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Mali: a Day in the Village December 2009

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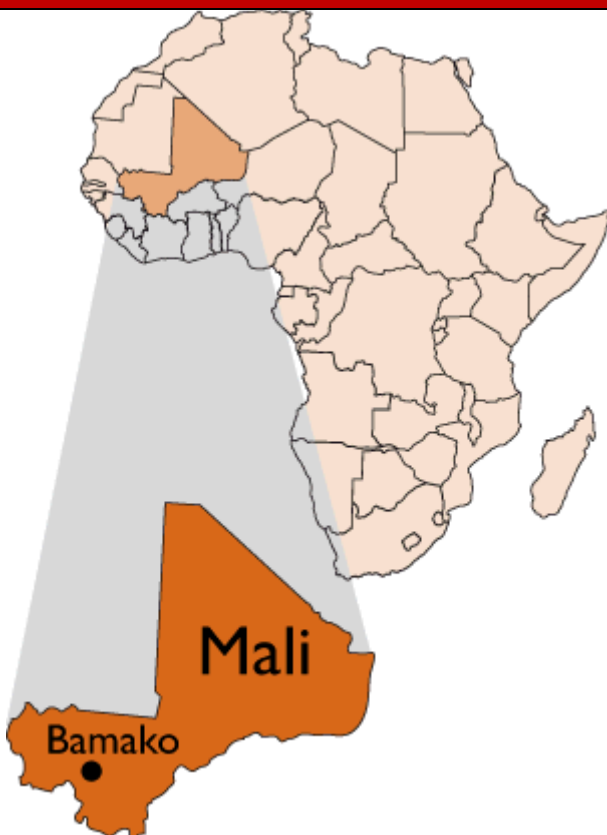
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Photo Gallery

Mali: a Day in the Village

December 2009



Approximately 80 percent of Malians engage in agriculture as a source of income, producing cotton, millet, sorghum and rice. Nearly two-thirds of the country lives below the poverty line, and 74 percent earn less than \$2 a day. The most productive land is located near the Niger river. Droughts and locust swarms regularly challenge agricultural and pastoral ways of life.



The INTSORMIL Program collaborates with the Malian National Program, IER in the promotion of sorghum and pearl millet production and marketing. INTSORMIL host country coordinator Mamourou Diourte (white cap) is shown at a field day promoting the production of an improved sorghum variety Seguifa. The banner says “Adopt the sorghum variety Seguifa in all production areas to increase production. Assure food security and participate in the economic growth of Mali.”



Dr. Bahiru Duguma, INTSORMIL Agreement Officer's Technical Representative (AOTR), USAID Washington DC observing the small panicles of local millet and sorghum varieties in a field that has been harvested near Mopti, Mali. Note the large weeds. Farmers in the Kayes Region in Northwest Mali near Mauritania have almost stopped the planting of pearl millet because of the severe damage caused by blister beetles feeding on the panicles.



With a water melon in one hand and balancing a basket of pearl millet panicles on their heads women carry the recently harvested crop to their home village, Douentza, Mopti Region, Mali. Pearl millet is a basic food crop in Northern Mali and when harvests are poor famine and hunger are common. The abundant harvest this year is one of the reasons for the broad smiles you see. The millet will be placed on the roofs of their homes for drying.



Back in Douentza the bundles of recently harvested pearl millet panicles are returned to the village where they are placed on the roof of mud houses. The hot sun helps manage insects and diseases. Later the millet panicles are placed in storage structures or threshed.



After drying in the sun the pearl millet panicles are placed in storage structures. This is a storage structure in the Douentza village composed of mud walls and a roof of pearl millet stems. This photo was taken in December 2009 in the midst of the 6 month dry season.



Farmers comparing the panicles of two pearl millet varieties being stored in a storage building in Douentza village. The INTSORMIL Program is introducing improved millet varieties , production practices and marketing strategies to increase millet production and support the USAID/Mali Mission's Global Food Security Initiative (GFSI).



INTSORMIL and IER/Mali scientists meeting with the farmers of Douentza village to discuss the 2009 millet yields and prices received in the Production -Marketing project conducted in this village in northern Mali. Most villages have a special tree under which all village meetings are held.



A highlight of the meeting under the Douentza village tree was a poster describing methods to manage sorghum and millet pests in storage. The poster produced by INTSORMIL scientists Niamoye Yaro Diarisso IER/ Bamako and Bonnie Pendleton, West Texas A&M University was of great interest to the farmers. With the shortage of food in the village losses in storage are devastating.



Botourou Ouendeba, INTSORMIL scientist (white baseball cap) discussing plans for the 2010 season for the Production-Marketing project in Douentza village. Locally grown groundnuts (peanuts) in the foreground are provided by the villagers to the visitors to snack on during the meeting.



Four women, in unison, threshing millet with a mortar and pestle in Douentza village. The precision at which they operate the pestles reminds one of the pistons of a 4-cylinder engine. Note the woman with a baby on her back.



Closeup of the mortar with millet grain and the pestle.



Village women, baby and young girl, all benefactors of increased pearl millet production in Douentza village. Attractive jewelry and colorful clothing are common among Malian women.



Family taking a noon meal break after spending the morning working in their millet fields near their village. Millet and sorghum are important foods in the diet of rural Malians. The goats in the background will serve as future meals for the villagers.