



Ten Years of Innovative Solutions

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Food for Progress Program to Improve Cashew Production in The Gambia, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau

Improving Local Economy and Nutrition

The global food crisis has further threatened reliability of food production in many countries. The Gambia, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau, three countries with the potential for improving their economies through increasing crop production, are receiving assistance from IRD to boost cashew production and sales with an eye towards reducing the effects of the crisis. IRD will help to improve food security by providing training to cashew farmers, seeds for a higher yielding variety of cashew plants, new techniques, nutrition education, land management practices, and small scale units that will process and help utilize all parts of the cashew fruit and nut.

IRD is selling 4,500 metric tons of vegetable oil, which was donated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is using the proceeds in The Gambia to increase the organizational ability of Cashew Farmer Associations, increase productivity and quality of cashew crops, and increase value addition and local consumption of cashews over three years.

IRD will work with the ministries of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment, and Natural Resources in The Gambia, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau, as well as selected organizations with expertise in farming in those regions to develop two improved varieties of cashew that will help to increase yields. Small grants will be given to these organizations to conduct research and development of technologies to improve the performance of the cashew farming systems. The selected organizations will also provide training in post-harvest handling and treatment of cashew nuts which will be supervised and coordinated by IRD.

The creation of primary producer groups and hiring of value chain coordinators will help farmers' organizations better serve their members. These organizations will also be trained in business management, entrepreneurship, advocacy, and policy analysis in order to articulate their needs, negotiate what is in their best interest, and participate in and influence the decision making process. In addition, IRD will conduct a nutrition education campaign on the nutritional values of cashew.

Estimated completion of the project is December 2011 and will total close to \$4 million in assistance.

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A cashew fruit