

Issue 26

April 2013

## Inside this issue

<i>IRD wins cookbook award</i>	2
<i>New additions to ACA team</i>	2
<i>Guinea gears up for cashew</i>	3
<i>Updates from ACI</i>	4

## ACA Secretariat Welcomes Deputy Managing Director Leonard Garden



Leonard Garden brings 15 years of experience working in Africa.

Leonard Garden has been named Deputy Managing Director of ACA, marking an important leadership transition at the organization. Garden will be working alongside current Managing Director Christian Dahm through June, when he will assume full MD responsibilities after the official handover takes place.

As only the second Managing Director since ACA's founding in 2005, Garden was hired after an extensive search and evaluation process by the Executive Committee and Advisory Board. He was formally introduced to these governing bodies at their March meeting in Accra.

**"I am thrilled to begin this new chapter with ACA and dedicated to increasing Africa-based cashew processing capacity."**

**-Mr. Leonard Garden, ACA Deputy Managing Director**

Ecom, a cocoa trade house. His work in cocoa made Garden known as "Mr. Sustainability" in the industry – while at Ecom, Garden helped over 10,000 cocoa farmers to improve their working conditions and to receive premium payments directly from chocolate industry buyers such as Mars and Nestle.

"I developed what was probably the first database for tracing cocoa back to individual farmers that could present evidence of good agricultural practices," said Garden of the highlights of his work in cocoa.

Similarities between the cocoa and cashew sectors were key drivers of Garden's *Continued on page 3*

## Ghana Government commits to doubling Raw Cashew Nut Production by 2016

The cashew industry in Ghana has attracted the attention of the government, thanks to efforts by the Ghana Cashew Industry Association. In a meeting with Ghana's new Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Haruna Iddrisu, a delegation representing the Ghana Cashew Industry Association explained the benefits of cashew to the Ghanaian economy.

The Association's goal of garnering the minister's support was successful – Mr. Iddrisu committed to providing technical and financial support that aims to double current production levels by 2016. The Ghanaian government estimates current production at 40,000 MT, and hopes to increase production to around 80,000 MT.

"The support will go to small holder farmers ... to enable them to increase their production levels to meet the target set and this support will come for them to start immediately this year", said Mr. Iddrisu as quoted in an article published April 6, 2013 in "The Daily Graphic" newspaper of Ghana.



Government estimates of production in Ghana are 40,000 MT.

ACA Member Mr. Winfred Osei Owusu and President of the Ghana Cashew Industry Association, helped organize the meeting and indicated his enthusiasm for continued efforts to leverage government partnerships to aid the cashew industry in Ghana.

"Among other short-term strategies prior to the inauguration of the national body, it is part of our advocacy program to marshal government support for the industry," he said. Mr. Osei Owusu cited the Minister of Agriculture as the next focus for the association's advocacy work.



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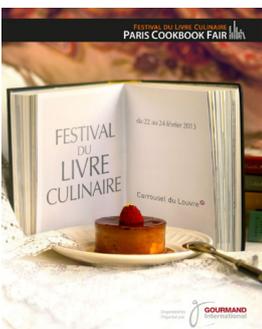
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## IRD's Cashew Cookbook Wins Prestigious Award

International Relief & Development's (IRD) The Cashew Cookbook received the award for the best cookbook in Senegal in two categories by the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards for the year 2012.

Originally entered into the Paris Cookbook Fair, The Cashew Cookbook: Recipes from Gambia and Senegal won in both the "Best Health and Nutrition Book" and "Best Single Subject Cookbook" categories and subsequently qualified for the "Gourmand Best in the World" competition.



Each year, Gourmand International

brings together the best of cookbooks from around the world and awards them during a festival celebrating food, health, culture and lifestyle. The Paris Cookbook Fair, which took place February 22-24, 2014, held its award ceremony under the Pyramid of the Louvre Museum.

Editor of The Cashew Cookbook, Jo Anne Yeager Sallah, spoke of her delight at being recognized on the international stage alongside many other amazing cookbooks by such a renowned organization.

