



# Feed the Future iAGRI Project Update November-December 2012



*iAGRI operates in Tanzania within Feed the Future, the US Government's global hunger and food security initiative. Feed the Future works to improve food security under the guidelines of Tanzania's CAADP (Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program) Compact, prepared by the Government of Tanzania in 2010. Primary stakeholders of iAGRI are Sokoine University of Agriculture and the National Agricultural Research System of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Cooperatives. Under Feed the Future, iAGRI's objectives are (1) degree training, (2) collaborative research, (3) capacity building, and (4) strengthening of Tanzanian-US-Global South research linkages.*

**Trainee Selection, Cohort 3.** Interviews were conducted for selection of Cohort 3 trainees. The iAGRI Training Committee interviewed 69 short-listed applicants out of the 150 who applied. A total of 33 Masters-level scholarships will be granted in the third round: 15 for study at the six iAGRI Consortium universities in the United States, 10 for study at African universities outside Tanzania (through an agreement with RUFORUM), 5 for study at Sokoine University, and 3 for study in India. The committee chose 25 semi-finalists to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), examinations required by most American universities. Based on their GRE and TOEFL test performance and their success in gaining admission at the consortium universities, 15 out of the 25 GRE and TOEFL test-takers will ultimately go for studies in the U.S.

**Trainee Coursework, Cohort 2.** Forty eight iAGRI trainees from Cohort 2 completed their first academic session. Of these, 29 trainees are at iAGRI Consortium universities in the U.S., 9 are at African universities outside Tanzania, and 10 are at Sokoine University. Grades (marks) are just beginning to come in for this cohort.

**Trainee Research, Cohort 1.** Five students from Cohort 1 began their research in Tanzania after return from a year of Masters-level study in the U.S. The sixth student in Cohort 1 returned to Tanzania in December. Supervision of the student researchers is done by a team consisting of an American and a Tanzanian advisor. iAGRI views interaction of the student with his/her advising team as an important factor in the success of the research. To facilitate high-quality intellectual guidance, iAGRI asks each pair of American and Tanzanian advisors to meet jointly every month with their advisee in a video call to discuss research progress and problems.

**Collaborative Research.** In October, the project put out a Call for Expression of Interest (EOI) for collaborative research on eight themes identified at the iAGRI Priority-Setting Workshop in 2011. Fifty three researchers from Sokoine University and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Cooperatives responded. Twenty four EOIs met the minimum criteria spelled out in the Call. Concurrently, 39 potential research collaborators from the iAGRI Consortium universities were identified. iAGRI then sent a Call for Concept Notes (CN) to the screened list of Tanzanian and American researchers. Each CN will be written by a team consisting of at least one person from Sokoine University, one from the Ministry, and one from the iAGRI Consortium, though having more than one researcher from each institution is encouraged. The researchers were sorted according to the eight research themes, and iAGRI then introduced the researchers to each other to facilitate the building of self-selected teams. Teams will choose their own leader, who can be either Tanzanian or American, according to the interests and contributions of the team members. CNs are due in January. An international review panel of Tanzanian and American members will read and rank the proposals. It is anticipated that 4-6 research proposals will be funded.

**South-South Linkages.** In November, Dr. David Kraybill, iAGRI Project Director, participated in a conference of the Tertiary Agricultural Education Partnership at University of Stellenbosch in South Africa along with Associate Dean Abel Kaaya of the Faculty of Agriculture at Sokoine University. The Partnership is emerging as an important coordinator of capacity building efforts in African agricultural universities. Also in November, Dr. Mark Erbaugh and Dr. David Hansen from the iAGRI home office at Ohio State University visited Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) in India to, among other things, make plans for placing iAGRI trainees there for studies.

**Seminar.** In December, iAGRI sponsored a lecture on "Stakeholders, Social Network Analysis, and Participatory Innovation for Conservation Agriculture" by Dr. Keith Moore from Virginia Tech, an iAGRI Consortium university. Also, Dr. Moore prepared a report on how iAGRI can assist SUA to strengthen its linkages with the private sector.

**Administration.** A parking lot and vehicle garage at the iAGRI office building were completed in December. The iAGRI Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2012 (October 2011 through September 2012) and the iAGRI Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2013 (October 2012 through September 2013) were prepared and submitted to USAID.