

PRESS RELEASE

Boosting the West African Cotton, Livestock, and Maize Sectors

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, January 22, 2018. Actors of the **cotton, maize, livestock, aquaculture**, and poultry domains are due to meet in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso from January 22 to 26, 2018, to discuss sustainable ways to improve the performance of projects in these sectors.

Animal genetic resources, cotton, and maize represent a considerable source of food and livelihood security for families and communities across West Africa.

Governments, regional economic communities, **research centers**, and civil society organizations acknowledge this and are collaborating to turn these sectors into financial security activities for smallholder farmers in eight countries of the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)**.

At the Ouagadougou meeting, research and development players from CORAF and other national, regional and international research organizations will review projects designed to raise the competitiveness of the cotton sector, enhance the marketability of maize, and increase the productivity of the livestock and poultry sectors.

Towards Progress

On September 17, 2014, WAEMU and CORAF renewed their collaborative agreement. The **new convention** mandated CORAF to lead research and development in three priority domains for countries of the Union.

Three years into the implementation of the component to promote livestock, aquaculture, and poultry, characterization undertaken in five cattle breeds present a massive potential for possible future uses, management, and conservation.

This includes the Ndama and Njelli cattle breed in Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Niger as well as the Peul Peul and Oudah sheep in Senegal and Niger respectively. Growing the animal genetic resources in West Africa is predicated on an engagement model known as Innovation Platforms where those in the value chain meet to learn, share knowledge and exchange ideas to trade and leverage business opportunities in the sector.

Hundreds of people are documented to be involved in the innovation platforms in the participating countries.

Getting More Value out of Cotton

With particleboard made from cotton stalk costing much lower than boards made from wood, WAEMU mandate CORAF to help cotton-producing communities in the Union to transform cotton by-products into particle board.

Feasibilities studies are complete and with pilot units expected soon, cotton stalk in West African producing countries will start to be transformed into particleboard.

Already, the cotton stalk is now transformed into cattle food, soil fertility elements, heating wood, construction materials, etc.

The project has been involved in training cotton growers including women to collect and conserve cotton stalk.

Are farmers taking up new maize varieties?

In order to learn and better serve maize-growing communities in West Africa, CORAF undertook an evaluation to measure the impact of the adoption of improved maize varieties in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali.

Preliminary results from the study show an 88 percent average adoption rate. Age, having maize as the primary crop, membership in a group, the number of agricultural assets in each household and participation in maize-production training are some of the variables determining adoption.

The study further shows that adoption of new varieties could potentially increase profit by about 35 percent.

Poverty is reduced by almost 9 percent for those adopting new varieties, the preliminary results of the impact study indicates.

Results, conclusions, and recommendations of the study shall be finalized and validated at the Ouagadougou meeting.

CORAF recently approved funding for a maize improvement project in Benin, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire for a total of USD 238,182.

This project will further work on strengthening the maize sectors in these three countries.

Note to editors

CORAF is Africa's largest sub-regional research organization. Established in 1987, CORAF now comprises 23 national agricultural research systems in 23 West and Central Africa countries. In the past 30 years, CORAF has improved agricultural production and increased the incomes of millions of entrepreneurs and farmers.

In collaboration with major players in the agric value chain, CORAF leads in up-scaling smart science, innovation, and technology solutions to achieve agricultural transformation. Climate, gender, migration, nutrition, youths, monitoring, and evaluation, are central to its delivery approach. Visit www.coraf.org for the latest information.