Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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For Mozambican Smallholders, Soybeans Hold the Key

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Women in the village of Munhinga in Mozambique press ground and cooked soy through a cheesecloth to make soy milk at a village level training conducted by the Soybean Innovation Lab.

In the rural villages of Mozambique, smallholder farmers are planting and harvesting more soybeans. The potential benefits of this protein-rich crop are promising: Soybeans hold the key to significantly improve nutrition in Mozambique, a country with one of the highest levels of chronic malnutrition in Africa.

But the road to progress hasn't been so simple. Growing more soybeans is only the first step; sooner or later, the soybeans have to find their way from the fields into the cooking pots and diets of Mozambican households. The smallholder farmers who grow and harvest soybeans also have to be able to turn them into healthy meals.

To move soybeans from field to fork, the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Soybean Value Chain Research (also called the Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Lab) is leading an effort in three Mozambican villages to train local smallholder women famers in processing and cooking soybean dishes for their families to eat. Along with partners from the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture and the Mozambican Institute of Agricultural Research, the project aims to introduce families and farmers to the many benefits of soybeans.

In each village workshop, women learn how to turn soybeans into soymilk, tofu and flour that can be used in soy ogi, a local type of porridge. A taste-test is part of the training, and participants share samples of each new soy food with men, women and children in the village. The workshops also teach participants about basic nutrition, the role of protein in promoting healthy development of bones and bodies, and the value of adding soy-based protein to their families' diets.

After the workshops, villagers expressed keen interest in processing soybeans at home to improve their families' nutrition and sell excess soy products for income.

Participants also receive Soybean Success Kits developed by the Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Lab. These kits include high quality seeds, inoculum and fertilizer as well as pictures that show how to grow the soybeans. Extension agents trained

by this Feed the Future Innovation Lab instruct smallholder farmers in best practices for planting, cultivating and harvesting the soybeans. According to follow-up results, smallholder farmers who used the kits were able to double their crop yields, from 1 metric ton per hectare, to 2.3 metric tons per hectare. That makes all the difference, and means that farmers can increase profits, save more soybeans for consumption at home, and sustainably produce more soybeans in the future.

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Soybean Value Chain Research is USAID's only comprehensive program dedicated to soybean research for development. An international team of tropical soybean experts provides technical support and knowledge to practitioners tasked with soybean development, including private sector firms, nongovernmental organizations, extensionists, agronomists and Africa's National Agricultural Research System. For more information, visit ***soybeaninnovationlab.illinois.edu*** *or contact* ***soybeaninnovationlab@illinois.edu****.*