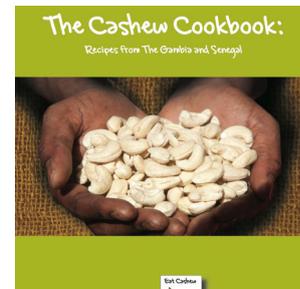
"This award from Gourmand International is further validation of growing interest in African cuisine," said Sallah. "It is such a great exposure for the agricultural value chains in which we work – cashew is an easy ingredient to market, and I am always happy and proud to be a cashew advocate."

IRD is an American NGO working in the Senegambia region to increase farmer and processor incomes through the improvement of the cashew value chain. The African Cashew Alliance and IRD have partnered on several projects in the region. A series of IRD-organized events promoting cashew consumption in early 2012 culminated in two cashew festivals (one in The Gambia and one in Ziguinchor, Senegal), where professional and home cooks submitted their recipes for using cashew in local dishes.

"The cookbook came about as a result of one element of the IRD's three month long media campaign to promote consumption of cashew nuts and apples in the Senegal and Gambia as part of a Food for Progress program funded by

the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)," Sallah said of how the cookbook idea was conceived.

The recognition of IRD's cookbook among competitors from 171 countries is a testament to the power of advocacy as well as the international excitement surrounding cashews produced in Africa. "It is a thrill and I hope that we can continue to produce high quality work that can be recognized in such illustrious circles", she says. "We hope chefs and individuals cooking at home will use The Cashew Cookbook and eat well while doing good."



The Cashew Cookbook, is available on the ACA website.

## ACA Seal Team Joined by Food Safety Expert

Peter Kojo Nyarko joined the ACA team on April 2, 2013, as the Seal Coordinator. He studied Biochemistry at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana. Prior to his appointment for this position, he worked with Nestle in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Cameroun in the quality assurance department. Peter speaks English and French fluently.



*ACA: What led you to apply for the Seal position at ACA?*

Peter Nyarko: The concept of the ACA helping Africans, especially Africans in rural areas where poverty is a problem, was very exciting. ACA's work helps Africans to have some means of employment, by boosting the production of the cashew industry as a way of alleviating poverty in Africa. That motivation caught my ear.

Food safety and quality alone have been something that I have liked working in for the past seven years, so doing something I like, for a cause such as the ACA's, seemed like something very worthwhile.

*ACA: How did you become interested in food safety?*

PN: I worked at Nestle for the past 7 years, and my first position there was in the quality department. The work was in many different countries but always in the same field, looking at product quality and food safety. That's where I've been all my professional life, so I grew a passion for it – it was something I developed out in the field and in the factories. Looking at the mission of the ACA with this passion in mind made this opportunity an interesting story.

*What aspects of your position are you looking forward to most?*

Because of my background, working mostly in the field, I'm looking forward to visits to the factory, to see what's going on. My main job is to

a USAID West Africa program, as an MIS consultant. Olivier is a holder of

help coordinate seal activities, so I would like to be out in the factories and implementing the program.

*What are your major goals for the Seal program for this year?*

I would like to see the seal continue to gain traction on the ground. A certain level has been achieved in the standards and documentation, and now I think for me the next step is the second point of going out with the info and standards we have developed. I think my main energy and focus will be to take these standards into the factories.

*How do you envision the development of the Seal program?*

We are looking at 3 different phases, or seal action areas. The first is those that have already been approved. Secondly, those who are implementing. The third is processors that are not yet on board. For those who've already been seal approved, I want to work on a monitoring system for the standards. For those who are implementing, it's important to be with them along the journey of implementation.

I'm very convinced that processing cashew is beneficial to local communities working around factories. With a new marketing approach, we want to bring everybody on board so hopefully by the end of next

## New MIS & Monitoring Coordinator Aims to Improve Supply Chain

year we should have a broader base for the seal program.

