



COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE

Investing in Small-Scale Haitian Farmers and Making a Big Impact

Heineken subsidiary BRANA invite US Ambassador and Haitian Government officials to celebrate the sorghum harvest with the farmers.

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI: The beginning of the harvest season is cause for celebration for small-scale sorghum farmers and for the Smallholders Alliance for Sorghum in Haiti (SMASH). Jointly funded through a public-private partnership between the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Brasserie Nationale d'Haiti S.A. (BRANA), SMASH partners hosted a harvest celebration on Wednesday July 23 to recognize local sorghum farmers, whose efforts were readily seen in this year's sorghum yield.

SMASH farmers cultivate the land in Thomazeau, situated east of Port-au-Prince. There they hosted U.S. Ambassador to Haiti Pamela White, the Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR) Thomas Jacques, the Minister of Commerce and Industry Wilson Laleau, BRANA General Manager José Matthijsse, and members of the local farmer's association along with their families to celebrate the harvest and the beginning of USAID's financial assistance to the program. Before joining the farmers in a traditional meal of prepared sorghum, Ambassador White, Minister Laleau, Minister Jacques, and Mrs. Matthijsse learned to harvest and thresh sorghum, using techniques employed by generations of Haitian farmers.

As the farmers in Thomazeau made clear, cultivating sorghum is an old practice in Haiti; yet by capitalizing on opportunities made available to them through SMASH, these Haitian farmers have breathed new life into their businesses and as a result many have already increased sorghum yields by 100 % and increased their incomes by 75 %. One of the farmers who hosted the celebration was among the initial farmers to join the program. Like other farmers in the area, he was skeptical at first. However, acknowledging the difficulties of recent seasons, constantly burdened by poor soil quality, seeds that would not germinate and harvests unable to support him throughout the year, he took a risk on the SMASH team. The risk has paid off. By the end of this harvest season, this farmer expects his income to more than double, enabling him to feed his family and send his children to school with his own income.

The SMASH program, BRANA's 5 year local sourcing program implemented by Papyrus, was launched in September 2012 with a commitment to the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI). The SMASH program is a market-driven approach to reduce poverty among farmers, which provides training in modern agricultural techniques and connects farmers to markets. BRANA is investing \$3.4 million into SMASH in order to purchase at least 5,000 metric tons of locally produced sorghum in place of imported malt for the production of its popular beverage, *Malta H*. Moving full speed ahead, BRANA has been producing Malta H with Haitian sorghum from the Cul-de-Sac region for over a year. USAID will contribute \$1.7 million to support this program and advance its mission to improve food security in rural Haiti. With USAID's financial support, SMASH will expand into two new regions of Haiti this year, the South and Northeast Departments. With these joint efforts, SMASH will establish a sustainable sorghum supply chain for BRANA that will last long after the program has ended.

Au cœur de la vie Haïtienne!