

Nigeria approves new names for top performing cassava varieties

The Federal Government of Nigeria on Wednesday evening approved new names for 10 improved cassava varieties, as part of efforts to brand the root crop for easy identification, cultivation and marketing of cassava stems.

The branded varieties comprise 6 released varieties and 4 yet-to-be-released varieties. The released varieties and their new names are as follows: IBA961632 (Farmer's Pride), IBA980581 (Dixon), CR36-5 (Ayaya), IBA070593 (Sunshine), and IBA980505 (Fine face). TME 419, a variety already popular among farmers, remained unchanged as TME419. The yet-to-be-released (pre-release) varieties and their new names are TMS13F1160P0004 (Game Changer), TMS13F1343P0022 (Obasanjo-2), NR130124 (Hope) and TMEB693 (Poundable).

The Director, Federal Department of Agriculture, Mrs Karima Babanginda, who moved for the adoption of the names on behalf of the government of Nigeria described the move as a 'welcome development.'

"Our farmers can now be able to identify the different cassava varieties," Mrs Babanginda said.

The naming of the varieties was facilitated by the Building an Economically Sustainable, Integrated and Economically Sustainable Cassava Seed System, Phase 2 (BASICS-II), that is being led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the NextGen Cassava Breeding project (NextGen Cassava).

Results on common names of the varieties from focus groups were collated and screened by an independent committee. The best three names that resonate with the market were subjected to voting by cassava farmers and names with the highest votes were finally picked.

In his welcome address, the Executive Director, National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI) Umudike, Prof. Ukpabi Joseph Ukpabi expressed optimism that the naming of varieties using common names would continue, stressing that "it will also help to change the game in the seed system of root and tuber crops in Nigeria and also serve as a model for other African countries."

Re-echoing the significance of the event, IITA Deputy Director General (Partnerships for



IITA Director General, Dr Nteranya Sanginga speaking at the Launch of BASICS-II

Delivery), Dr Kenton Dashiell noted that the re-naming of the varieties was imperative.

"It will help the cassava sector in a big way," Dr Dashiell added.

The brand names mark a departure from codes that are usually handed to farmers by researchers and often difficult to memorize.

Prof. Chiedozi Egesi, Project Manager for NextGen Cassava Project observed that code names are hard to remember or confusing which can lead to loss of identity of a variety or mixtures in farms.

"Substituting the official names of the varieties with simpler or more relatable brand names will make farmers more familiar and closer to the varieties. From the

BASICS-II project, two early generation seed companies, IITA GoSeed and Umudike Seeds, have been set up to ensure the production and commercialization of breeders and foundation seeds in a sustainable manner to ensure constant access to quality planting material of improved varieties," he explained.

BASICS-II Project Manager, Prof Lateef Sanni said the variety naming would enhance the cassava stems promotion activities of the project since farmers would be able to identify and relate better with the new names, especially as the farmers also participated in the naming process.

All the varieties named are high yielding, Cassava Mosaic Disease-resistant and are in high demand by farmers.

TME419



Erect and straight plant type excellent for mechanization

High yielding (36 tons/ha)

High dry matter (40%)

CMD resistant

Good for starch, flour, garri and fresh consumption



Sunshine (TMS-070593)



Best current biofortified with high Provitamin A

Yellow roots

Excellent for yellow garri and other biofortified food products

Good dry matter content

CMD resistant



Fine face (TMS-980505)



High yielding (34 tons/ha)

CMD resistant

Excellent for garri production

Attractive umbrella shaped plant type good for weed control





Dixon (TMS-980581)

High yielding (35 tons/ha)



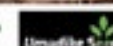
- Erect plant type
- Petiole color red
- Excellent drought tolerance
- CMD resistant
- Good for garri production



Farmer's Pride (TMS-981632)

High yielding (35 tons/ha)
High and stable dry matter (39%)

- CMD resistant
- Erect plant type excellent for mechanization
- Good for starch and flour production



Ayaya (CR36-5)

High and stable dry matter (40%)



- Erect growth habit
- Petiole color is purple
- CMD resistant
- Excellent for flour and starch production



ACAI trains Tanzanian government extension agents for AKILIMO dissemination



Training of extension agents in Tanzania

The African Cassava Agronomy Initiative (ACAI) project held a training session for the Tanzanian government extension officers on the use of Fertilizer Recommendation (FR), Weed Management and Best Planting Practices (WM/BPP) and Scheduled Planting and High Starch Content (SPHS) and the operation of various formats of the AKILIMO toolkit.

