

Canadian Society of Animal Science (CSAS) - Ghana Society of Animal Production (GSAP) Partnership Project Annual Report (April 2009 – March 2010)

This project is managed by the Agricultural Institute of Canada (AIC) under the auspices of its International Twinning Partnership Program (ITPP), funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The project is in Year 4 of Phase 2. The objectives of the project are:

- To strengthen and utilize the institutional capacity of GSAP to improve household food security and income among women in the Northern Region of Ghana
- To mobilize and empower sustainable women's groups to access information on environmentally sustainable and economically viable technologies that will enhance the shea nut-livestock production system.

The 25 communities participating in this project comprise 21 villages in the Northern Region and 4 in the Upper West Region of Ghana. Two collaborating non-government organisations (NGO's), the Northern Development Society (NORDESO) and the Rural Women Emancipation Foundation (RWEF), managed three communities each.

Some of the major successes and activities of the year for each of the project objectives include:

1. Strengthening and utilizing the institutional capacity of GSAP to improve household food security and income among women in the Northern Region of Ghana
 - a. Participation in a meeting of all Canadian and international partners of the ITTP in Sri Lanka in July, 2009, to develop a strategy for a new proposal to CIDA for the next phase of the program (2011-2016). Workshops conducted at the meeting led to the identification of new overall ITTP outcomes and specific CSAS-GSAP project outcomes.
 - b. Attendance of 67 GSAP members (55 males and 12 females) at the GSAP 16th Biennial Scientific Conference and 24th AGM at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi on August 5-8, 2009. Issues discussed included pursuing recognition of GSAP as a professional institute by the government of Ghana.
 - c. Launch of the GSAP mentoring programme: 10 female undergraduate animal science students in their final year participated in the mentoring programme. Of these, 8 students presented posters on their dissertations at the GSAP Biennial Scientific Conference.
 - d. Publication of the 4th and 5th volumes of the Ghanaian Journal of Animal Science in September, 2009, and March, 2010, respectively.
 - e. Enhancement of ties between CSAS and GSAP.
 - i. Contacts initiated after the visit of 4 CSAS members to Ghana in November, 2008, resulted in a GSAP member pursuing a PhD programme at the University of Lethbridge.
 - ii. Dr. F. Obese, GSAP Vice-President, made a presentation at the CSAS AGM in Montreal in July, 2009. He also gave a talk at the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) in Saskatoon, Canada during the same trip.
 - iii. The Canadian Project Coordinator, Dr. John Baah, and Assistant Coordinator, Dr. Shannon Scott, carried out a monitoring trip to Ghana in January and February, 2010. They worked with GSAP colleagues to revise the new proposal to CIDA. Along with members of the GSAP field implementation team, they discussed with women's groups their evaluation of project successes to date and their priorities for the next phase of the project.
 - f. Enhancement of ties between the two AIC-ITPP projects in Ghana: CSAS-GSAP and Canadian Society of Horticultural Science (CSHS)-Ghana Institute of Horticulturalists (GhIH). Training on animal production was provided to project group members in CSAS-GhIH communities and training on dry season vegetable production was provided to CSAS-GSAP project communities. In addition, a baseline study on Integrated Agriculture Aquaculture (IAA) production was conducted in 2 GSAP and 2 GhIH project communities. The study, conducted by the Canadian NGO Fish for Africa (FfA), aimed to determine the feasibility of integrating fish farming with existing small ruminant production and dry season vegetable production. As a result of this baseline study, CSAS, GSAP, CSHS, GhIH, and FfA undertook a joint monitoring trip in Northern Ghana in February, 2010, which in turn led to GSAP and GhIH developing a joint IAA project for incorporation into the new ITTP proposal to CIDA.

- g. Enhancement of opportunities for collaboration between GSAP and GhIH and NGO and government organization (GO) partners. A workshop held in February, 2010, highlighted potential collaborations and development in the following areas: animal production; aquaculture; vegetable production; microcredit; women's groups; and shea nut picking and processing.
 - h. Initiation of discussions to form the Agricultural Institute of Ghana (AIG). These discussions were attended by representatives of GSAP, GhIH, and the Ghanaian societies of soil science and agricultural economics.
 - i. Enhancement of ties between GSAP and the Animal Science Association of Nigeria (ASAN), the Nigerian Institute of Animal Science (NIAS) and the Nigerian Society of Animal Production (NSAP).
 - j. Initiation of discussions to form a West African Institute of Animal Production (WAIAP). Countries contacted included Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Senegal, and Gambia.
2. Mobilizing and empowering sustainable women's groups to access information on environmentally sustainable and economically viable technologies that will enhance the shea nut-livestock production system.
- a. Provision of small ruminants and training in small ruminant production to members of women's groups in project communities.
 - i. A donation of £2,500 from the Ørskov Foundation was used to procure 53 goats for distribution to 52 women in 5 project communities. A revolving fund for the purchase and use of basic veterinary drugs was established in each of the communities. The CSAS-GSAP project also provided an additional 32 goats to 32 women 2 districts.
 - ii. In a pilot study, GSAP procured 12 Sahelian dairy goats for women in the project communities. Eventually, beneficiaries will be trained to process milk into yogurt and other healthy products aimed at meeting the protein needs of the population.
 - b. Provision of microcredit to members of women's groups in project communities to improve household food security and income. This activity was carried out via collaborations with the local NGO's NORDESO and RWEF and with a Canadian NGO, Bridges of Hope International Network of Development Agencies Inc. (BOH). Benefits to beneficiaries included engagement in petty trading, vegetable farming, poultry, small ruminant and pig rearing for income generation, improvement in family nutrition and health, increased influence of women in community development and decision making, and increased child school enrolment.
 - c. Provision of material assistance to women's groups: donkey carts, shea butter extraction machine parts, rubber boots and gloves to prevent snake bites, anti-snake bite venom, and insecticide-treated mosquito nets to reduce the incidence of malaria.
 - d. Provision of training on operation of shea butter processing machines to 20 females and 2 males.
 - e. Creation of awareness of HIV/AIDS and other major communicable diseases via training sessions attended by 510 females and 202 males.

It is worth emphasising that at the community level, two of the most important outcomes of the CSAS-GSAP collaboration have been the increased number of small ruminants owned by women and the corresponding increase in their income, both of which have effectively served as buffer to the food security needs of their families when crop yields are poor.

As mentioned above, BOH has continued to partner with the CSAS-GSAP project to provide microcredit funds to women's groups in project communities as well as to support activities targeted at alleviating poverty in the project areas. We would appeal to members interested in making donations to the project to make their contributions through the BOH website (www.bridgesofhope.ca) and to specify that donations are for the CSAS-GSAP micro credit project. Tax deductible receipts will be issued.

We are grateful for the continued financial assistance from CIDA and for the role of AIC in coordinating and facilitating the project. Members are encouraged to visit the project website at http://www.csas.net/nav_aic.htm for additional details and news on the project as well as the AIC website (<http://www.aic.ca/international/index.cfm> for information on the international programs of the AIC.

Respectfully submitted by Dr. John Baah and Dr. Shannon Scott (13 July 2010)