



SUCCESS STORY

USAID Improves Food Security in Rural Haiti by Empowering Farmers in Montrouis



Photo: DAI

Above, DEED's community liaison expert raises local farmers' awareness on the importance of practicing sustainable agriculture - in order to reforest Ivoire's depleted hills, with trees such as moringa, banana, and citrus, guaranteeing additional sources of income.



Photo: DAI

Above, one of the 5 superior bulls donated to OPD8 producers by HPI, dispersed around Ivoire and meant to crossbred with the local cows.

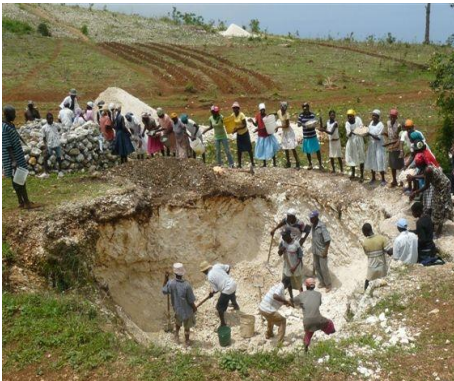


Photo: DAI

Men and women - members of OPD8 - prepare the ground for the construction of a dairy on the hilltops of Ivoire, near Montrouis.

In the recent decades, rural farming in Haiti has offered little hope of significant economic prosperity. With few market outlets in the provinces, a lack of access to the big cities and a lack of training for market penetration, farmers tend to practice subsistence agriculture, satisfying their family's most basic needs, until they migrate (in search of better opportunities) to the city or branch out overseas. Unregulated cattle rearing and tree-cutting - added to unsustainable crop cultures, have depleted the soils and contributed to an alarming decrease in farmers' incomes in communes like Archaie. But fourteen kilometers from the main road leading to Montrouis, at an altitude of seven hundred meters, producer group OPD8 is working hard at improving the lives of its members in Ivoire, partnering with DEED in a multi-faceted dairy production project.

DEED's grant to OPD8 provides support for enclosed livestock rearing and the commercial production of pasteurized milk in Ivoire, in collaboration with an existing animal production activity through Heifer Project International (HPI). Eighty seven cows donated to local farmers by HPI will soon provide fresh milk to a dairy funded by DEED on OPD8's land. The commercial product will be sold in its entirety to Veterimed, a local NGO constructing dairies and supplying public school canteens around the country with fresh milk, hence guaranteeing an income increase for cattle breeders and milk producers in the region. As production grows, farmers plan to transform excess pasteurized milk into cheese and yogurt - both high value products, for direct market sales.

Other than funding the dairy and facilitating the sales and purchase agreement, DEED has tackled the environmental challenges by putting up a tree nursery for reforestation activities using local multi-use species, extensively promoting enclosed livestock rearing, and has organized upper watershed management activities in the same area.

USAID's DEED (Economic Development for a Sustainable Environment) works in two of Haiti's watersheds, Limbé and Montrouis, to reverse environmental degradation while improving livelihoods among watershed inhabitants. Through a competitive fund, DEED will continue to invest in producer groups such as OPD8 that present environmentally sound approaches to enterprise development.

