



Farmer innovators in northern Ghana awarded at annual National Farmers Day celebrations

by Ayamga Samuel Atia, Prolinnova–Ghana coordinator, and Joseph Nchor, ELI-FaNS project coordinator, Association of Church-based Development Projects (ACDEP)*

The annual National Farmers’ Day in Ghana is the biggest statutory obligation that provides the platform to celebrate Ghanaian farmers and fishers for their contribution to the economy. This event is not just about awards, but a celebration of the entire farming and fishing community, from innovative techniques to sustainable practices. The National Farmers’ Day was instituted by the Government in 1985 in recognition of the vital role that farmers and fishers play in the Ghanaian economy. The event is normally held on the first Friday in December as a public holiday and is organised simultaneously at national, regional and district level throughout the country.

The 2023 celebration of the National Farmers’ Day is the 39th since its inception. It provided an opportunity to highlight the importance of sustainable agriculture practices, to celebrate the contributions of farmers, and to reflect on the positives, as well as the challenges impacting on the wellbeing of farmers and Ghana’s agriculture in general. The theme for this year’s celebration was **“Delivering Smart Solutions for Sustainable Food Security and Resilience”**.

ACDEP/Prolinnova–Ghana, coordinated by the Association of Church-based Development Projects (ACDEP) and in partnership with the local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in the Misereor-funded project “Expanding the Promotion of Local Innovation for Food Security and Healthy Nutrition to Strengthen Resilience with a Focus on Women” (*ELI-FANS), supported outstanding farmer innovators to take part in the district-level event in their respective action-learning sites. This is a key strategy of Prolinnova–Ghana to promote agricultural research and development actors, political authorities and decision-makers to recognise the immense contribution of farmer innovation and farmer-led joint research to improving household food security and incomes of rural small-scale farming families.

The local partner NGOs – Navrongo-Bolgatanga Catholic Diocesan Development Organisation (NABOCADO), Presbyterian Agricultural Services (PAS) Mile 7 and Center for Ecological Agriculture and Livelihoods (CEAL) for the Bongo, North East Gonja and Walewale action-learning sites, respectively – facilitated the identification and selection of top innovators by the local multi-stakeholder platforms at each of the three sites. Four innovators per site – altogether 11 women and one man – were selected to participate in the event and to receive awards. The selected innovators were supported with ELI-FaNS funds to prepare, transport and exhibit their products during the National Farmers’ Day celebration.

The innovators explained to the political authorities such as the District Chief Executives, the departmental heads of the various government agencies and other interested participants how their various innovations work.



North East Gonja District Director of Agriculture Ms Naomi Zaato explaining innovations to the dignitaries

The 12 innovators supported by the ELI-FaNS project also received various categories of awards from the Department of Agriculture of the Local Government and also from the local partner NGOs for their outstanding contribution to sustainable farming, food and nutrition security. The awardees were presented with different prizes including farm implements, blenders and certificates of recognition (see Table 1 for details). The photos below show innovators receiving awards during the National Farmers' Day.



Award to Ms Alice Atanga



Awards at Bongo action-learning site

Table 1: Innovators, innovations exhibited and awards received

Site	Innovator	Innovation	Products exhibited	Awards received
North East Gonja	Mr Sulemana Osman	Using <i>paliga</i> (<i>Securidaca longipedunculata</i> – violet tree) to preserve grains	<i>Paliga</i> roots & powder	Wellington boots, gloves, cutlass, hoe
	Ms Rachia Alhassan	Using Lima beans for <i>kosae</i> (fried bean cake) and <i>tubani</i> (steamed bean cake)	Lima bean, <i>kosae</i> & flour	Dish pan with lid, sieve, stirring spoon
	Ms Asimawu Kasim	Adding <i>dozim-chisi</i> (<i>dawadawa</i> flour by-product) to make <i>dawadawa</i> condiment	<i>Dozim-chisi dawadawa</i>	Mortar & pestle
	Ms Sharatu Issahaku	Using yam peels to cook <i>yama</i> (steam cake)	Yam peels, <i>yama</i> (steam cake)	Dish pan with lid, sieve, stirring spoon
Walewale	Ms Yahaya Barikisu	Improved special <i>sobolo</i> (local bottled drinks)	<i>Sobolo</i> drinks made from rice, coconut and <i>sobolo</i> leaves	Blender, two knives, certificate of recognition
	Ms Rahina Yussif	Quick-action multi-purpose compost	Two bags of organic compost	Spade, machete, gloves, Wellington boots, certificate of recognition
	Ms Musah Ahei	<i>Dawadawa</i> yellow pulp <i>kulikuli</i> (fried cake)	<i>Kulikuli</i> made from <i>dawadawa</i> yellow powder	Spade, machete, gloves, Wellington boots, certificate of recognition
	Ms Atika Zakaria	Using <i>yoosuma</i> (<i>Cassia</i> sp. – Dwarf cassia) to control Striga	Sample seeds from <i>yoosuma</i>	Spade, machete, gloves, Wellington boots, certificate of recognition
Bongo	Ms Atanga Alice	Adding maize to legumes to prepare <i>tubani</i>	<i>Tubani</i> raw materials: maize, rice, beans, Bambara beans & soybeans	Certificate of recognition, Ghana Textile Print (GTP) cloth, silver pan
	Ms Ayamga Rita	Innovative steaming of paddy rice for high-quality milled grain	Paddy rice & raw rice	Certificate, GTP cloth, silver pan
	Ms Abaah Akuah	Processed orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) flour for improving child nutrition	OFSP flour & raw OFSP tubers	Certificate, GTP cloth, silver pan
	Ms Kunetiah Nmaah	Improved processing of <i>dawadawa</i> condiment (<i>korlko</i>) to reduce bad odour during production	Organic <i>dawadawa</i> , raw <i>dawadawa</i> seeds	Certificate, GTP cloth, and silver pan