

African Leafy Vegetable Promotion of underutilised local resources by Bioversity International

For the past ten years, Bioversity International has been working with local communities and partner institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa to promote research and use of underutilized African leafy vegetables.

Dr Yasuyuki Morimoto of Bioversity was in Ethiopia between June 1st and 10th for attending a conference on Seed System and visiting research centres to interact with researchers. While he was in the country, FRG II organised a seminar and Dr Morimoto presented his research experience in Kenya on African Leafy Vegetable (ALV). The following is the summary of what he presented.

Bioversity focused on providing evidence about the value of ALVs such as amaranth (*Amaranthus sp.*), pumpkin (*Cucurbita sp.*), cowpeas (*Vigna sp.*) and Jew's mallow (*Corchorus sp.*) and enhances market development. The activity improved the consumption of ALVs, resulting in their enhanced presence in both formal and informal markets as well as the increased capacity of smallholder farmers to respond to market demand. The project contributed that sales of ALVs at the major supermarkets in Nairobi rocketed significantly upward, increasing from 31 tons/month to 400 tons/month (1100%) over a period of three years. Experiences from these activities have shown that it is possible to improve livelihood and conserve local knowledge and genetic resources. Revisiting available local resources had resulted in attitude change, new value and more demand, improved income for farmers and women traders and benefit to conservation. The seminar was attended by a group of researchers, extensionists and administrators and had lively discussions.

- Dr Morimoto's presentation is available at
[http:// www.slideshare.net/FRGII/s-alv-promotion-in-kenya-morimoto20110610](http://www.slideshare.net/FRGII/s-alv-promotion-in-kenya-morimoto20110610)
- FRG II will conduct occasional seminars.

Gender in FRG DAC-GENDERNET Conference

FRG Project's experience on gender consideration in agricultural research was presented at the DAC-GENDERNET Conference held on June 14-16, 2011 in Paris. GENDERNET is a DAC network to promote gender equality through providing a forum for sharing experiences, disseminating good practices and innovative approach and strategic support to the policy priority of the DAC.



Mr
Tekalign Gutu of Adami Tulu Agricultural research Centre, currently studying at the University of Antwerp in Belgium,

presented his experience of gender focused research activity with female farmer groups in collaboration with agricultural office, health office women affairs office, NGO, private farms and donor. By applying the FRG and Livelihood Improvement approaches, the research activities covered various areas including self funding micro credit, hygiene and nutritional improvement, water harvesting, livestock, improved stove and kitchen garden, and resulting in empowerment of women. Based on the practical experience, Mr Tekalign's presentation was well received by the conference participants.

FRG Based Research 2011 Season

FRG II project has been supporting a number of selected FRG based research projects in the various commodities and/or technical topics. Eleven research projects in rice cultivation and quality seed production technologies were conducted in 2010. In addition to the remaining seven ongoing projects, 14 new research projects including four rice and ten quality seed were selected for this 2011 season. Research sites were selected from various agro-ecologies from Aksum in the north, Jijiga in the east to Wolaita Sodo in the south.

For the rice FRG based researches, technical topics selected were weeding frequency, transplanting and seed pre-germination, irrigation intervals, and nitrogen-fertilizer rate and weed competition. Wide-ranging commodities including teff, wheat, maize, haricot bean, groundnut, tomato, pepper and onion, and several aromatic and medicinal plants were listed on the quality seed production technology. To develop farmer-friendly techniques, interesting research topics in; teff productivity with lower seedling rate using sand mixture, seed extraction techniques in tomato, modification of animal drawn compactor for teff, seedling multiplication technology of stevia and lemon verbena and seed treatment technology, were among the 2011 season research.

In collaboration with Nagoya University of Japan, FRG II project is going to conduct three-year verification experiments on the productivity changes of farmer saved seed in generations. The research is to test a perception among farmers, agricultural experts and researchers about the discourse that "farmers' saved seed gives less production year after year." The researcher of Quality Seed Promotion Project (QSPP) suggests that the improper post-harvest handling and storage may be the major reasons for the seed aged-deterioration of farmer saved seeds. While QSPP will conduct a comparison trial between "refreshed" farmer saved seed and conventional farmer saved seed under controlled environment in greenhouse, FRG based research will conduct the same comparison trial on farmers' field.

OTHER INFORMATION RELATED TO THE PROJECT

- The following publication has been out for distribution. There are limited copies available at FRG II Office.
 - "Improving Farmers' Access to Seed", Empowering Farmers' Innovation Series No. 1, FRG/EIAR
- If you have been forwarded this newsletter and would like to receive it in future, please send e-mail to <research4farmers@gmail.com>