

SLARI on National Baseline Survey on Cassava Value Chain

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As one initial and concrete measure to tap into the huge potential of cassava and line it up with the government's goal of productivity, commercialization and competitiveness and providing adequate and quality food on the table of every Sierra Leonean, the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research institute (SLARI) is currently undertaking a baseline survey on cassava value chain in the 13 agricultural districts in the country.

The information gathered during the three week long national baseline survey will be analyzed and be able to give a clear picture on the production of cassava, provision of needed services including research,



SLARI Staff collecting information on Cassava Value

extension and input supply as well as processing and marketing. The conclusion made will be used to help SLARI, the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP) and their various partners to develop the cassava sub

sector in Sierra Leone.

On this score, the baseline survey will capture several issues focused on the development of the cassava value chain. For instance, in the area of production, the survey will elicit information in areas of what cassava varieties farmers deal with (local and or improved) and the sources they get them ,advantages or benefits experienced in using each,

ecology and soil fertility, management practices including weeding, pests and diseases; source of labour, storage facilities and any credit facilities

On processing, it will capture information regarding the experience of cassava processors in the discipline, distance of processing facilities to market or main roads, organizational structure and membership as well as the motivation and benefits of becoming a member. It will also probe into type of cassava processing contracts parties get into with other actors along the value chain including terms of the contracts with successful implementation or any breach and the level of sanitary conditions in which cassava is processed; source of water and availability of labour and cost.

SLARI Baseline Survey is also taking into account the activities of service providers in the cassava value chain. In this regard, it will look at the services of agro dealers, NGOs, extension service, micro finance; fabricators, the media and policy makers. In this vein, financial service providers will be expected to give among others information on the type of financial service they have been providing to cassava value chain



SLARI Biometrician Tamba Bandabla Monitoring the Survey

actors, maximum amount of money they lend to them, requirements for loans needed and the period of time repayment must be made. The exercise will also consider the mode of reimbursement; the reasons for

giving such loans and if for interest, the interest rate as well as the problems of repayment and measures taken against defaulters.

It will also elicit information on fabrication of cassava processing machines such as names of machines fabricated, sources of materials for fabrication, groups of beneficiaries the machines are produced for; access to credit facilities and any access to market information about demand for tools and machines among others.

On the commercialization of cassava, the exercise will capture such issues as various trading operations on cassava value chain including wholesale, retailing, exporting, middlemen, type of cassava trade such as trading in the leaves, raw cassava roots, gari, cassava flour, dry chips, starch and cassava bread.

It will be recalled that although cassava is a leading root crop in Sierra Leone and second important food crop after the staple food rice, the tubers are not only largely used for boil and eat but cassava has been over the years predominantly restricted to production.

SLARI is carrying out the baseline survey in collaboration with WAAPP. WAAPP is a regional Programme funded to help the Njala Agricultural Research Centre under SLARI to identify the key constraints of the sub sector as well as the opportunities in a way that the cassava sub sector can meaningfully contribute to the attainment of food security and poverty reduction in the region.