Mr. Olivier Kabré joined the ACA team on the 3rd of April, 2013 as the Market Information System (MIS) and Monitoring Coordinator. Prior to his appointment for this position, he worked with Agribusiness and Trade Promotion,



a License Degree in Physics and Chemistry

*Continued on page 4*

## Leonard Garden named Deputy Managing Director

*Continued from Page 1*

interest in the position at ACA.

“Many of the potential opportunities for optimizing income in African cocoa-producing communities were also apparent to me in the cashew sector,” said Garden. “These include increasing farm productivity, promoting farm entrepreneurship and most of all, adding value to the raw material by processing.”

A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Garden’s interest in agriculture led him to become a US Peace Corps Volunteer in Togo. “Since then my work has always led to improving conditions in rural Africa,” said Garden. That desire led him to The Ohio State University where he received a Master’s degree in Natural Resources. He soon returned to West Africa, living in Niger, Guinea Conakry, and Cote d’Ivoire before his most recent move to Accra, Ghana.

While Garden is working to expand his cashew expertise, he has already gained a strong sense of the industry’s potential as well ACA’s role in harnessing and strengthening it.

“I believe the cashew industry today is headed toward further mechanization and increasing processing capacity in the producing

countries such as Côte d’Ivoire and Nigeria,” said Garden. “ACA hopes to encourage that trend by promoting pro-investment policies and sharing the testimonies of those communities that now benefit from greater employment opportunities.”

Less than two months after his March 7 arrival at ACA, Garden envisions the continued success of business advisory and support programs while continuing to foster an engaged and growing membership. Bringing wisdom from his previous work, Garden’s approach emphasizes sustainability – for African cashew businesses, for the environment, and for the ACA organization itself.

“I hope that ACA can raise awareness among financial institutions concerning the benefits of financing this sector’s processors, as well as on the value of planting cashew to recover degraded lands,” said Garden. “I also hope that our membership will continue to support ACA until we are totally self-sustaining as a membership-based association.”

The secretariat warmly welcomes Leonard, as a fellow team member sharing a commitment to the values and purpose of the African Cashew Alliance.

“I am thrilled to begin this new chapter with ACA and dedicated to increasing Africa-based cashew processing capacity,” said Leonard. “I believe the value added in cashew processing will help increase

## Guinea Gears up for Cashew

*Guinean Cashew Alliance Launched*

Guinean cashew farmers, processors and traders have joined forces to develop the potential of the cashew industry for the country’s economy. On February 25, 2013, the Guinean Cashew Alliance (l’Alliance Guinéenne de l’Anacarde) was launched in Conakry at an event attended by more than 50 participants from industry and government. With a growing production and processing industry, cashew contributes to the incomes of 50,000-80,000 people in rural Guinea.



AGA Executive Secretary Keita Sidikiba, ACA MD Christian Dahm, and AGA President after the MOU signing.

Their income could be significantly improved by promoting good agricultural practices, harvest and post-harvest handling to improve the poor quality of the crop.

Furthermore, local processing of cashew could create thousands of jobs in rural communities. Christian Dahm, Managing Director and William Larbi, Partnership Officer traveled to Conakry with USAID-BEAM support and at the invitation of the newly launched Guinean Cashew Alliance (AGA). While at the launch event, Dahm and Larbi presented the international cashew market, its potential in Guinea and policy options for supporting the sector. ACA and AGA signed an MOU establishing a partnership agreement that reinforces cooperation and collaboration between the two organizations.

*First Guinean Cashew Processor Signs up for the ACA Seal Program after Initiating Guinean Cashew Exports to US*

“The work that still needs to be done is less than what we have accomplished already, I am certain we will reach the next level,” said El Hadji Mamadou Bary of Sopolgui, after he signed up his company for the ACA Quality and Sustainability Seal Program.

Sopolgui is Guinea’s first cashew processor. The Indian-Guinean joint venture began operating in 2012 and has since exported the first cashew kernels from Guinea, most of which to an ACA founding member based in the US.

After discussions with ACA Quality and Food Safety Expert Jim Giles and a visit by MD Christian Dahm and William Larbi in February 2013, Sopolgui decided to implement the ACA Seal program. The facility is the most recent to commit to the ACA Seal, enrolling in a program that now includes two approved and seven implementing companies in East and West Africa.

