

Nutrition, food quality and post-harvest management



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Agriculture is Africa's most critical industry, providing more jobs than any other sector and contributing more to economic growth than any other sector. The agriculture sector is also intrinsically linked to food security and nutrition.

Undernutrition and malnutrition—receiving not enough, or the wrong balance of food types—has an enormous impact on health and childhood development. Africa suffers disproportionately from poor nutrition, with particular challenges for children. The continent is the only one with a dual burden of stunting—impaired growth due to poor nutrition—and childhood obesity. The impacts of poor nutrition are severe for individuals and for society at large. Poor nutrition is linked to long-term health conditions and poor educational outcomes, with implications for economic growth and an increased burden on state services.

Improving the quality of Africa's domestic food supplies could have benefits for farmers and for consumers. By adopting nutrient-rich crops and diversifying their crop mix to encompass a wider variety of foods, farmers can contribute to better nutrition and health outcomes for themselves, their families and society at large.

There are also significant economic benefits. Aside from food quality, food safety is another key issue of major concern for health and agribusiness. Both food quality and safety are critical to increasing access to international food markets.

Farmer incomes are not only driven by production increases, but are primarily dependent on reduction of post harvest losses that happens through the supply chain. Post harvest losses in Africa is estimated at 37% (of total produce) between harvest and consumption.

Our contribution

AATF is committed to using sustainable technologies to build an agriculture sector that contributes to a food and nutrition secure Africa. A significant part of this mission can be achieved by improving the economic conditions of farmers, as poor nutrition is closely linked to poverty.

AATF is working to strengthen the business capacity of smallholder farmers and improving their access to markets so that they can enhance their earnings. The foundation works across a crop portfolio that combines cereals, roots and tubers, legumes and horticultural crops, supporting farmers in building a diverse, nutritious food system.

We have also undertaken initiatives to develop regulatory frameworks that support food quality, ranging from the registration of environmentally friendly technologies, such as biopesticides, and initiatives that reduce food spoilage and contamination.



Current projects and special initiatives

Building a regional consensus on biopesticides

There are concerns in several African countries about the contamination of food grains with aflatoxin, a poisonous toxin resulting from fungal pests.



AATF has been working with the relevant stakeholders to develop a 'guidance document' for the registration of biopesticides that could be used to control the contamination.

This initiative includes providing regulatory laboratories with sampling and testing equipment, and building the capacity of government ministries and the private sector to address food safety.

We have also worked with public and private partners to help them to comply with international trade standards, to assist them with their access to global markets, in particular through the US' African Growth and Opportunity Act.

Supporting seed companies

The Seeds to Business Project (Seeds2B) facilitates diversity of commercial crops that are rich in nutrients and that hold strong market value for both farmers and seed companies.



The Seeds2B initiative applies a systematic market-led methodology to transfer seed technologies from research programmes to seed enterprises through a process of technology scouting, analysis and product registration. The initiative targets several crops including soybean, groundnut, pearl millet, tomato etc.

Breeding pest resistance cowpea

Cowpea is one of the most important legume crops in Sub-Saharan Africa, constituting a major protein source for low income communities in rural and urban areas. The crop is currently under threat from insect pests, including the podborer, **maruca vitrata**.



AATF's pod borer resistant cowpea project has been developing cowpea lines that are resistant to the pest, raising crop yields to boost availability and affordability for higher consumption to enhance balanced diets for higher protein levels.