



SUCCESS STORY

USAID FUNDS UNIVERSITY FAIR PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN NORTH OF HAITI



Photo: DAI

DEED's booth (shown above) attracted fair attendees interested in learning about the project's resources and in applying for grants.



Photo: DAI

Crowd of participants listened as guest speakers addressed challenges related to diminishing local food production such as erosion and urban migration.

USAID's Economic Development for a Sustainable Environment (DEED) project focuses on environmentally sound economic development in two of Haiti's watersheds. Through one of its grants, it recently supported and attended the UCNH (Université Catholique du Nord d'Haiti)'s agriculture fair and producer exposition, along with a number of local handcraft artisans and producer organizations. UCNH is a privately funded university functioning as a non-profit in Haut Limbé, and offering competitive bachelor and masters programs. Its agronomy school is one of the most reputable in the north.

On national Labor Day May 1, UCNH's agricultural fair marked the launch of its campaign for increased food production in the northern part of the country, and served as a platform for dialogue and exploration of opportunities in sustainable agriculture. Different speakers addressed the country's dependency on imported goods, as well as the economic and food security challenges that derive from that dependency. The consequences of poor investment in the local agriculture were highlighted with an emphasis put on the environmental degradation of the Limbé watershed. The solution for potentially reversing the course was shown to reside in intensive and sustainable agricultural production.

Many local products were made available for tasting and for sale. Artists, artisans and entrepreneurs from the food processing industry showcased locally produced handcraft works, farm commodities and processed agriculture products. Local authorities, the media, multiple organizations and commercial institutions, producer groups from the Limbé watershed, and students from neighboring schools actively took part. Although the University site is relatively remote, in all, more than 1,000 people attended the fair.

DEED representatives seized the opportunity to better inform participants about the project's approach towards sustainable development, its grant opportunities and to encourage the submission of project proposals. As a result, a number of PPA (Public-Private Alliance) proposals for sustainable production were received in the Limbé office in the weeks following the UCNH fair.