African Rice

The Gambaga

Partnership

The Gambaga is a founding member of African Rice.

The Gambaga is also a member of the African Rice Center’s Board of Governors, which is the center’s highest governing body.

As a member country, The Gambaga takes part in the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI).

The Gambaga is one of the most important national partners of the Center.

In 2017, June

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“Rice is global and it is big business. Rice is life in Africa.”
— Dr Harold Roy-Macauley, AfricaRice Director General

Contributions by AfricaRice to The Gambia

► Between 2009 and 2016, The Gambia has benefited from 13 donor-funded projects, coordinated by AfricaRice.

► AfricaRice, in partnership with NARI, has contributed to boosting The Gambia’s rice sector in terms of policy and technical advice, improved seed, cropping practices and processing technologies, capacity development and support to rice value chain development.

Capacity strengthening

► Between 2009 and 2016, 5 PhD and 2 MSc scholars were trained. About 60 Gambians participated in group training workshops on marker-assisted selection techniques, experimental design, data collection and analysis, quality seed production, integrated rice management, and impact assessment.

IMPORTANCE OF RICE IN THE GAMBIA

With one of the highest per capita rice consumption (117 kg) in West Africa, the Gambia has a long history of rice cultivation. Farmers were growing rice in the country long before the arrival of the Europeans.

The Gambian government has identified rice as a major food security crop and has developed a national rice development strategy (NRDS) for 2015-2024, founded on a vision of rice self-sufficiency, with a production target of 322,600 t of milled rice by 2024.

The objective of the NRDS is the creation of a competitive rice industry, which will lead to improved food security and poverty reduction. The NRDS spells out six priority actions: (i) Land development, irrigation development and paddy production, (ii) Post-harvest losses handling, (iii) Processing (value addition) and marketing, (iv) Seed development and varietal improvement; (v) Rice production inputs supply distribution; and (vi) Pests and disease management.

The Gambia possesses a range of suitable ecologies for rice production, including about 216,121 ha of lowland ecologies for rice production. The NRDS places equal emphasis on the intensification in both upland and lowland production systems and the expansion of lowland production systems.

Most of the rice consumed in The Gambia is imported. The country imported about 125,000 t of rice in 2014, while domestic production was about 48,000 t of paddy. In view of the high population growth rate (about 3% per annum), the demand for rice is expected to remain strong.

In line with its strategy to boost rice production, The Gambia, through NARI, has been collaborating with AfricaRice to develop improved rice varieties and accompanying technologies to increase rice productivity in the region.

Rice Statistics for Selected Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paddy production (t)</td>
<td>46,000</td>
<td>66,000</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td>55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area (ha)</td>
<td>66,000</td>
<td>78,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yield (t/ha)</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption (t)</td>
<td>165,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>165,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Improved varieties

► AfricaRice and NARI introduced high-yielding upland NERICA rice varieties into The Gambia with the support of an African Development Bank-funded project. The most popular NERICA varieties are NERICA 1, NERICA 3, NERICA 4 and, NERICA 6.

► NERICA adoption increased average rice yields by 157 kg per ha and annual income of small-scale rice farmers by $148. With the profits, farmers were able to send their children to school and provide them with better health care.

► Through the Stress Tolerant Rice for Africa and Asia (STRASA) project, many stress-tolerant varieties are being tested. Two salt-tolerant rice varieties were released in The Gambia in 2013 and a third salt-tolerant variety was selected under the ARICA brand (ARICA 11) and was released in the country in 2014. All three are suitable for the mangrove rice ecology.

Improved management practices

► Gambian participants benefited from a series of training workshops on integrated rice management (IRM), which aim to enrich researchers’ and technicians’ knowledge of IRM. This will help to bridge gaps that currently exist between actual farmers’ yields and attainable yields through better crop management, and to fully exploit the potential of improved varieties. Gambian participants also benefited from training courses on yield gap and diagnostic surveys and on the building/assembly of mini-combine harvesters.