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|---------------------------------|---|
| Editorial | 1 |
| MISTOWA goes to Banikoara | 1 |
| Easing the food crisis in Niger | 2 |
| Planning Activities for FY06 | 2 |
| SMS Pilot for Commodity Prices | 3 |
| Crop Outlook Conference | 4 |
| Project Advisory Committee | 4 |
| Staff News | 4 |
| Upcoming events | 4 |

MISTOWA goes to Banikoara!

Editorial

Valued readers, welcome to the 8th edition of the MISTOWA information newsletter.

In this edition we report the MISTOWA launching in Banikoara, and efforts of the DMDA market association to join the relief efforts in Niger. We also bring you up to date on the stakeholder workshop to plan FY 06 activities.

MISTOWA LAUNCHED IN BENIN

MISTOWA was officially launched in Banikoara, northern Benin, on August 16. This area, noted for cotton production, has struggled with difficult environmental and economic conditions in recent years.

The community of Banikoara, situated at 800 km north of Cotonou, the capital of Benin is reputed for cotton production, and represents over a quarter of the national production, estimated at 420,000 tons. The community faces problems of land degradation and declining revenues from cotton production.

As an alternative to continuous cotton production, the Government of Benin has launched a program to diversify production to include maize, rice, livestock, shea, cashew, mangoes, vegetables and sunflower and other crops. This program falls within the broad USAID Benin's and MISTOWA's objectives.



The Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Mr. Fatiou Akplogan in a hearty handshake with Kofi Debrah, after the official launching. The mayor of Banikoara and the ROESAO Representative look on.

Early this year, the USAID mission in Benin provided additional funding to MISTOWA to enhance the capacities of smallholder farmers in the Banikoara community to take advantage of the excellent trading opportunities with neighboring countries to increase their



Officials being briefed by the MISTOWA representative in Benin, Alain Soglo and Angela Katary of the IFDC office in Cotonou, Benin.

revenues and overcome poverty.

It was against this background that MISTOWA was officially launched on August 16, 2005 at the conference hall of the Union Communale des Producteurs (UCP) in Banikoara. The ceremony was attended by an enthusiastic crowd of about 400 farmers, traders, community and religious leaders from Banikoara and surrounding villages who defied a heavy downpour to grace the occasion. Other dignitaries at the function included the representatives of ROESAO, RECAO, RESIMAO, USAID, NGOs, religious and community leaders.

After brief remarks by the mayor of Banikoara, the IFDC representative in Benin, the USAID representative and the Chief of Party of MISTOWA, the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Mr. Fatiou Akplogan officially launched the project. The mayor of Banikoara implored the project to take advantage of the

(Continued on page 4)



Mr Francis Oke represented the USAID Benin mission at the MISTOWA launching.

NEWSLETTER

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EASING THE FOOD CRISIS IN NIGER: THE DAWANAU MARKET DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION'S CONTRIBUTION

Niger: Cereal production in Niger this year fell 11% of the five-year average. Earlier in the year, locusts invaded and did considerable damage to fodder, prompting pastoralists and their herds to migrate to the neighboring countries.

Experts claim the food crisis in Niger is more a problem of high prices than of available food. High prices because Niger's neighbors, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria have been buying up Niger's grains as opposed to the traditional phenomenon of Niger buying grains before their harvest. In addition, Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria have restricted grain exports to Niger this year resulting in high cereal prices where millet and sorghum prices are reported to rise 75-80% above its average for the last five years.

The international community has focused its attention on the crisis and has mobilized food aid and relief. Next door, the Dawanau Market Development Association in Kano, Nigeria has been making its own modest contribution. According to Imam Ahmed, General Secretary of the Dawanau Market Development Association (DMDA), the association played an important role in helping alleviate the plight of hunger stricken population in Niger.

DMDA played a dual role in alleviating the crisis. They reduced the prices of garri, millet and maize so they become affordable for traders in Niger. They also opened their warehouses in the market for the Federal Government to purchase grain and other food items for dispatch to Niger. While Government operations take place on daily basis, DMDA operations are weekly.

The table at right shows details of the transactions recorded for the three commodities between 1 June and 22 August 2005. A total of



Truck loads of maize, millet and garri left the Dawanau market every Tuesday to Maradi, Niger during the crisis.

