

## **Visit to Tamale by the technical advisor to participate in the coalition quarterly meeting and provide technical advice on project activities**

**7<sup>th</sup> – 20th Sept 2003**

### **Background**

The project 'Improving household food security by widening access of small-holder farmers to appropriate grain store pest management' has now completed eight months of its 23 month duration. In the next two months, Coalition Partners will be involved in helping farmers implement a variety of storage option for their maize and cowpea harvest. The success of this process and wider promotion of storage technologies will be assessed in March 2004 and reviewed at a workshop at the end of that month. At that time decisions will be made on how to scale-up the activities and ensure that there is sufficient momentum for the work to continue beyond the life of the project.

### **Objectives**

- Participate in the Coalition monthly meeting and contribute to the preparation of the Q2 report
- Review progress on technical and social issues, and draw the attention of Partners to suggestions by the Social Advisor (SA) relating to farmer selection and collection of data on decision making by farmers
- Make field visits to project sites to view progress on farmer training and implementation of storage technologies
- Consider progress on written materials, especially in relation to the dissemination of storage methodologies by alternative promotion pathways
- Hold a two-day meeting with parties interested in LGB risk warning in order provide training on model use and consider how to link model outputs to risk warning.

### **Achievements**

1. All Partners except OICT (apologies for a visit to Togo) were present at the Coalition monthly (also quarterly) meeting which went according to plan. The Q2 report was initiated during the meeting and completed over the next few days, a copy has been placed on PID (attached documents Contractual/Financial). Partners showed strong interest in the SA's proposals re farmer selection and decision making but felt it was too late to alter the farmer selection at this stage. Their selection was based on their own contact groups, chosen for optimal uptake and wider dissemination within the community. However, it was agreed that this issue should be debated again before any scaling-up of the project and could make an important contribution to widening access. In relation to farmer decision-making it was agreed that Partners should develop a farming calendar with each participating farmer and ask questions at regular intervals to check how planned activities (especially in relation to storage) deviate from actual

activities and record the decision process behind this. **Action** - *Coalition Partners should prepare a draft example of a farming calendar and draft an outline for data collection at each visit. The Social Scientist (SS) should seek feedback on these from the SA. In addition, it would be useful for AEAs to collect some data on the incidence of LGB infestation in their villages (not only from selected farmers but a wider group). This issue could be worked into the data collection system. The purpose of the exercise would be to have field confirmation of any decision made about LGB risk warning.*

2. Issues relating to monitoring the implementation of storage technologies with farmers were discussed. Besides the decision making mentioned in 1., it is intended that grain samples will be taken at the start, middle and end of the storage period. This will enable farmers to debate performance objectively at the end of storage as well as enable the project to record its own success. All samples will be stored at a central location in either a freezer, in individual, labeled plastic bags or in sealed, fumigated bins. In the latter case, samples will be in cloth bags to allow penetration of fumigant. It was agreed that the mid-point for all the monitoring activities should not be later than the end of February so that there will be some data available for analysis of promotion prior to the March Workshop. The final monitoring will probably be April/May.

3. Some progress has been made by the SS in the analysis of farmer questionnaires. A summary of farmers' storage methods and their cropping and storage activities with maize and cowpea has been posted on the PID (attached documents – Technical). It is to be distributed to AEAs as a guide to their selected groups and lists 172 farmers in 13 communities, the distribution of maize and cowpea storage methods is shown in the Table below: some farmers are using more than one method.

<b>Storage method</b>	<b>% farmers using for maize</b>	<b>% farmers using for cowpea</b>
Mud silo	37.8	5.2
Jute sack	26.7	44.8
Mat barn	21.7	-
Basket	10	-
WPP sack	3.9	50.0

The storage technologies have a tendency to be fairly uniform within communities, especially mud silos where they are predominant in six of the 13 communities and rare in the others. Maize storage is practiced by 96% of farmers and the quantities stored vary widely, from 49 bags to only 1 bag. Cowpea storage is less common than maize storage, being practiced by 23% of farmers. They may store as little as 0.25 bags but normally stored not more than about 1 bag: a single exceptional farmer stored 24 bags last year. Bag storage is preferred for cowpea and there is an even distribution between jute and woven polypropylene and rare use of mud silos (in just one community). The project appears to have captured a wide range of both storage technologies and storage volumes. The questionnaire survey still requires considerable further analysis and the preparation of a final report. The survey for mud silos storage (Activity 5) has been undertaken but

as yet has not been analysed. **Action** – The SS *should proceed to prepare appropriate summaries of the farmer questionnaire in consultation with the Project Leader (PL) and Research Co-ordinator (RL) and finalize a short report with the SA. She should prepare a draft report on the mud silos survey and circulate it for comment to Coalition Partners with mud silos experience (OICT and MoFA) before finalizing it in consultation with the SA.*