The ACAI team trained 67 participants from Bagamoyo and Chalinze districts in Pwani region and Handeni districts from Tanga region in a four-day workshop held in Bagamoyo in September. The training aimed at building the capacity of extension agents

to train smallholder cassava farmers on the proper application of the AKILIMO agronomy advice tools as well as applying the best agronomic practices.

ACAI project coordinator for Tanzania, Freddy Baijukya, presented the functions and importance of using new technologies like AKILIMO Decision Support Tool for agricultural development.

“Smartphones have a lot of packages that can help farmers in collecting and accessing important information about cassava crop”, said Freddy.

The training included sessions on how to upload data to the ACAI platform by using Open Data Kit (ODK) that will be used to calibrate the AKILIMO prediction engine. Participants were also trained on how to interpret AKILIMO recommendations and how to apply them in their farming activities. Participants acknowledged that the training has been an advantage to both extension officers and farmers on increasing awareness that will help to improve agronomic practices.

“The training gave me enough knowledge on the adoption of new technology in cassava farming, I will apply the knowledge and disseminate it to other farmers” noted Ally Salahanga, an extension agent from Chalinze.

The District Agriculture, Irrigation and Cooperative officer (DAICO) from Chalinze, Jovin Bararata recognized the efforts made by ACAI in disseminating AKILIMO tool and delivering the necessary knowledge to different regions in the country.

The participatory approach of the training gave room for participants to give feedback on how helpful they find AKILIMO tool in supporting their decision making in cassava growing practices.

Source: [AKILIMO UPDATES](#)

Nigeria: BASICS-II onboards 45 new Cassava Seed Entrepreneurs in Kogi State to address seed gap in cassava



Group photo from the onboarding ceremony

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) led Building an Economically Sustainable Integrated Cassava Seed System, Phase 2 (BASICS-II) on Thursday enlisted 45 farmers in Kogi state as cassava seed entrepreneurs (CSEs).

The CSEs were drawn from across the state after a thorough screening process by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the BASICS-II partner leading the development of CSEs in Nigeria.

The plan is to help Kogi State boost its seed demand for cassava production, create a new stream of business opportunities, improve the livelihoods of farmers and contribute to the overall food security in the country

The coming on board of the new cassava seed entrepreneurs will drive the adoption and marketing of the recently branded six released varieties and four yet-to be-released varieties. The released varieties and their new

names are as follows: IBA961632 (Farmer's Pride), IBA980581 (Dixon), CR36-5 (Ayaya), IBA070593 (Sunshine), IBA980505 (Fine face) and TME 419. The yet-to-be-released (pre-release) varieties and their new names are TMS13F1160P0004 (Game Changer), TMS13F1343P0022 (Obasanjo-2), NR130124 (Hope) and TMEB693 (Poundable). Under good agronomic practices, these varieties yield more than 20 tons per ha as opposed to the current national average of 9 tons per ha.

Kogi State Commissioner for Agriculture, David Apeh, said the development of cassava seeds system in Kogi state was a welcome development for the transformation of the state's cassava sector.

"It all starts with the seeds. When you start with bad stems, you end with bad results. Therefore, we appreciate IITA, BASICS-II, and CRS for bringing this project to Kogi state," Mr Apeh, who was represented by the Director of Agricultural Services, Mr Okolo Ichalla, said.

Prof Lateef Sanni, BASICS-II Project Leader, re-echoed the importance of developing the cassava seed sector to catalyze the diffusion of improved varieties in Nigeria.

He noted that there was a huge opportunity in the cassava seed sector for farmers to utilize and transform their livelihoods, adding that "BASICS-II was willing to backstop farmers towards developing a sustainable cassava seed sector in Nigeria."