2,250 tons of foodstuffs valued at US\$1,194,935 was contributed directly by the market association while government purchases from the market are estimated at about 10 times the contribution of the trader associations. The discounted prices offered by the DMDA represent a savings of US\$117,837 to the Nigerien traders.

DMDA Contribution—June to August 2005

| Commodity | Regular Price (N) | Reduced Price (N) | Total Qty Sold (tons) | Value of Sales (N) |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Garri (35kg bag) | 3500 | 3200 | 360 | 32,914,286 |
| Millet (140kg bag) | 9000 | 7500 | 1080 | 57,857,143 |
| Maize (100kg bag) | 6500 | 6200 | 1080 | 66,960,000 |
| Total | | | 2520 | 157,731,429 |

MISTOWA STAFF AND PARTNERS PLAN ACTIVITIES FOR FY06

MISTOWA organized a work planning workshop for staff and representatives of implementing, technical and donor partners in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The workshop provided the opportunity for the different partners to critically and collectively review the past year's performance and to contribute directly to the elaboration of the FY 06 work plan.

The workshop took place from the 24th to 26th August at Hotel Splendide and was attended by a total of 81 participants from 12 countries. They represented 30 producer, trader and MIS associations and networks, representatives of sub-regional organizations (ECOWAS, CILSS, UEMOA), technical and donor partners (Agriterra and USAID). Mr Mamadou Chabi from the Chamber of Agriculture, Benin chaired the function and was assisted by Mamadou Sy of RESIMAO and Canar Diop of FACIA as rapporteurs.

During the plenary session Kofi Debrah, Chief of Party provided an



Frans Van Hoof emphasizes a point during one of the working groups to review proposed FY06 activities and make recommendations to improve communications and effective collaboration between POs, TOs and MISTOWA.

overview of MISTOWA project's performance, challenges faced and proposed activities for next year. Patrice Annequin made a presentation on the challenges of involving partners in the generation and dissemination collection and Meg Ross talked about the essential elements in building web sites for partners. The presentations were followed by lively discussions on all aspects of the project.

Participants were divided into six sub-groups (2 each for MIS, Producer Organizations and Trader Organizations) to review and make modifications to the proposed FY 06 work plan. The participants also made recommendations for improving communication between MISTOWA and partners and between partners themselves. On the second day, the sub-groups made presentations on their findings at the plenary chaired by Dr. Gagny Timbo of RECAO.

According to Kofi Debrah, the work plan resulting from the workshop will be further refined into country-specific work plans with clear targets and milestones.



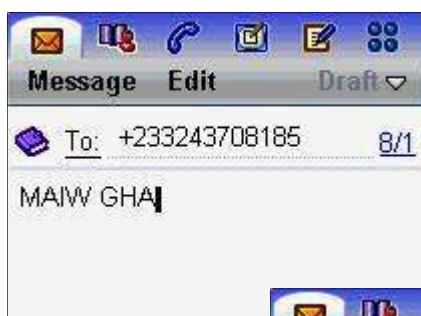
Officiating at the opening of the meeting were (from left) Rob Groot, Director, IFDC Africa and MISTOWA Project Director; Sylvain Roy, IFDC Representative Burkina Faso; Mamadou Chabi of the Chamber of Agriculture, Benin; Jatinder Cheema, Mission Director of USAID/WARP; and Frans Van Hoof of AgriTerra.

MISTOWA BEGINS TWO-MONTH SMS PILOT FOR COMMODITY PRICES

For the next two months, MISTOWA is conducting a pilot test of the new SMS system for the West African Agricultural Trade Portal, www.wa-agritrade.net. During the pilot, SMS responses to your requests are provided free of charge. You pay only to send your request, like any other text message.

NOTE: this is a PILOT program only, and full functionality may not be available at all times. In particular, only wholesale prices are presently available, and Ghana and Nigeria are the two countries with the most commodity prices available. Prices for additional countries will be available as time goes on.

To begin, send a text message to **+233 243 708 185** containing one commodity code and one country code.



You'll get a quick response from TradeNet, listing the commodity, currency and unit wholesale, followed by market abbreviations and prices.

TRY IT YOUR-SELF:

Enter a text message containing only the commodity code **MAIW** and the country code for Ghana, **GHA**. Send the text message to **+233 243 708 185**.

