



SUCCESS STORY

USAID FACILITATES FIRST TENANT FARMING AGREEMENT FOR IMPROVED LAND-USE AND FOOD SUPPLY IN MONTROUIS



Photo: DAI

DEED's staff raised the awareness of Montrouis farmers around the importance of sustainable agriculture, in the course of previous months' meetings.



Photo: DAI

DEED led a visit for Mr. Dubuisson and Mr. Millien to Lamadelle in Croix des Bouquets, where they saw first-hand the potential gains from commercial production of honey, fruit and chicken farming.



Photo: DAI

In a ceremony attended by representatives of the MARNDR, MdE, UNDP, USAID, the town mayor, 3 Kaseks and DEED staff, Montrouis landowners and farmers signed a breakthrough land-use agreement.

The Montrouis watershed, encompassing about 630 square km of land, is in serious risk of desertification. Like in many parts of Haiti, the majority of the area's landowners have inherited large parcels, many of which are left unattended and potentially available for small farmers to exploit. Due to the farmers' practice of slash and burn agriculture and the production of subsistence crops, the majority of land along the Arcadins coast is no longer fertile, leaving farmers desperate for new sources of income. USAID's DEED project (Economic Development for a Sustainable Environment) is working on several fronts for an environmental recovery of the watershed, engaging all sectors of the community and related government branches in a search for innovative alternatives to unsustainable farming practices, and improved land-use management for wealth creation.

As a result to a series of talks facilitated by DEED, families Millien and Dubuisson, the two biggest landowners in Dignes Matheux (Arcahaie), signed a multi-year tenant farming agreement with ten hillside farmers, marking a major breakthrough in the sustainable economic development plans for the Montrouis area. According to the agreement, each of the tenants has relinquished his/her small plot of land on the fragile upper slopes in exchange for 2-hectares on the private acreage of the two landowners. This way, the soil on the upper slopes will be left to regenerate with trees and plant species indigenous to the area. In return, DEED will assist tenant farmers and landowners in developing joint income-generating activities in the lowlands, starting with the planting of 50,000 high value trees such as moringa, mango and other fruit trees, the commercial production of honey and fruit, and various animal rearing. Each of the ten farmers will receive a milk cow and a dozen egg-laying chickens, whose produce will be sold to the Arcahaie dairy and to hotels along the coast.

This pilot project is the result of a farm strategy being promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture and implemented with DEED in an effort to address pressing food security and environmental issues. DEED has identified over 20 landowners in the Montrouis area with whom it will work towards duplicating the model.

DEED is a three year project (Jan 2008-Jan 2011) implemented by DAI and also investing in the recovery of the Limbé watershed, in the north of Haiti.