Expanding Nigeria's exports of sesame seeds and sheanut/butter through improved SPS capacity building for private and public sector

Donor: Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) through World Trade Organization (WTO)/Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF)

Timeframe: 2011 - 2013

Background: Nigeria ranks second in the world for production and export of sesame seed. Sesame seed is frequently contaminated by high levels of aflatoxins, which is the largest impediment for export to the EU where aflatoxin regulations are very strict. Currently, suboptimal transport and storage conditions favor aflatoxin contamination. Also, no aflatoxin regulation is in place in Nigeria, and seeds are only visually checked prior to export. Fruits from the shea tree are a native source of edible oil and fat used for cooking, as a soap, and for medicinal and cultural purposes. Recently, demand for shea products has grown in the EU and the USA, where it is now used as a cocoa butter equivalent or improver in chocolate and other confectionaries, margarine, and in cosmetic and personal care products. Nigerian exporters indicated that the main problem encountered with export of shea products is aflatoxin content in the nut while in storage. Quality assurance for shea products to meet importers' requirements is becoming an increasingly complicated and highly technical issue for which Nigeria needs to develop expertise in order to safeguard and increase market penetration. In addition, demands for adequate certification of shea has become increasingly important in the EU, and necessitates development of expertise to safeguard export.

Shea tree with fruits *(photo by J. Atehnkeng)*

Project summary: This projects aims to implement quality control along the sesame and shea product supply and value chains, rather than reliance on end-point food quality and aflatoxin analysis just prior to export. The project addresses critical sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) issues along the sesame and shea production chain, by focusing on five components: (1) documentation of current practices; (2) implementation of a robust quality control system; (3) capacity building through training; (4) dissemination of information to all stakeholders; and (5) strengthening of the public-private dialogue and partnerships. Within the first component, emphasis is on a simple, predictive model for aflatoxin contamination along the supply and value chains and identification of critical control points for aflatoxins contamination.

Objectives

- to improve documentation of current practices of quality control for Nigerian sesame seed and shea products
- to implement robust field quality control system for Nigerian sesame seed and shea products
- to train producers, traders, exporters and standards enforcement officers to adopt and implement an improved food quality management system
- to disseminate project information, studies and results to all stakeholders
- to strengthen the public-private dialogue and partnership in the Nigerian sesame and sheanut seed sector

Outputs

- determination of optimal storage and transportation conditions from aflatoxin tests on sesame and sheanut samples
- review of existing standards on sesame and shea, and development of manuals for quality control along the production and value chains
- operators trained on harvest, post-harvest and processing machines
- system for traceability established
- extension workers, traders, exporters and standards enforcement officers trained
- dissemination material distributed (project website, guidance documents, educative advertisements)
- meetings conducted with stakeholders in the public and private sector

Major partners: Agricultural Development Projects (ADP), Association of Sheanut Producers of Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Federal Produce Inspection Services, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), National Association of Sesame Seed Producers of Nigeria, National Centre for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM), Nigeria Agriculture Quarantine Service (NAQS), Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC), Nigerian Institute for Oil Palm Research (NIFOR), several farmers associations of Nigeria

Target country: Nigeria

Crops: shea, sesame