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

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# Trip Report: Haiti

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**Purpose:** To choose research field plots, mark them out, take soil samples, and prepare host country partner agronomists for implementing the research protocols involving randomization, replication, seeding, data collection and harvesting techniques.

**Sites Visited**: Corporant Research Site in Mirebalais
Lachateau Research Site in Boucan Carré
Maïssade Research Site near Maïssade

On January 12, 2010, Port au Prince Haiti was struck by a 7.0 Earthquake as our Virginia Tech and Haitian teams were leaving the city. This terminated our plans to visit the potential research sites in the Central Plateau. The Virginia Tech team left for home through the Dominican Republic. As Haiti began to recover and the airport was reopened, we booked tickets to return to Haiti in mid-March to complete our January work. The goal was to visit before the beginning of the rainy season and plots would be planted. This plan was implemented from 3/14 through 3/19 with the four-member Virginia Tech team visiting all three research sites and conducting training workshops with the agronomists and technicians at the two Zanmi Agrikol sites (Corporant and Lachateau) and the Caritas site (Maïssade). We further expanded on our January plans, by taking soil samples, doing bulk density samples and running percolation tests at each research site. We were also able to deliver the seed for the black bean trials as well as arrange for soil samples to be sent to A&L Laboratories in Richmond, Virginia. Each of the research sites and agronomists were equipped with a milk scale and balance to weigh yields, a soil probe, a minimum and maximum thermometer, a range gauge, planting strings, and a compendium of bean diseases to aid in identification and data collection. All our work was completed by Thursday evening, March 18, and the first rains came. This was a very successful week.

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**Description of Observations**:
There was a great deal of apprehension among the host country agronomists concerning what needed to be done to carry out a research project. Individual workshops with each NGO greatly assuaged some of the early reservations agronomists had in the field. Laura Maupin and Wade Thomason did an excellent job of discussing research protocol and data collection. Robert Badio, SANREM CRSP National Coordinator will be assisting the agronomists with the establishment of the research plots. Robert will also be responsible for sending the soil samples to Virginia and for obtaining the proper forms to receive maize seed from CIMMIT in Mexico.

There were some modifications to our initial plan. In the Corporant and Lachateau sites, black beans are normally planted in late fall. It is only at the higher elevations around these sites that bean planting is done in the spring. So, the decision was made to not have two planting dates for the bean variety trial, but rather a spring and fall planting at different locations. This spring, the bean trials will be conducted on farmer fields at the higher elevation and the fall trials will be on research sites at Corporant and Lachateau. Spring planting is the norm in Maïssade, so the two planting date study at the same site will be conducted at the Maissade Research site. We left open the possibility for sending someone down during the planting season to assist with the research planting. There was also the possibility of fertilizer distribution to farmers. If this became a reality, we have proposed sending Mark Alley to help make sure that fertilizer was applied properly by the farmers to achieve the maximum benefit, and that could be timed to planting time to serve both purposes.

**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 | | |
| Research Site Selection, Corporant | 3/15/10 | Zanmi Agrikol Agronomists and technicians | 7 | 3 | Virginia Tech | Train agronomists to square, GPS, and stake out the experiments, take soil samples, do soil percolation test, and take soil bulk densities. |
| Research Site Selection, Lachateau | 3/16/10 | Zanmi Agrikol Agronomists and technicians | 6 | 3 | Virginia Tech | Train agronomists to square, GPS, and stake out the experiments, take soil samples, do soil percolation test, and take soil bulk density. |
| Workshop at Wozo Plaza Hotel, Mirebalais | 3/16/10 | Gillaine Warne, Director of Zanmi Agrikol and Zanmi Agrikol Agronomists | 5 | 3 | Virginia Tech | To explain the research protocol (randomization, replication, seeding, data collection, and harvest techniques) for black bean, maize, and conservation agriculture research plots. |
| Research Site Selection, Maïssade | 3/17/10 | Catitas Agronomists | 4 | 2 | Virginia Tech | Train agronomists to square, GPS, and stake out the experiments, take soil samples, do soil percolation test, and take soil bulk density. |
| Workshop at Caritas Office, Hinche. | 3/18/10 | Caritas Agronomists | 4 | 2 | Virginia Tech | To explain the research protocol (randomization, replication, seeding, data collection, and harvest techniques) for black bean, maize, and conservation agriculture research plots. |