

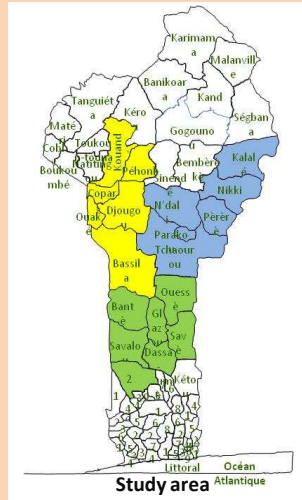
# Link Between Cash Crop Production and Household Food Security in West Africa: the Case of Cashew Promotion in Benin

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## INTRODUCTION

In Benin, cashew nuts represent the second export cash crop after cotton. For about 200,000 people the cashew sector plays an important role in setting their livelihoods, within those 180,000 small scale farmers. In 2011, the total cashew export from Benin was about 140,000 MT and its contribution to GDP was 4%. With about 1 to 2 ha only, cashew orchards are largely cultivated by small-scale farmers alongside food crops for consumption and sale.

Cash crop production is often seen to compete with food security. In order to understand the impact of cashew promotion on food security in Benin, a survey has been conducted by the African Cashew Initiative (ACi) in 2010–2011.



## OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Determine the extent to which income from cashew helps to avoid or reduce the frequency, duration and severity of poor households' food shortages;
- ◆ Determine the potential impact of the ACi interventions on household food security, especially the potential for reducing or eliminating food shortages.

## DATA BASE

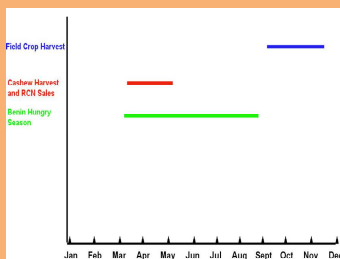
Study area: Atacora-Donga, Borgou-Alibori and Zou-Collines.

Sample size: Data from 657 cashew farming families in 13 districts was collected and used.

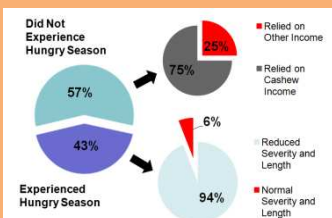
## METHODOLOGY

- ◆ Assumptions about yield and income impact expected from adopting various ACi trainings were defined
- ◆ The amount of food purchased using income from cashew sales during the period of food scarcity was calculated
- ◆ The amount of money each household needs to buy enough food to avoid food shortages was calculated
- ◆ The amount of additional income from cashew sales that each household would have gotten due to the adoption of new techniques through training was calculated
- ◆ The percentage of households that could avoid hunger by adopting techniques from training was calculated and converted to number of individuals

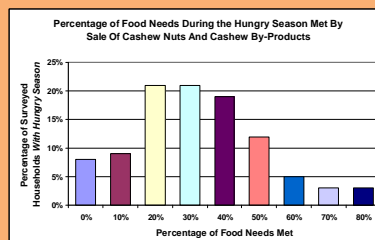
## RESULTS



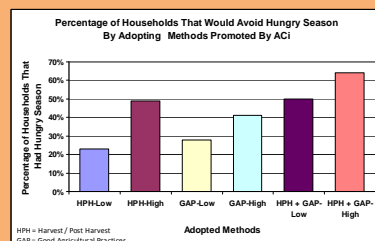
Food scarcity in Benin coincides with the start of the cashew harvest



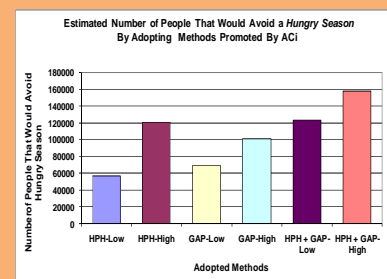
Correlation between income from cashew and household food security



Average = 32%, Median = 30%



About 23%–64% of households with hungry seasons could avoid them, depending on which practices they adopted



ACi training should stress the linkages between the promoted cashew practices and HH food security



## CONCLUSION

The Benin case shows that cash crop production and food security are linked and not necessarily contradictory. Small-scale farmers do profit from income generated by cashew production on their fields especially during periods when households need money to secure food needs.