Chairman of the Nigeria Cassava Growers Association, Pastor Paul Agada, said the association was working with the Central Bank of Nigeria to establish 4000 hectares of cassava seed farms. He assured the CSEs of adequate demand and market for improved cassava seeds, stressing that at the moment there was a gap in the availability of clean-improved and certified seeds.

"Our farmers are willing to buy cassava seeds, so we are glad some of you will be producing



L-R: Prof. Lateef Sanni, BASICS-II Project Leader, IITA; Mr. Ajayi Ikpemige, Seed Producer with Wadahi Farms in Kogi; and Mr Oluwatosin Oni, Senior Program Manager with CRS, on the field admiring Farmer's Pride cassava variety... in Kogi

for farmers in the state," Mr Agada added.

Though recognized as a major cassava growing state in Nigeria, majority of farmers in Kogi rely on local varieties to grow cassava. This approach undermines the yield of cassava and makes cassava business unprofitable.

Mr Oluwatosin Oni, Senior Program Manager with CRS said the onboarding of the CSEs

was a new dawn for the cassava sector in Kogi state.

He expressed optimism that the adoption of BASICS-II model would help Kogi to remain among the top states producing cassava in Nigeria.

For more information on how to get improved cassava varieties, please contact: Godwin Atser, g.atser@cgjar.org

CBN to lend only to farmers using improved, disease-free varieties



Clean cassava field

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) says only farmers who grow improved disease-free cassava stems will have access to the N25billion facility it has created to boost cassava production in the country.

The policy aims at ensuring that beneficiaries of the facility have increased productivity and are able to repay loans and make incomes for themselves.

A senior official of the apex bank, Chinedu Ogbonnaya, who represented the CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele, made this known during the signing of Memorandum

of Understanding (MoU) between the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) BASIC-II Cassava Seed Entrepreneurs and Nigeria Cassava Growers Association (NCGA).

The event, which took place at the office of the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) in Sheda, Abuja, was witnessed by major stakeholders in the cassava sector, including the CBN, NASC, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI), Umudike Seeds, and IITA GoSeed.

Mr Ogbonnaya said the CBN realized that without the use of improved varieties, cassava production would not be profitable.

"This year, we insisted that cassava growers must plant only improved seeds before they can access our loan facility," he said on October 6.

Under its intervention in the cassava sector, the CBN is targeting more than 100,000 farmers across the states of the federation for 2020.

The amount is split into two – N11 billion allocated to five-star farmers (those growing from five hectares and above) and N14 billion to conventional farmers (those planting between one and four hectares).

The Project Manager, Building an Economically Sustainable, Integrated Cassava

Seeds System, Phase 2 (BASICS-II), IITA, Prof Lateef Sanni said the project would work with the Nigeria Cassava Growers Association to ensure the adequate supply of improved cassava varieties to farmers.

"As a project in IITA with the mandate to create a sustainable cassava seed system, we are willing to assist the CBN to achieve its goals," he said.

Professor Chiedozi Egesi of the NRCRI, on his part, assured that NRCRI would work with BASICS-II and the NCGA to ensure the availability of improved cassava stems, stressing that any cassava grower that does not get improved certified seeds from the right source was starting on a wrong footing.

Chairman of Benue State Seed Producers Cooperative Union (BSSPCU), Mr. Francis Chia, in a brief remark, thanked the major stakeholders for the opportunity given to cassava growers to be part of the cassava revolution in Nigeria.

The BASICS-II project, which was awarded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to IITA and its partners in May 2020, aims to transform the cassava seed sector by promoting the dissemination of improved varieties thereby creating a community of seed entrepreneurs across the cassava value chain. The five-year project will focus on Nigeria and Tanzania with spin-off to other African countries.

Ogun State of Nigeria adopts AKILIMO as part of the Excellence in Agronomy package



Ogun State Commissioner for Agriculture Dr Adeola Odedina speaks at a meeting with ACAI project team and partners in Abeokuta, Ogun State Nigeria. (Photo: Omotolani/IITA)

Ogun state government has directed that all extension agents under the state's Agricultural development program (ADP) be trained on how to use AKILIMO tools and provide cassava agronomy recommendations to cassava growers.

