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The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative



MALI FOOD SECURITY POLICY RESEARCH PROGRAM



www.foodsecuritypolicy.msu.edu/countries/mali



MISSION AND GOALS

Mali Food Security Policy Research Program aims to address key evidence and analytical gaps in priority policy areas while simultaneously building up long-term local capacity for policy-relevant research and engagement through collaborative research with local partners.

The priority policy areas are:

- agricultural inputs,
- agribusiness investment,
- land and natural resources,
- agricultural trade, and
- gender and youth (cross-cutting theme).



BACKGROUND

Agriculture is a strategic economic sector for Mali and the backbone of a national strategy for achieving food security and poverty reduction. At its core, the Mali Food Security Policy Research Program promotes improved policies that will enhance agricultural productivity growth, improve nutritional outcomes and livelihood resilience. Especially, this program aims to address key evidence and analytical gaps in priority policy areas while simultaneously building up long-term local capacity for policy-relevant research and engagement through collaborative research with local partners.

In order to build up local capacity for policy research, MSU faculty and staff conduct collaborative research, policy outreach and focused short-term training with professional colleagues and students at several Malian institutions. Collaborative research activities include field investigation of farmers, traders, agribusiness leaders and policy makers. Empirical evidence affecting key agricultural and food security policy decisions are disseminated through policy workshops, professional presentations, village outreach efforts and media events.

ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

Pesticide Markets and Regulations in Mali (agricultural inputs)

As a founding member of CILSS¹, Mali has committed to establish national regulatory institutions necessary to implement the common pesticide regulations in force throughout the CILSS region. The Mali Food Security Policy Research Program team studied progress to date in Mali's country-level implementation of these mutually agreed-upon regional pesticide policies. As part of a seven-country set of comparative case studies, this work collectively researched the reasons for uneven rates of country implementation of regional agricultural input policies.

Processed food inventory (agribusiness investment opportunities)

Urbanization drives major changes in African agri-food systems, most notably an increase in consumer demand for packaged, prepared and processed foods. To investigate prospects emerging in Mali, MSU faculty member Véronique Thériault led a team of local researchers in conducting an inventory of processed cereal and dairy products available at a range of Malian retail outlets. Because this study forms part of a cross-country comparison with four other African countries (Ghana, Nigeria, Mozambique and Tanzania), the results promise to help Malian investors and policymakers to gauge promising agro-processing investment prospects in two large and growing processed food arenas.

Gender gaps (gender and youth)

The "gender gap" in crop productivity of African agriculture has raised policy concern for decades. Since African women play a pivotal role in agriculture and family food security, this gap entails high social and economic costs. A recent study from the FSP Mali team compared adoption and intensity of fertilizer use, as well as productivity between men and women growers of sorghum within the same households. Results show that within these complex, extended family households, women and men manage their plots with different objectives, and differential access to resources. Agriculture support programs should be designed to enable individual family members, including women and youth, to attain their farming potential. Such measures would result in an increase in food security for all.

Agricultural student thesis research (capacity building).

Financial and mentoring support from MSU and local partners at IER, IPR and CPS enables five students from Mali's Institut Polytechnique Rural (IPR) to conduct policy-relevant thesis research each year. PRePoSAM staff members at partners at IER conduct a one-week short course for the five IPR students on field research methods. A second short course on data management methods follows their return from collecting field data. Designated mentors provide regular feedback on analysis and thesis write-ups.

¹ The Comité permanent Inter-états de Lutte contre la Sècherese au Sahel (CILSS) is an intergovernmental organization including nine Sahelian countries.

ABOUT

The Mali Food Security Policy Research Program is part of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy project (FSP), funded through USAID. FSP is coordinated by Michigan State University in collaboration with IFPRI and the University of Pretoria. FSP in Mali is known in French as the “Projet de Recherche sur les Politiques de Sécurité Alimentaire au Mali (PREPOSAM).” It works with several local partners including: Assemblée Permanente des Chambres d’Agriculture du Mali, Institut d’Économie Rurale, Institut Polytechnique Rural de Formation et de Recherche Appliquée, Observatoire du Marché Agricole, Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire and the Cellule de Planification et de Statistiques du Secteur Développement Rural.

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Photo credit: FSP Mali team, 2016–17



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