4. In the period since the last visit of the SA, further developments in the internal communication strategy have materialized. Partners have agreed that a comprehensive report on each completed activity should be written and have agreed to extend their internal communication by holding monthly meetings at which minutes will be taken. The responsibility for taking minutes will rotate between Partners. In addition, Partners with responsibility for field work activities will prepare individual reports on progress at the end of each quarter. A selection of these reports will be posted on the PID (under attached documents – Contractual/Financial).

5. I had the opportunity to make two days of field visits to see farmers supervised by MoFA (Gushie), CAPSARD (Tindang) and CARD (Gbenjag). These were contrasting. The Gushie community displayed little activity and the village appeared relatively poor and ‘un-improved’ although farmers were co-operative and forthcoming. The AEA was very quiet and will require quite a lot of ‘support’ to get him working effectively with the farmers. Tindang is a much improved village with mud silos, improved latrines, tractors, improved maize varieties and a brand new well just inaugurated by the US Ambassador. The householders were very dynamic with many different agricultural activities going on in the compounds simultaneously. I met the AEA for this village on a later occasion and he appeared energetic and was forthcoming. The village of Gbenjag is intermediate in its development and the AEA (MoFA staff supervised by CARD) was on hand to convene a small meeting with farmers to discuss their situation. The farmers were able to list most of the storage approaches recommended by the project. From all three villages the impression given was that the main harvesting activity this year is likely to start at the end of October and continue into December. It is clearly important that AEAs are reminded of their roles in October. **Action** – *Coalition Partners should interact with their AEAs, perhaps distributing an information pack containing a reminder of what is expected of them including an explanation of the farming calendar and decision making questionnaire, an explanation of grain sampling and a description of the preferred storage options (see 6. below).*

6. The preparation of draft handout materials for store hygiene, insecticide treatments and solarisation has still to be completed. These are needed in local language (s) and with simple illustrations. It is important that this is completed soon in connection with implementation of storage methods (see 5.) and alternative promotion pathways (see 7.). **Action** - *the RC and PL should prepare drafts in collaboration with the Technical Advisor (TA) as a matter of urgency.*

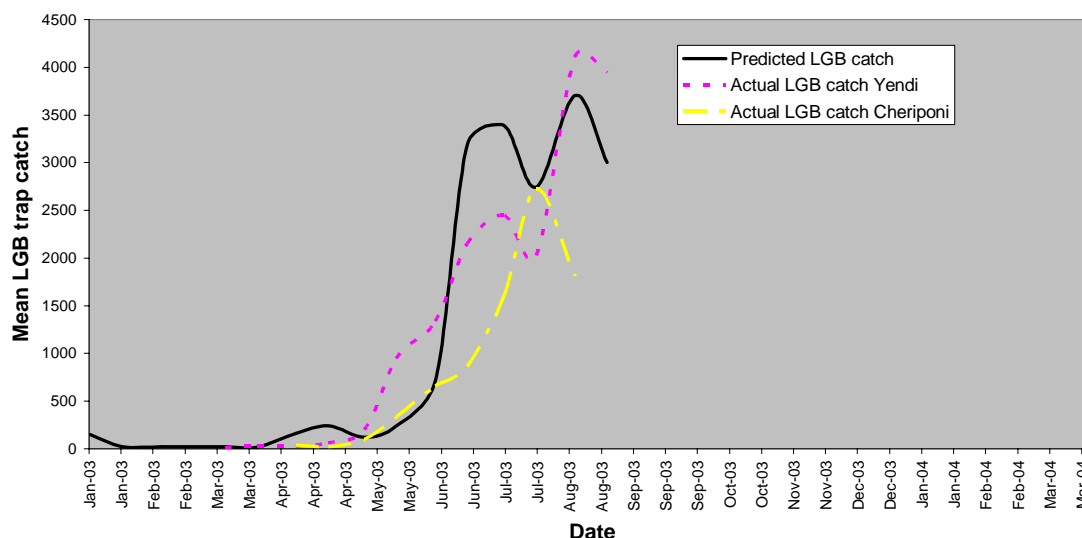
7. Alternative promotion pathways have been brain-stormed and recorded and copied to the PID (attached documents -Technical) but as yet not prioritized or followed up. The

