside West Africa will be invited to cross-fertilize ideas and practices across regions. Moreover, leading voices from the investment community and from pan-African agricultural research and technology agenda setting organizations shall be invited.

Location and Meeting Dates

The workshop will be held in Dakar, Senegal (King Fahd Hotel) from 01-02 September 2015.

Language

All plenary sessions will have French and English simultaneous interpretation.