

ANTENNA NEWS

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2011



NUTRITION PROGRAMMES



Spirulina: New programme against malnutrition and for economic development in Togo

BACKGROUND

In Togo, an estimated 250,000 children (one in three) suffer from nutritional deficiencies which can lead to physiological problems and the spread of infectious diseases.

In 2004, Antenna Technologies France set out to address this problem by creating the Agou Nyogbo spirulina farm in partnership with WWOOF Togo (Willing Workers On Organic Farms) and Spirale Verte et Partage (France). Each year, the programme produces 200 kg of spirulina which is distributed free of charge to low income populations affected by malnutrition via the Nutrition and Research Centre and local dispensaries.

PROJECT

With an increasing demand for spirulina in the region, Antenna Technologies France decided to support a project to extend the Agou Nyogbo farm. The association will provide help and guidance to the organisation spearheading the project, WWOOF Togo, and train the operation-teams. The project will cut down production costs and create an economically autonomous and sustainable, structure. The farm committed itself to redistribute 10% of its annual profits to the village development committee.

OBJECTIVES

- * Build 500m² additional production capacity;
- * Create 10 jobs locally (6 in production and 4 in distribution);
- * Achieve a yearly production of 900 kg spirulina;
- * Provide spirulina to 3,000 people each year for free;
- * Achieve financial autonomy within 2 to 3 years;
- * Create an information and training centre, with the aim of getting the local community involved and replicating the project.

Annual production will be distributed as follows: 15% given to 3,000 people free of charge; 15% sold at cost price to bodies active in nutrition and children's health; 70% sold on local markets.

This project is budgeted for a total of 66,000 euros and will start by the end of 2011. Yet, it is not completely financed and we are still looking for sponsors. Please visit the website www.antenna-france.org for details or contact us. Thank you very much!

EDITO

HORN OF AFRICA LEFT TO SUFFER

The world today sees hunger and malnutrition as a fatality. Lack of food, yet the most obvious problem during a food crisis, is only the tip of the iceberg. Something needs to be done about the problems populations have in gaining access to a diversified diet and setting agriculture for local needs as a priority.

The dire situation in the Horn of Africa seems to have filled us with feelings of helplessness and apathy. Yet it is a situation we might face on a much larger scale in the future. Some one billion of the world's 7 billion inhabitants are currently starving and suffering from malnutrition. In 30 years, there will be 9 billion of us and if we want to be able to feed everyone, agriculture will have to increase its productivity by 70%!

Humanitarian aid supported by northern governments remains vital in cases of war or climate catastrophe. But if we want to provide long term help to the billion starving people in the world, development policies need changes. If priority is not given to agricultural research and production, developing countries are likely to experience the nightmare of hunger on a much larger scale.

Ways of avoiding such a situation exist. Europe and the United States must stop subsidising excessive agricultural production, which put subsistence markets and agriculture in the southern hemisphere at disadvantage. The South could feed all its inhabitants if appropriate agricultural technologies and microcredit mechanisms were introduced. Antenna's programmes are intended to encourage small-scale farming to produce their own food, developing local production using technologies such as biofertilizers, biopesticides, and microirrigation systems. When will priority be given to family gardens allowing families and small-scale farmers to feed themselves and the local markets?

*Denis von der Weid,
Founder and Director of Antenna Technologies*



ANTENNA TECHNOLOGIES

11 rue des Pâquis – CH-1201 Genève
T +41 22 731 10 34 – F +41 22 731 97 86
info@antenna.ch - www.antenna.ch



SAFE WATER PROGRAMMES



WATASOL Club launched for Haitian users

Since 2005, Antenna has been disseminating WATA devices to a whole range of field partners including NGOs, private individuals, entrepreneurs, health centres, and emergency organisations. All these actors are interested in this simple and low-cost solution, which enables them to be self-sufficient in their need of chlorine. The production and dissemination of chlorine or the choice for the supply of a service of chlorinated water depends on the context, the network, and the skills available.

Until now, all the information about WATA technology was available on our website, in the WATASOL toolbox section, where you could find support documents related to the technique, the training, awareness material, etc. But there was no way for WATA users to interact and exchange,

ask each other questions, solve logistical problems, or share their experiences.

This is done now: The WATASOL club is online since September 16th, offering WATA users the opportunity to exchange and learn from each other's experience. The first version is available to organisations producing chlorine in Haiti, but it will subsequently be opened up to WATA users in other countries, so that people involved in existing chlorine production and dissemination programmes can get in touch with each other.

To open your user account,
[email clubwatasol@antenna.ch](mailto:clubwatasol@antenna.ch).

WATA technical improvements

The increasing number of WATA devices used in the field revealed that users frequently encounter technical problems related to unstable power supply combined to the effects of chlorine on the cables.

Pierre-Gilles Duvernavy, project coordinator and technical advisor at Antenna, went to Mali last July to see if he could transform theory into practice for an optimal evolution of the WATA family. Solar power has been selected as the best alternative, and we intend to develop its use by designing solar panels that can be produced locally.

This mission gave us a good overview of challenges faced by our partners in the field and to search for suitable technical solutions. The minimum dose of caustic soda needed (as

a stabilizer) has also been determined - now it needs to be tested in a real-life production setting. Local production of some WATA accessories has been introduced with the perspective for a future diffusion in the Sahel belt. Last but not least, a collaborative research and development initiative is beginning to take shape involving the NGO Formations Sans Frontières (Mali) and the Fribourg College of Engineering, under Antenna's leadership.

In October Pierre-Gilles will be returning to Mali to finalise the tests being conducted on the WATA devices.

Discover the new Mini-WATA with solar power connector. It's smaller and better suited to use in the field:
www.antenna.ch/en/research/safe-water/wata-devices

Worldwide impact survey

As part of our mission to achieve progress through research, Antenna continually strives to improve its solutions. With this in mind, we are currently conducting an impact survey among users of WATA devices.

The WATA technology makes it possible to decentralise production of chlorine and drinking water, thus providing a solution for the poorest populations, who are at the end of the chlorine supply chain (powders, tablets, bottles, etc.) and therefore frequently, if not always, have to do without it. However, the autonomy offered by the WATA is not conducive to providing Antenna with feedback. The purpose of this survey is therefore to obtain a more detailed picture of how WATA devices are used in the field, enabling us to learn from users' experience and share our findings with our partners.



Ongoing researches on Argemone

If a locally available plant could be used to rapidly treat people suffering from malaria in remote areas, then considerable progress could be achieved in public health by encouraging its cultivation and preparation as a medicine.

A collaborative research project studying the clinical efficacy of a traditional preparation from Mali identified a series of very active molecules identified in Argemone. These results are now being investigated further, with the aim of establishing the molecules' pharmacokinetics and providing a scientific base for its optimal use in traditional medicine in Mali. This research on Argemone is being conducted in Bamako (Malaria Research and Training Center) and Geneva (University of Geneva, WHO, and Medicines for Malaria Venture). The results are expected by the end of 2012.