



IFAD representative's visit to HQCF sites to review project activities

Dr Ndavi Malu visited IITA to review the activities of the HQCF project being funded by IFAD. His entourage included the project Leader, Dr Adebayo Abass from Tanzania, and Mrs Olayemi Oluwasoga who stood in for the Project Coordinator, Engr. B. Alenkhe who was on a training trip to Colombia.

He was warmly welcomed to the campus by the DDG (Research) Dr Ylva Hilbur. Dr Malu stated that IITA was the first beneficiary of the new IFAD window of Research and Agricultural Fund under which the HQCF project is being funded out of the four research proposals received through the window. The HQCF project as a value chain (VC) project will look at the value chain system and determine their connectivity. This, according to him, will look at the profitability analysis of each operator/process in the VC to determine which is at the greatest advantage and vice versa.

African countries depend on the western world for their wheat consumption and this heavily cuts into their foreign reserves. Dr Malu said some countries such as Burundi, Rwanda, and Zambia have been identified as potential wheat producers; which may reduce Africa's importation of wheat, while some other countries such as Nigeria are exploring the option of substituting HQCF for wheat. These two possibilities of reducing wheat importation will eventually be compared to see which is more beneficial in the long run, though there is the possibility of using both options. He stated that more implementing and outreach partners are needed to ensure the delivery of the project goals.



Dr Malu with the Project team members.

He praised IITA's research focus, but he also advised that the Institute should look into profitability and sustainability of projects. He said "developing the youth is also as important as research".

Dr Malu met with the project team and consultants on Tuesday, 9 June 2015. Each member of the team made a Power Point presentation of their activities in the past year.

As part of his visit, Dr Malu was taken round the newly established Cassava Processing Center by Dr Alfred Dixon and Engr. T. Diallo. Various processing equipment such as graters, pressing machines, chippers, and mechanical garri fryers were displayed. The innovations and improvements made on each equipment were explained.



Dr Ndavi Malu and Engr. T. Diallo at the Cassava Processing center.

At the High Quality Cassava Processing Peels Center at ILRI, Dr Malu saw the processing of fresh cassava peels into feed and feed ingredients for large and small ruminants and poultry. He encouraged the nutrition specialist to research into the nutrition value of the produce. He praised the activities of this center which is turning waste materials into useful ingredients and also reducing environmental pollution.

Dr Malu was taken to the Agriserve Youth Center to see the activities of the IITA Agripreneurs (IYA), which is partly funded by the HQCF project. He was shown round the fish hatchery, ponds, piggery, soymilk and snacks processing unit, and the vegetable garden of the IYA.

He praised the efforts of the youth and promised further funding of their activities. While encouraging them to operate a good accounts system and ensure profitability of every unit of their operations, he also enjoined them to pursue excellence in academia and aspire to become scientists in future.

As part of his visit, Dr Malu was taken round the Youth farms at Osoogun and Igbo-Ora in Oyo State where each youth is allotted 2 hectares of land for cultivating cassava. One of the constraints faced by the youth in acquiring land for production was experienced where two communities are claiming ownership of the farmland.

The chiefs of the contesting community were assured that IITA was not coming to take over their land, but “to engage the youth in agriculture, provide food security, and provide employment” as explained by Dr Abass. They were also promised that if they can provide 40 hectares of land and 20 youths, they will also be included in the project. Over 80 hectares of land is being cultivated.



Dr Malu at the ILRI Cassava Peels Processing center.



Dr Malu and some of the youth at the Agriserve Center.

The visiting team proceeded to the Jonaks Oshaw processing center at Igboora where HQCF is produced. Jonaks Oshaw is a beneficiary of the project and serves as the node for operations at Igboora and environs. The center is linked to the Osoogun and Igboora farms from where fresh cassava roots will be sourced.

At Joga-Orile farm, the outgrower and local youth involvement in the production site was applauded. The processing node center—OpenDoors—was praised for pre-funding the participants on the production sites, an action that will encourage them to farm more.

The team proceeded to Sango-Otta where the processing factory was located. This platform of semi-processing of HQCF was welcomed by Dr Malu and according to him “this shows that the barrier of distance between production sites and processing centers can be broken”.

A total farmland of 34 hectares is being cultivated.

At WAHAN Foods in Ilorin, Dr Malu met with the outgrowers and local youth who are also pre-funded to manage 2 hectares of cassava production site each. The processing center is the node for the production site. The involvement of IITA was praised by the factory owner. The technologies adopted from IITA by the farms include improved varieties and spacing knowledge.

Also at Ilorin, the team proceeded to Arogunjo farms, a private establishment willing to partner with the HQCF project. The center was described as a “complete and perfect model” which produces fresh cassava roots, processes them, and uses the HQCF to make a finished, consumable product. Arogunjo farms have benefitted from the training activities of the HQCF unit. The farms have cultivated 70 hectares of land and are in the process of preparing another 60 hectares of land for planting.



Dr Abass, Dr Malu, Mrs Oluwasoga, and Mr Atu at Youth farm, Osoogun.



Dr Malu and Dr A. Abass at Jonaks Oshaw HQCF Processing Center, Idere.



Dr Malu with outgrowers and youth at Joga-Orile.



Dr Malu with Alhaji Daramola, WAHAN Foods, Ilorin.



Dr Malu proudly posing with youth at WAHAN Farms, Ilorin.



Land preparation at Arogunjo Farms.



Enjoying bread produced at Arogunjo Bakery.



Dr Malu with staff at Arogunjo Farms.