You will receive a prompt reply showing the commodity code you requested, the currency per unit wholesale, and a list of markets with the price in each market, as shown in the snapshot above. **MAIW** means **Maize, White**, and **GHC** stands for **Ghanaian cedis**. Next is **kg-whs** for kilograms, wholesale. This is followed by current prices for specific markets: **ACCR5000** Accra, ₵5000 per kilogram, wholesale; **AMAS4000** Amasaman, ₵4000; **KOFO4500** Koforidua, ₵4500; **KUMA2000** Kumasi, ₵2000; **MANK3125** Mankessim, ₵3125; **SALP3750** Saltpond, ₵3750; **SEKO3333** Sekondi, ₵3333; and **TAMA2500** Tamale, ₵2500. At the end is the sponsor message and the date.

If no prices are available for the country and commodity you requested, you will receive a message saying "No prices available for this commodity in this country." If you made a mistake in entering the codes, the system will send you a message saying it did not recognize your request and to please try again. If you do not receive any reply, please check to make sure you dialed the correct number.

For brief instructions, send "HELP". For a list of country codes, send "COUNTRIES".

COMMODITY SMS CODES

| commodity | produit | EN | FR |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|------|------|
| cereals | céréales | | |
| maize (white, grain) | maïs (blanc, grain) | MAIW | MAIB |
| maize (yellow, grain) | maïs (jaune, grain) | MAIY | MAIJ |
| millet (sounna, grain) | mil (sounna, grain) | MILA | MILA |
| millet (sanio, grain) | mil (sanio, grain) | MILO | MILO |
| rice (local) | riz (local) | RICL | RIZL |
| rice (imported, standard) | riz (importé, grande consommation) | RICI | RIZI |
| sorghum (red, grain) | sorgho (rouge) | SORR | SORR |
| sorghum (white, grain) | sorgho (blanc) | SORW | SORB |
| pulses | légumineuses | | |
| cowpea (white) | niébé (blanc) | CWPW | NIEB |
| cowpea (red) | niébé (rouge) | CWPR | NIER |
| roots & tubers | racines et tubercules | | |
| cassava (chips) | manioc (cossettes) | CASC | MANC |
| cassava (gari) | manioc (gari) | CASG | MANG |
| cassava (fresh tuber) | manioc (tubercule frais) | CAST | MANT |
| irish potato (local) | pomme de terre (locale) | POTL | PDTL |
| irish potato (imported) | pomme de terre (importée) | POTI | PDTI |
| nuts | noix | | |
| cashew (nuts, unshelled) | anacarde (noix, non décortiquées) | CHWN | CAJN |
| oil-bearing crops | oléagineux | | |
| groundnut (edible) | arachide (bouche) | GDNE | ARAB |
| groundnut (oil mill) | arachide (huilerie) | GDNO | ARAH |
| groundnut (unshelled) | arachide (coque) | GNDU | ARAC |
| shea (butter) | karité (beurre) | SHEB | KARB |
| shea (nuts, unshelled) | karité (noix, non décortiquées) | SHEN | KARN |
| palm oil (red) | huile de palme (rouge) | POIL | HPAL |
| fruits & vegetables | fruits & légumes | | |
| tomato (for cooking) | tomate (pour sauce) | TOMC | TOMS |
| tomato (industrial) | tomate (industrielle) | TOMI | TOMI |
| onion (Galmi violet) | oignon (violet de Galmi) | ONIV | OIGV |
| onion (yellow, imported) | oignon (jaune, importé) | ONIV | OIGJ |
| livestock | bétail | | |
| young bull (live, 3-4 years) | taurillon (vifs, 3 à 4 ans) | BULY | TAUJ |
| bull (live, 5-8 years) | taureau (vifs, 5 à 8 ans) | BULA | TAUA |
| cow (live, 5-10 years) | vache (vif, 5 à 10 ans) | COWA | VACA |
| fertilizers | engrais | | |
| urea | urée | UREA | UREE |
| NPK (cereal) | NPK (céréales) | NPCR | NPCR |
| NPK (cotton) | NPK (coton) | NPCT | NPCT |

COUNTRY SMS CODES

| country | code | country | code |
|---------------|------|---------|------|
| West Africa | WAF | Mali | MLI |
| Benin | BEN | Niger | NGR |
| Burkina Faso | BKN | Nigeria | NGA |
| Côte d'Ivoire | CIV | Senegal | SGL |
| Ghana | GHA | Togo | TOG |
| Guinea | GUI | | |