The Ogun State Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr Adeola Odedina, asked

the Ogun State Agricultural Development Program (OGADEP) to start the process of organizing trainings in multiple locations across the state, starting with 2,500 farmers that have been profiled for access to land.

Dr Odedina spoke at a meeting with ACAI project team, project partners and state officials in Abeokuta, Ogun state, Nigeria. ACAI, through IITA, will provide the complete AKILIMO tools content in all available formats to be permanently integrated into Ogun state's extension tools for training and agricultural advisory services. ACAI was also tasked to conduct a series of Training of Trainers (ToTs) for extension agents, technicians and state officials who will then replicate the training to their peers on the proper use of the AKILIMO tool, interpreting the recommendation and providing support to farmers.

The state through OGADEP will mobilize extension agents, cassava farmers and youth for training on AKILIMO. The state government estimates that about 7,000

young farmers between the ages of 18 and 40 are involved in the growing cassava and will be part of the targeted group. The collaboration between ACAI and OGADEP is aimed at reaching 40,000 farmers in Ogun state.

The meeting was attended by the Special Assistant to the Governor on Agriculture & Food Security Dr. Adegbite Toyin representing the office of the governor; Prof. Sanni Lateef, Prof. Jacob Olaoye and Prof. Adebawale of the Federal University of Agriculture in Abeokuta (FUNAAB); Taiwo Ayansanya, Project Manager, OGADEP; Thompson Ogunsanmi of ACAI, among others.

The stakeholders will be meeting quarterly to review the implementation on the agreed action points, appraise the state leaders on the progress and address any arising issues.

Source: [AKILIMO UPDATES](#)

ACAI begins dissemination of Six Steps/BPP on television

The African Cassava Agronomy Initiative (ACAI) of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) has commenced the dissemination of the Six Steps to Cassava Weed Management and Best Planting Practices toolkit on television.

The TV show, known as Cassava Matters, is broadcast on the television channels of the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS); and available on local TV on Channel 28 UHF; cable TV (GOtv), channel 105; and Startimes, channel 113. The show airs for 15 minutes every Thursday by 5.30pm.

Speaking on the essence of adding television to the number of dissemination channels for the toolkit; Godwin Atser, IITA Digital Extension and Advisory Services Specialist, explained that the TV show would complement the on-going radio programs by providing viewers with visuals.

"The feedback we are getting shows that the radio programs have been very impactful," he said. "But we figured that television will allow viewers, especially the farmers we are addressing, to see the things being discussed... Visuals are powerful. And we chose BCOS TV because of the local appeal the television offers in Oyo State. Remember that most of the cassava farmers we are dealing with are local smallholder farmers," he explained.

According to Godwin, topics being treated on the show include integrated weed

management systems, planting, herbicides application, use of improved cassava varieties, etc.

"Even though Cassava Matters will dwell majorly on the "Six Steps...", issues around the cultivation, processing and business of cassava will be accommodated on the show. So, apart from farmers, agrodealers, extension agents, cassava processors, policy makers, and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector will find the program very informative and educative", he said.

"Viewers can also catch up on missed episodes on the Cassava Matters Youtube channel and send feedback via emails, phone numbers and our social media handles," he added.

The Six Steps to Cassava Weed Management and Best Planting Practices toolkit, popularly called "Six Steps..." is a complete package that addresses all aspects of good agricultural practices in cassava production. Nigerian farmers using the "Six Steps..." get more than 20 tons per hectare of cassava roots, which is above the current national average of 9 tons per hectare. The toolkit prescribes best bet practices in site selection, weed identification, preemergence herbicides application, tillage operations, use of improved planting materials, plant spacing, and post-emergent weed management. The "Six Steps..." has been integrated into AKILIMO, a comprehensive digital advisory service for cassava.



Shooting of one of the episodes of Cassava Matters TV

This newsletter is produced by African Cassava Agronomy Initiative (ACAI) in collaboration with the BASICS projects.

Advisers: Drs Bernard Vanlauwe, Alfred Dixon, Lateef Sanni, Friday Ekeleme, Stefan Hauser and Pieter Pypers.

Editor: Godwin Atser (g.atser@cgiar.org)

Contributions: Patrick Akpu, Ibukunoluwa Oladokun and David Ngome