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Millet Technologies Increase Food Security and Farmers' Incomes SUCCESS STORY

INTSORMIL

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SUCCESS STORY

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Photo byOuendeba Botorou

The head of the millet farmers'association in Tingoni. The new millet cultivar "Toroniou" introduced under the IER-INTSORMIL project, sponsored by USAID, has helped the 100 members of the association to improve their production, to become more food secure and to increase their revenues.

"Before 2006, we were not self-sufficient in millet because the yields were very poor. But thanks to the introduction of the "Toroniou" cultivar from the INTSORMIL project farmers are becoming more skilled in millet production. Now many farmers in this village are able to meet their home consumption in millet and make more money." Siriki Diarra, president of the cooperative "Yeretaton" for millet production in Tingoni, expressed his appreciation for involvement in the IER-INTSORMIL project financed by USAID-Mali.

Millet is the main crop grown and consumed in the village of Tingoni located in the Ségou region of southern Mali. However, average yields of the local variety were usually low, no more than 0.8 to one ton/ha in good years. Farmers could barely meet their family home consumption. Continuing soil depletion in the village and the lack of access to credit for fertilizer resulted in low millet yields. Since 2006, the Production-Marketing component of the IER-INTSORMIL project has introduced a millet cultivar "Toroniou" and has trained Tingoni farmers in the use of improved agricultural techniques and marketing strategies to increase millet productivity, prices, incomes, and food security.

In 2009, a year after their graduation from the project, farmers' yields for the improved cultivar were still high. Yields average 1.5 tons/ha and reach 2.3 tons per hectare for the best farmers. These yield achievements have no precedent in the village. Farmers used the increased income from millet to satisfy their household consumption requirements, meet family expenses and buy clothing and other gifts for women and children.

Moreover, producers in the association earned more income by following the marketing strategies. Bargaining power has increased and strong marketing ties established with food processors and other institutions. In 2009, the cooperative sold 35 metric tons of millet at a price premium of $0.31/kg to the World Food Program (WFP) and Mme Deme, a millet food processor. At that time the millet price was $0.26/kg in the local market. Thus, a net gain of $1,750 was earned by the cooperative from the price premium. This gain was shared with members and the farmers association continued to use their rotating fund for fertilizer purchases in 2010. Also, in 2010 eight new farmers' producer associations with 50 to 200 members planted 500 ha in the new technologies. USAID/Mali funded project IICEM and Global 2000 coordinated the development and implementation of this scaling up of the Tingoni model. IER and INTSORMIL were involved as technical consultants.