



PRESS RELEASE

Abuja, Nigeria, 22nd November 2022

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Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF)

Controlling Fruit Flies in Nigeria: ECOWAS Hands-Over Surveillance Materials and Phytosanitary Equipment to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

As part of the ECOWAS efforts to provide surveillance and phytosanitary inspection materials to the 15 Member States towards controlling fruit flies in the region through the AFD/EU-funded SyRIMAO Project, the ECOWAS Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development handed-over this Tuesday 22nd November 2022, some surveillance materials and laboratory equipment to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Since 2008, the horticultural sector in West Africa has been confronted with the issue of fruit flies that destroy 50 to 80% of fruit production. These crop pests have a negative impact on the entire sector. The challenge is therefore to develop more relevant, affordable, and accessible control technologies in the region.

As the first fruit fly control project (PLMF: 2015-2019) could not adequately address the issue in its entirety, the "Innovative Regional Fruit Fly Control System Project (SyRIMAO) in West Africa" started its field activities in January 2021 to consolidate, scale-up and sustain the PMLF achievements and gain more command in providing more appropriate response to the scourge.

Though Nigeria is not the biggest mango producing and exporting country in the region, it has a key role to play in the sector as it is the most populated country stands out as the largest market in all socio-economic respects. The equipment handed over to Nigeria is composed of surveillance materials for the monitoring and control of more than 10.000 ha of mango industry in seven States that include Benue, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Oyo, Plateau and Adamawa and equipment as support to the Federal quarantine laboratory. This will support research, surveillance and alert faces of the control in the beneficiary country.

Materials and equipment were handed over by **Mr Sy Alain Traoré**, ECOWAS Director for Agriculture and Rural Development on behalf of the ECOWAS Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture, **Ms Masandje Touré-Litsé**. While taking delivery of the materials, **Dr Deola Tayo Lordsbanjou**, Deputy Director, Horticulture Division, representing Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, expresses gratitude to ECOWAS for the various supports to Member States, specifically to Nigeria.

So far, the project has succeeded in fixing the blocks for stronger surveillance and forecasting, capacity building, quarantine supervising, and linking national research to the regional Excellence Centre, that is the National Centre for Specialisation, Fruits, and Vegetables of Bobo-Dioulasso/Burkina Faso (CNS-FL). Nigeria is committed to be among the best mango producing and exporting countries of the region and is taking steps towards contributing more to international trade.

The objective of sustainable fruit fly control is achievable in West Africa as fruit flies can be monitored, warning given to producers, and efficient and affordable control technologies produced in the region. National Committees therefore have a vital role to play in ensuring ownership and sustainability of the memento raised by the project, especially after the ECOWAS-Donor funding period.



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To recall, the overall objective of the SyRIMAO Project is aimed at improving the incomes of fruit and vegetable producers, thus contributing to food security, poverty reduction and job creation in the region. The two main expected results are: (i) regional and national research systems and their coordination are strengthened to provide producers with efficient control techniques with low environmental impact; and (ii) losses on fruits and vegetables due to infestations are controlled through strengthening the structure of the sector at both national and regional levels.

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RAAF: Feed West Africa

The creation of the RAAF by ECOWAS through a regulation in August 2011 and its official launch and installation in September 2013 in Lomé, Togo, is part of the operationalisation of the Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) adopted in January 2005. It also reflects the need to create operational agencies with administrative and financial management autonomy to coordinate the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Policy projects and programmes. RAAF is an ECOWAS specialised Agency headquartered in Lomé, Togo.

RAAF mandate is to ensure technical execution of regional programmes and investment plans contributing to the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) by relying on regional institutions, organisations, and actors with proven expertise. The Regional Agricultural Policy rests on a modern and sustainable agriculture, based on the effectiveness and efficiency of family farms and the promotion of agroforestry and fisheries enterprises with the active involvement of the private sector.

In this perspective, the estimated 300 million citizens of the ECOWAS Community can ultimately take ownership for the realisation of the new vision of moving from an ECOWAS of States to an **“ECOWAS of the People: Peace and Prosperity for All”** by 2050.

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