

Legume Inoculant Technology and Quality Control Procedures Workshop

A workshop on Legume Inoculant Technology and Quality Control (QC) procedures was held at the Microbial Resources Centre Laboratory (MIRCEN) in the Department of Land Resource Management and Agricultural Technology (L.A.R.M.A.T.), University of Nairobi (UoN; Kabete Campus) from July 4th to 22nd, 2011. The training was co-funded by the N2Africa Project and SIMLESA (Sustainable Intensification of Maize-Legume Cropping Systems for Food Security in Eastern and Southern Africa) with the focus to provide participants with the latest ideas and techniques in manufacturing Rhizobium inoculants and in QC testing procedures required in achieving high quality legume inoculants.



Thirteen attendees comprising of specialists coming from N2Africa and SIMLESA partners in six countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe), University of Nairobi Students and MIRCEN Laboratory technical staff, participated at this workshop. Its structure was a practical and hands-on experience where they learnt to deal with rhizobia cultures, recognize contaminants, maintain rhizobia Mother Cultures, produce batch fermentation cultures, inject inoculant bags and perform QC tests. Participants also had the opportunity to learn serological techniques (Precipitation & Agglutination and the ELISA test) frequently used in the identification of rhizobia species. This was demonstrated by Chief Technologist Nduhiu Gitahi (MSc Immunology) from the Department of Public Health Pharmacology & Toxicology, UoN.

The workshop provided all attendees with new skills that they in turn will be able to share and use in their workplace. It was also an excellent opportunity to interchange information between participants and trainers and to develop and foster new relationships and networks with the ultimate aim of improving the production of legume inoculants in Africa.



Workshop participants (from top left): Victor Mukwa (Zambia), Priscah Echessa (MEA Limited-Kenya), Demola Akanni (Nigeria), James Ndiritu (MIRCEN Technologist), Dr Kenton Dashiell (N2AFRICA Project Leader; CIAT-TSBF), Nabintu Ndusha (UoN Student), Alfred Rumongi Tabaro (UoN Student), Amanuel Asrat (Ethiopia), Maureen Waswa (UoN Student), Dr Anabel Vivas-Marfisi (Australia), Cathrine Mushangwe (Zimbabwe), Prudence Mapiki (Zambia), Professor Nancy Karanja (UoN) and Lloyd Liwimbi (Malawi).

Dr. Anabel Vivas-Marfisi (Centre for *Rhizobium* Studies, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia)



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