

FEED THE FUTURE INNOVATION LAB FOR LEGUME SYSTEMS RESEARCH

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Legume Systems Research is a five-year research capacity building development program managed by Michigan State University that focuses on grain legumes in West and Southern Africa. Legumes are a nutrient-dense staple crop that have multifunctional roles in smallholder farm systems in developing countries including food and nutrition security, generating income, providing livestock feed and fodder, and contributing to the sustainability of soil systems through their nitrogen-fixing capabilities. Cowpea and common bean are the focal crops of the Legume Systems Innovation Lab.



The Legume Systems Innovation Lab goals include:



Inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth



Strengthened resilience among people and systems



A well-nourished population, especially among women & young children

The strength of the Legume Systems Innovation Lab's design lies in its innovative and vibrant research to scaling strategy using a systems approach. Supported projects are diverse in research focus and address both the development and placement of innovative technologies with a thorough understanding of the systems they will impact thus leading to successful adoption. Projects are focused in three areas of inquiry:

- Integration of legumes into sustainable smallholder farming systems and agricultural landscapes
- Integration of legumes within local and regional market systems, including trade
- Analysis of sociocultural and/or economic motivators or barriers to legume utilization at various stages and scales within production and market systems

In addition, the Legume Systems Innovation Lab will focus on opportunities that address nutrition; the unique needs of women and youth; ensure greater resilience of people and systems under stress and shocks; and contribute to the development of human and institutional capacity for a resilient agricultural innovation system. Project activities are focused in the Feed the Future target and aligned countries of Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Zambia.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW:

Quantifying the Scale and Scope of Nutritious Cowpea Products in Local Markets



Principal investigator/Lead institution
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Collaborating institutions

- [Universite de Thiès](#), Senegal
- [Université des Sciences Sociales et de Gestion de Bamako](#), Mali

Project Overview

West Africa is the global locus of cowpea production. Across the region, cowpea products provide critical nutrients and cash income to smallholder farmers. Yet, little is known in quantitative terms about the scale and scope of cowpea products in local markets. Beyond grains, market-based incentives for cowpea-based products, including leaves and processed items have received limited attention.

Our research in Mali and Senegal seeks to close the information gap by building a quantitative inventory of cowpea-based products supplied by different vendors across rural and urban local markets and collecting shopper data in lean and abundant seasons to test the effectiveness of market-based incentives on consumer behavior.

Through several conduits, we will strengthen the capacity of local partners to conduct market analyses, assess consumer demand, and implement policy research using innovative methods and tools.

Our results will inform the development of incentives for expanding the array of nutritious cowpea-based products sold in local markets, especially by small-scale women enterprises. More market opportunities for cowpea through value-added products would help contribute to livelihood resilience for farmers relying on cowpea as a source of income.