



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Women Cash In with Traditional African Crop in Senegal



USADF

Members of Koba Club present U.S. Ambassador to Senegal Lewis Lukens with fonio products.

According to legend in some parts of West Africa, the universe began from a single grain of fonio—a type of millet, one of Africa's oldest and fastest growing cereal crops.

Now, in Senegal, the highly-prized and nutritious millet is the focus of a \$190,000 Feed the Future grant from the U.S. African Development Foundation (USADF) to improve community members' incomes and household food security.

Koba Club is a female-run economic interest group created in 1989 in the remote town of Kédougou in the Tambacounda region of southeast Senegal. Nearly 90 percent of local women in this region are involved in the production and processing of fonio, which grows easily in poor soils and is drought-resistant, but is extremely time-consuming to produce. Koba Club purchases fonio from local producers and transforms the cereal grain into a value-added product, but it has struggled to meet the market demand in terms of quality and quantity due to insufficient workspace and outdated production methods.

With the Feed the Future grant they received from USADF, Koba Club's 25 members have been able to purchase new machinery to improve threshing and hulling, resulting in a major time savings and reduction of labor. With the new machinery, the women can now mill 150 kilograms of fonio in one hour compared to the 12 hours it used to take to mill the same amount.

Koba Club was also able to secure a more spacious production center that encourages hygiene, quality control and, most important, the safety of members.

Thanks to Feed the Future, the members of Koba Club are earning more income and improving household nutrition and food security for their families and community. They are also well-positioned to become large-scale agro-processors of pre-cooked fonio in Senegal's economy.

A few simple, smart investments have made processing this traditional grain more feasible and are enabling Koba Club to reach local, national, regional and even international markets.