



2015 BHEARD Scholar
Damba Yahaya

Profile

Country of Study:	United States
University:	Tennessee State University
Department:	Agricultural, Human and Natural Sciences
Student Position:	Graduate Research Assistant—Ph.D.
Hometown:	Cheyohi, Ghana
Home Institution:	University for Development Studies
Home Position:	Assistant Lecturer
Mentored By:	Home: Dr. Nicholas Denwar, Plant Breeder and Senior Research Scientist, Savannah Agricultural Research Institute, Ghana USA: Matthew Blair, Professor, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Dept., Tennessee State University

Research Area: Biological Sciences—Plant Genetics and Genomics

BHEARD PROGRAM START DATE: August 2015

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION: B.Sc., Agricultural Technology (Agronomy), University for Development Studies, Ghana

GRADUATE EDUCATION: M. Phil., Biotechnology, University for Development Studies, Ghana

RESEARCH INTERESTS: Damba's research interest lies in the exploration of the vast and diverse scientific principles governing the transformation and evolution of plants to breed for drought tolerant cowpea varieties for farmers. The research would focus on quantitative trait locus (QTL) using single nucleotide polymorphism (SNPs) markers and carbon isotope discrimination to screen for drought tolerance in cowpea plants. Most crop varieties currently cultivated by farmers are susceptible to early or terminal drought which are bound to worsen in a climate change scenario. Feeding the over 9 billion global populations by 2050 will require breeding for crop varieties with tolerance to drought and other abiotic factors.

During Damba's undergraduate studies, his research focused on the effect of pruning on the size of tomato fruits. He later carried out experiments on the use of somatic embryogenesis in cassava leaves to eliminate the cassava mosaic virus during his postgraduate studies in Ghana. Damba also worked on IITA and WIENCO funded project to generate seed yam for farmers in Tolon and West Mamprusi districts in Northern region through miniset technology.

PERSONAL STATEMENT: Damba wishes to become a researcher and a lecturer in biotechnology. He also wishes to bring out the best in himself and be part of a team that stands for organizational success in order to ensure a progressive transformation of the agriculture industry through dedicated service to mother Ghana and the world at large. He is a self-motivated and dynamic individual who has good communication skills with excellent humanitarian and social mobilization skills which will help disseminate crop improvement to farmers to ensure food security in the world.

WHEN I AM NOT WORKING I ENJOY: At his leisure time Damba watches movies with his family and friends. He also uses part of his leisure time once a while to discuss with his electorates back in Ghana current infrastructure and social developmental issues in his electoral area as an elected assembly member for Kumbungu District Assembly of the Northern Region.