Sopolgui was also featured on the evening national news program in Guinea, in a segment highlighting the facility and the potential of cashew processing for the Guinean economy. A team of journalists interviewed Guinean Cashew Alliance Executive Secretary Keita Sidibe and Dahm for the piece.



Sopolgui is Guinea’s first cashew processor, and began operating in 2012.

**New MIS & Monitoring Officer** *continued from page 2*

and a Master's Degree in applied computer engineering from the University of Ibn Zorh, Agadir, Morocco. Olivier is fluent in French, speaks English and some West African languages such as Moore and Bambara.

ACA: Tell us about your experience with MIS and your interest in the field

OK: Market Information System is a domain that I've worked in for more than 7 years now. My interest in MIS is to bring a contribution to cashew market development in Africa. Also to help farmers access the market and gain more profit for their activities. I was specifically interested in this position because I used to work on different types of value chains in West Africa, helping facilitate transactions. I was interested in ACA's Market Information System because cashew is a cash crop, thus is a more structured value chain than other African crops. The way market info should intervene in trade activity is much easier in a value chain oriented for trade – this drew my attention.

ACA: What have you learned about cashew so far?

OK: I see that Africa has great potential, and ACA really works to address the issue of being first in the world by developing a crop like cashew. I've seen that in 10 years, Africa has been able to double their production in RCN, surpassing other countries outside of Africa that were producing more. Africa clearly has a lot of potential with production of cashew.

ACA: How do you think the African cashew market can continue to improve?

OK: I think we need to do more, on our side, in the other links along the value chain. The production is increasing quickly, so we also need to address the other issue in the chain, to improve the quality and processing, so that we are able to face the world market.

ACA: What would you like to achieve and how do you see the MIS system developing?

OK: I think that the Market Information System in the cashew industry can help improve the supply chain of cashew – for the raw nut and the kernel. So MIS can especially help farmers to make better decisions in fixing the prices of their product, and also be able to aggregate their production. It should help them have better access to processors and traders that want to purchase their product. The goal of the MIS is to enable the ease, and better management of the supply chain.



**The Cashew Matching Grants Fund – The first and only Fund for Cashew worldwide!** *by Ann-Christin Berger, ACi*

As part of a second Phase, the African Cashew initiative (ACi) created a unique Cashew Matching Fund to accelerate the development of the cashew industry by allowing public and private investments to benefit farm productivity and farmer income. The African Cashew Alliance (ACA), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the German International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Dutch Sustainable Trade Institute (IDH) make up the Board of the Matching Fund.

The first call for applications was in September 2012, and by beginning of February 2013, 16 projects with a total investment of 6.0 Million



Euro started implementation. The grant component from the Cashew Matching Grants Fund is 2.2 Million Euro. Public partners are research institutes as AICAJU, INCAJU and IIAM in Mozambique, CNSE, INERA and URPA in Burkina Faso, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and CRIG in Ghana and INRAB in Benin with a focusing on the development and distribution of improved planting material for enhanced cashew production and productivity. Private Partners include cashew processors – Benin Gold and Tolaro Global in Benin, Gebana in Burkina Faso, OLAM in Ghana and Intersnack in Mozambique, Burkina Faso and Benin – who are implementing projects on effective supply chain linkages.

Currently, trainings by the Matching Fund Unit of ACi are provided on Monitoring and Evaluation Systems as well as on Financial Administration, which is highly appreciated by all partners. During trainings, ACi experts discuss technicalities concerning the project roll out and the identification of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). KPIs are defined variables to measure the effectiveness of a project to trace the progress throughout the implementation phase.

While the first projects are implemented, the ACi is already preparing for a second call for applications to be announced after 1st of July, with intended funding by IDH. Again cashew processors, farmer-based organizations, buyers/traders who purchase kernels from Africa, international kernel retailers, private sector foundations and government/research institutions are eligible to apply for grants.



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