West African Mango Producers Smiling Again

Exports of mangoes from West Africa to the European market have increased by 40 percent while interceptions of shipments have fallen by 57 percent, according to data from the Fruit Fly Control Project.

Ten West African countries implemented this Project between 2015 to 2019. It was designed to manage the fruit fly scourge. Actors of the project met in late July 2019 in the Senegalese capital, Dakar to reflect on the results achieved and to draw lessons for the future.

About 1.5 million tons of mangoes are produced in West Africa annually representing about 4 percent of global production.

While this represents a significant source of revenue for countries and exporters, the horticultural sector in the region is adversely affected by the fruit fly. It destroys between 50-80 percent of mango production.

Besides, post-harvest loses range between 50-80 percent, which means that less than 100,000 tons of fresh mangoes are exported and about 50,000 tons are processed each year locally.

“Economies of mango-producing countries in West Africa and exporters have experienced substantial loses as a result of interceptions of mango exports,” says Cheikh Ngane, President of the National Fruit Fly Control Committee of Senegal.

A Reversal of Tides

In the past four years, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo implemented the Fruit Fly project with significant results for orchard owners and producers. Overall, € 23.5 million was invested in this project from the European Union, the French Development Agency, the Economic Community of States West Africa (ECOWAS), and beneficiary states. The West and Central African Council for Agriculture Research and Development (CORAF) had responsibilities over the adaptive research component.

At the Dakar meeting, ECOWAS enumerated the achievements of the project and how it has contributed to the livelihoods of exporters.

“The implementation of the project has improved the income of producers, set-up a regional monitoring system, and strengthened the capacities of producers,” said Mr. Alain Sy Traoré, Director of Agriculture at ECOWAS.

“The project has also put at the disposal of farmers technologies to prevent fly infections.
This allows for timely, targeted, and environmentally-friendly actions.”

In Burkina Faso, mango professionals recorded less interception and destruction of their exports to the European market. Only eight confiscations were recorded in 2018 compared to 23 in 2017. Mango exports have increased by 115% in Burkina Faso, according to the Association of Mango Producers of Burkina Faso known in French as APROMAB. Meanwhile, about 8500 tons of dried and fresh mangoes were exported in 2018 compared to 7000 tones in 2017.

Senegal, which has been less affected by the fruit fly attacks, has seen its mango exports jumped from 350 tons in 1999 to around 22 000 tons in 2018.