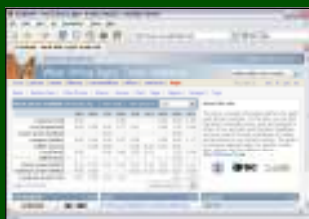
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The West African
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CROP OUTLOOK CONFERENCE BEGINS 19 SEPTEMBER

The Second Annual Crop Outlook Conference and Trade Opportunities event will be held in Accra, Ghana. Sponsored jointly by MISTOWA and CILSS, this gathering offers participants excellent opportunities to meet potential new business partners and familiarize themselves with market conditions forecast for the coming year.

150 participants from throughout West Africa are expected to attend. Discussion topics will include the recent food crisis in Niger and the 2005 lean season, and issues around the agricultural policies of EPA, CAADP/NEPAD, and ECOWAP.

Proceedings will be made available online at <http://www.mistowa.org/en/pages/cropoutlook2.htm>
 At present the conference program is available.

MISTOWA PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE HOLDS FIRST MEETING IN AUGUST

The MISTOWA project will be advised by a committee composed of representatives from its project partners. The committee will meet twice a year, in conjunction with other project activities.

In their initial meeting held in Ouagadougou on 23 August 2005, the committee elected Mr. Jacques Bonou, the ROPPA representative as its chairman. Members of the committee include Mamadou Chabi of RECAO, Salifou Diarra of RESIMAO, Alidou Alassani of ROESAO, Moustapha Djigo of FACIA, Moussa Cissé of CILSS, Salisu Ingawa of PCU (Nigeria), Frans Van Hoof of AGRITERRA, Kolado Bocoum of UEMOA, Sola Afolabi of CEDEAO, Jeremy Strauss of USAID/WARP, Hansjorg Neun of CTA, and Kofi Debrah and Rob Groot of IFDC.

The committee will play a number of roles:

Consultative role: to be consulted by the project management team on project issues;

Advisory role: to collectively provide advice to the project management team about implementing planned activities;

Proactive role: to assist the project in looking for opportunities for involvement, such as finding new market outlets, creating opportunities for private/public sector alliances, feeding information on events of interest and/or benefit to the project, proposing key resource persons for key activities, and other recommendations as appropriate.

Upcoming events

19-23 Sept—Accra, Ghana:
 Second Annual Crop Outlook Conference and Trade Opportunities, co-organized by MISTOWA and CILSS.
 Contact: ecalognikou@ifdc.org

11-13 October—Nairobi, Kenya: First regional summit of Cereal Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa, co-organized by RATES, COMESA, ECA and USAID. Contact: www.tradeafrica.biz

24-26 October—Stellenbosch, SA: market access conference for agricultural products. by SA Agri Academy in collaboration with CBI, UNCTAD, NMAC, PPECB (S. Africa). Contact: reventer@netactive.co.za

STAFF NEWS

Staff Addition

Raymond Grant recently joined the MISTOWA team as its new Business and Trade Adviser. He holds a Business Administration degree in Economics and an MBA from the University of West Florida. While obtaining his masters, Raymond worked as a Business Analyst for the Haas Center for Business Research and Economic Development. His job included analyzing business trends, creating business surveys, and developing economic research studies.



After completing his studies, Raymond volunteered with the Peace Corps in Mali from 2001 to 2003. While in Mali, Mr. Grant volunteered in a small bank where he developed training workshops for rural bank managers. He also taught entrepreneurs modern business practices, such as how to create a business plan, develop marketing strategies, and credit and savings techniques.

Contact: rgrant@ifdc.org

(Continued from page 1)

community's V-Sat facilities, community radio and Internet connectivity. The Minister on his part noted, "there can be no industry without markets and no processing or value added without market information, this is why I salute the efforts of MISTOWA to fill in the information gap."



At the end of the ceremony, the Supreme Chief, the highest-ranking religious leader (pictured above) invoked blessings for the success of the MISTOWA Project in Banikoara. The minister then cut the symbolic tape to the premises of the new office.

If you wish to announce an event in this column, please send us a message before the 25th of the month to: info@mistowa.org