

INTSORMIL Program Doubles Sorghum and Millet Yields in Mali, West Africa



After the close of the meeting where the farmers learned about the potential of being a collaborator in the Production-Marketing Project in 2009, INTSORMIL PI John Sanders shows women sorghum farmers from Diankounte Camara village in western Mali photos of the lush sorghum plots taken in 2008 project sites in eastern Mali. After learning about the potential of the project all farmers expressed their enthusiasm to be collaborators in 2009. Their major concern was that only 75 farmers in the Diankounte Camara village could be involved due to funding limitations. As collaborators, the Diankounte Camara women expect to be able to provide more food and income for their families.

In December 2008, the "Sorghum, Millet and Other Grains Collaborative Research Support Program" (INTSORMIL) received a \$5 million four year award "Transfer of Sorghum, Millet Production, Processing and Marketing Technologies in Mali" from the USAID Mali Mission, West Africa. The project is designed to rapidly move sorghum and millet production technologies onto farmers' fields, link farmers' organizations to food and feed processors and commercialize processing technologies so as to enhance markets. In year 1 the award has allowed INTSORMIL to significantly increase its impact in Mali by (1) expanding to new sites, (2) upscaling the research and (3) upscaling the technology transfer component.

The INTSORMIL Production-Marketing component of this project, with support from the USAID and led by John Sanders, Purdue University, collaborates with national programs, local NGOs and farmers' organizations to introduce new technology and marketing strategies. The program involves (1) the introduction of improved technologies (the combination of an improved variety, inorganic fertilizers, water harvesting techniques and other agronomic improvements), (2) a marketing component aimed at getting a price premium for quality grain and taking advantage of the price recovery later in the year by not selling at harvest and (3) a capacity building component aimed at developing farmers' associations into viable marketing organizations selling the grain, providing storage and purchasing inputs in quantity. Yields of farmers in this program doubled in Year 1. Farmers made income gains from the yield increase and also received a price increase of 31% due to the marketing strategy. Total income gain was 43% with the best farmers gaining 121%. Because of the success of this project, the Mali USAID Mission has requested INTSORMIL to add new sites in west and north Mali and to double the number of farmers involved.

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