K-State lands $12M grant to lead agricultural growth in Haiti

Feed the Future project will help build knowledge, food and nutritional security

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Kansas State University’s Feed the Future Sustainable Intensification Innovation Lab has been awarded a five-year $12 million grant from United States Agency for International Development to establish a Center of Excellence that will enhance capacity of six universities to support agriculture-led growth in Haiti.

Vara Prasad, director of the innovation lab (also known as SIIL), said the grant will help to create the Center of Excellence on Mitigation, Adaptation, and Resilience to Climate-Change -- or CEMARCH -- to foster agricultural education, training, research and extension through improved collaboration, communication and knowledge sharing.

The effort will address agricultural problems, and food and nutritional security in the Caribbean country.

According to Prasad, CEMARCH will focus on building institutional and human capacity so that Haiti is able to identify and seek solutions to its agricultural problems in partnership with U.S. universities.

“The SIIL is perfectly positioned with its international recognition and extensive experience to engage in a co-creation process with the six Haitian university partners and USAID-Haiti to successfully establish the CEMARCH,” said Ernie Minton, dean of K-State’s College of Agriculture and director of K-State Research and Extension.

SIIL will work closely with a consortium of six universities, including:

- Quisqueya University in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.
- Faculté d’Agronomie et de Médecine Vétérinaire in Port-au-Prince.
- Campus Henry Christophe de Limonade in Limonade, Haiti.
North Christian University, Cap-Haïtien.
American University of the Caribbean in Sint Maarten.
University Notre Dame, Les Cayes, Haiti.

Together, those universities will help identify areas of research, curriculum development, and opportunities to engage the farming community and other local partners to redesign agri-food systems.

“Engaging with scholars, educators, policy makers, smallholder farmers, and building social capital and human resources is a hallmark of SIIL’s portfolio, and we have successfully done this in multiple countries around the world,” said Prasad, who is also a University Distinguished Professor and the R.O. Kruse endowed professor at K-State.

“We are fortunate that USAID values our work and is willing to support and invest in our research, education, outreach and capacity building approaches (so that we can) replicate these proven models in Haiti.”

According to Prasad, SIIL has built capacity around the world by training 160 students and establishing seven agricultural technology parks in Cambodia; and one in Senegal. The lab has plans to establish more in West Africa (including Burkina Faso, Niger, Ghana and Mali).

“This latest significant award to the Sustainable Intensification Innovation Lab is the perfect example of how K-State is focused on promoting collaborative, high-quality research programs around the world,” said David Rosowsky, vice president for research at K-State. “We are pleased to have worked with Prasad and (SIIL associate director Jan) Middendorf on this large grant and significant accomplishment.”

Prasad said work at CEMARCH focuses on three objectives:

- Increasing institutional and human capacity and social capital to better meet the demands of the agricultural economy and workforce needs.
- Developing revenue-generating services to provide to the region.
- Establishing technology parks to showcase high-potential Climate Smart Agriculture technologies and strategies to sustainably intensify smallholder production systems.

He said SIIL will work directly with the universities to provide support for management, reporting, communications and outreach, and organizing events. The SIIL at K-State will work with the Haitian institutions to develop a five-year plan based on the needs, priorities, opportunities and commitments of Haiti.

“This initiative gives us a great opportunity to emulate the land-grant model by working with local Haitian universities to foster agricultural education, training, research and extension,” Middendorf said. “We will also work toward improving collaboration, coordination, and knowledge sharing to concentrate on Haiti’s food and nutritional security challenges, especially during these very challenging times.”
The U.S. Agency for International Development administers the U.S. foreign assistance program providing economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 80 countries worldwide.

K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county extension offices, experiment fields, area extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus in Manhattan. For more information, visit www.ksre.ksu.edu. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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