Coalition needs to select one or two pathways and forge ahead with them. This will be much easier once some written materials are available, since these would be the cornerstone of promotion to secondary education establishments. In addition, consideration should be given to the SA's suggestion of contacting Janet Adama Mohammed (Ecumenical Training and Consultancy Centre – living opposite Baobab guest house) who might be in a position to talk about uptake pathways and promotion in NR and possible linkages with HIV/AIDS. She should be approached in terms of collaboration between her project activities and ours. Perhaps asked to attend a Coalition meeting to talk through issues relating to promotion and involvement of a wider stakeholder base. These issues are of particular importance for the March Workshop but need to be pursued sooner rather than later. **Action** – *PL to make contact with Janet Mohammed.*

8. The project needs to begin to explore publicity soon. After a discussion with a UK based video Director/Producer (Anita Hodgeson) who was visiting CAPSARD in connection with other work, it was agreed that the PL should seek a quotation for creating archive video footage of the implementation of storage options with farmers. This footage could then form the basis to publicity and training materials later in the project. The possibility of radio coverage, particularly a question and answer programme, was discussed at it was agreed that local radio stations should be consulted on this. **Action** – *PL to seek quotations for video filming and radio broadcasts and submit these for consideration by the Programme Manager.*

9. A two-day meeting was held on the LGB risk assessment system (Activity 4). The first day was for those who still monitor beetle levels using pheromone-baited flight traps to support validation of the prediction system and the second was for those who will be actually making the predictions. To date, there are two models, one for Tamale and one for Yendi, Saboba and Cheriponi. Both are performing well and it is anticipated that by the end of the project there will be no further need for trapping, the climate models will be sufficient to make reliable predictions. Predictions and actual catches of LGB for the Yendi area are very accurate and are in the 3 to 4 thousand mark which is particularly high (see Figure below). There is a possibility that this year could be a bad one for farmers. The situation needs watching carefully and a decision about the level of risk made during December. The harvest is most at risk in November and December so a prediction needs to be available by the end of November, based on cumulative trap catch for November and predictions for December 2003 (this is possible as climate data for Oct/Nov are the major determinants for LGB catch in December). **Action** – *RC to continue sending climate and LGB trapping data to NRI but also enter these into the Office computer. Could send copy of Excel file of model for checking after updating. It would be helpful to print out graphs and display these on walls of the office as a reminder of progress and for publicity to visitors. As a decision is needed on whether this is a high risk year, it is important that November data are available as early as possible in December. More pheromone capsules are needed and these will be given to the RC when he visits UK in December.*

**Actual and predicted catch of LGB in pheromone-baited flight traps in Yendi (n = 4) and Cheriponi (n = 4)**



10. A survey of the success of project promotion (Activity 11 to be undertaken by SS backed up by SA) is planned before the end of Year 2, probably during February 2004. Conclusions from this will be key for decision making at the Workshop in March 2004. It is important that the approach to the survey is debated and decided early to ensure that sufficient thought and planning are brought to bear. Some data will be available through AEA's feedback on decisions making etc, but eight days in the field have been allocated to the SS and so checking on promotion by AEA's and the collection of other data from participating communities and other stakeholders can be considered. **Action** – *Coalition Partners to open a debate on Activity 11 as soon as possible, preferably at the next monthly meeting.*

11. An important objective of the project is to scale-up its activities after March 2004. There will a workshop for all Partners at the end of March at which the approach to scaling-up will be decided. There might be two parts to this meeting, the first confined to existing Partners to discuss progress against objectives and the second designed to include a wider range of participants/stakeholders. Prior to the meeting there will have been a survey for the success of promotion to date (SS backed up by SA). **Action** – *At next monthly meeting, Partners should open the debate about scaling-up post March 2004. Consideration will need to be given to involvement of other NGOs and CBOs since linkages with these will need to be in place well before the end of March.*

12. From time to time, the project has visitors to its offices (e.g., Andrew Barnet, coming soon with Dr Dadzie). It would help to raise the image of the project if more could be done to provide visual material. A good start has been made by the preparation of a map to which appropriate coloured pins will be attached to indicate the responsibilities of respective partners. This could be taken further with the addition of a project header

pinned to the board, risk LGB risk graphs (see 9.) and graphical summaries of farming communities taken from the farmer questionnaire survey. The generalized farming calendar ( see 1.) could also be an interesting feature with a few words about how we proposed to collect information on farmer decision-making. If there was any space left then an example of the decision support tree could be added. Choice of material for the board should place priority on visual impact.

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