



## Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program

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### Trip Report: Kenya 18-25 July 2010

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**Purpose:** To assess the initiation of the 'Development and transfer of conservation agriculture production systems (CAPS) for smallholder farms in eastern Uganda and western Kenya' (LTRA-10) project led by PI Jay Norton, meet host country teams and their partners, learn about the implementation contexts, initiate the technology networks and gendered knowledge Cross-Cutting Research Activities (CCRAs), build gender awareness among the local site teams, canvas the sites for graduate student placement, and develop linkages with USAID Missions.

**Sites Visited:** Manor House Agricultural Center (MHAC), Kitale; Naisombu Community, Transzoia; Sustainable Agriculture Center for Research, Extension and Development (SACRED Africa), Bungoma; and Nairobi, Kenya

#### **Description of Activities**

The LTRA-10 team, hosted by Manor House Agricultural Center (MHAC), was quite receptive to the SANREM CAPS and Cross-Cutting Research Activity (CCRA) presentations. Serious discussions surrounded the technology networks CCRA and proved useful in clarifying its content and objectives. Much of the LTRA-10 teams' time was spent discussing and making final decisions concerning the content of the baseline questionnaire and the sampling framework. This opportunity to meet was critical for making headway on this first year activity. After considerable discussion of multiple questionnaire items and sampling approaches, decisions were made that were fully consensus driven. It was a good opportunity to come to know the various members of the three teams. They have a lot of talent among them. The Focus Group activity elicited new information about the level of organizational activity in this part of Kenya. It also demonstrated that women in the community of Naisombu are considerable empowered with respect to accessing community resources and making substantive production decisions. Before heading back to Nairobi to meet with USAID, I visited the Sustainable Agriculture Center for Research Extension and Development in Africa (SACRED-Africa) in Bungoma.

On Monday, I began our discussions with an overview of the SANREM program, provided background on the Conservation Agriculture Production Systems approach, and described the four cross-cutting activities, specifically highlighting the technology networks for innovation. The presentations were interspersed with questions and discussions of issues as we covered the material. The major discussion during my visit concerned finalization of the baseline survey questionnaire and sampling frame. This activity provided the opportunity to observe how the teams had envisioned for their baseline surveys (in part reflecting their intervention approaches to technology development). Despite considerable variability in the sampling frames that each brought to the table, substantial and productive discussion ensued.

The focus group activity was held in Naisombu community in the peri-urban surroundings of Kitale. MHAC shares this demonstration facility with multiple development organizations where farmers gather and demonstration trials are conducted. The subsequent focus group discussions were quite successful in eliciting a particularly high level of institutional linkages – a consequence of the site's status as an entry point for development organizations and its proximity to town. Overall it appeared that the population of farmers (women and men) was well served. Unlike in the case of Mali and Ghana, credit organizations were quite apparent and served the population. Veterinarian and AI services were also found to be important. These were not uncovered in Mali and Ghana.

In the development of gendered resource maps, there were some differences in men's and women's access, control and labor. Building on a discussion of the maps, it was determined that while men may still feel in control of many aspects of agricultural and livelihood decision making, their control has diminished overtime. Women, particularly in this peri-urban environment, have multiple options for empowerment. The institutional sphere is highly developed with many support services available. Recent programs of the government and NGOs have increased opportunities for women. Men's perspectives on soil fertility were quite well informed. They correctly identified the importance of humus in the soil for water retention, recognizing it by the color and texture of the soil samples. However, they over studied the soils and took far longer than the women to arrive at the same conclusions.

The review of the baseline questionnaire, with a brief break for dinner, continued through the evening (question-by-question) to midnight. Interesting discussions were provoked by the various questions posed. The team is coming together nicely and demonstrates healthy give and take. A highlight of the evening for me was the decision to include the Technology Networks survey items for a subsample of survey respondents. The next morning the teams agreed on a standardized sampling framework.

I discussed my graduate student's upcoming field work for her Master's thesis in Agricultural Economics with both AT Uganda and Manor House. They were both supportive of her coming and would try to help situate her within their communities.

My visit to SACRED-Africa was informative about their programs – a substantial rural technical institute feeding Moi University is being developed, currently averaging 250 students a semester. SACRED-Africa has several campuses in the region and one in Nairobi.

USAID/Nairobi never responded to either my or AOTR Harry Rea's requests for an appointment or contact information so the opportunity to meet with them was squandered.

**Training Activities Conducted:**

Program type (workshop, seminar, field day, short course, etc.)	Date	Audience	Number of Participants		Training Provider (US university, host country institution, etc.)	Training Objective
			Men	Women		
Focus Group	20 July 20 10	Men and women villagers in Naisombu	11	11	SANREM ME in collaboration AT Uganda, Manor House AC, and SACRED	Introduce and investigate the concepts of conservation agriculture , technology networks, and gendered knowledge and practices.

**Suggestions, Recommendations, and/or Follow-up Items**

The dispersed location of the three NGO teams implementing LTRA-10 in East Africa makes coordinated efforts sometimes difficult to consummate. While email communications are being used to exchange information, collective decision making requires more physical presence and interaction. As research findings are made and site-specific CAPS activities accelerated, conscious efforts will need to be made to bring the three teams together on a routine basis for sharing of lessons learned and maintaining coherence in the overall program. The three teams appear to work well together and clearly synergies will evolve, particularly due to the fact that the teams are disciplinarily distinct and really require each other for 360 degree analysis of their individual findings.

There are also differences in the sites which makes each one particular. While some findings/approaches may be applicable across sites, in other cases, specifically tailored interventions will be necessary for some activities. One clear distinction in that regard is the dramatic difference between the Manor House site at Naisombu with its highly sophisticated organizational environment and differentiated production systems (more complex technology networks) as compared with the Ugandan sites greater internal diversified production systems and more insular village conditions. As one might expect, there will be differences across these sites for women are quite dramatic as well with women in the former site having greater independence of decision making and action than those in the latter sites.

**List of Contacts Made:**

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