

# **PHYTOSANITARY RESEARCH CLINIC LAUNCHED IN BURKINA FASO**

The Institute of Rural Development of Burkina Faso (IRD) has established a clinic tasked with improving the use of phytosanitary products, such as insecticides and pesticides, to reduce their impact on agriculture and the environment, and to improve food security.

The clinic was officially launched earlier this month (7 March) in Bobo Dioulasso at a meeting attended by representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, and experts from the agriculture, hydraulics, environment and sustainable development fields. Members of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation were also present.

The clinic has been financed for five years, at a cost of \$US536 million (265 million CFA).

It has been tasked with studying and making improvements to insecticide use, including the potential use of naturally occurring

insecticides, and improvements to fungicides, which kill or limit the development of parasitic fungi that attack crops.

Irene Sonda, general manager of the IRD, said the clinic would also provide networking opportunities between researchers and potential beneficiaries, to better share experiences derived from research and development, and to enable more efficient diagnosis of bio-aggressors.

And [it will] look for and identify opportunities to collaborate with other phytosanitary initiatives, he told *SciDev.Net*.

The project's coordinator, Anne Legrve, said the clinic would serve as an interface between field practices and laboratory research.

This means researchers won't be obliged to go out into the field to discover the [kinds of] problems being faced by producers, she explained.

Legrve added that the clinic was a first for West Africa, and would provide valuable support for research in education and training and in technology transfer related to agricultural activities.

The president of the Polytechnical University of Bobo Dioulasso (PUB), Georges Oudraogo welcomed the clinic's establishment, saying it would fulfill a much-needed permanent interlocutor role between farmers and researchers.

Oudraogo said many producers have difficulty in getting access to safe chemicals, leading them to use unsuitable phytosanitary products for treating market garden produce, getting fruit to ripen, and keeping cereals fresh.

He said Burkina Faso currently spends more than \$US111 million on imported agricultural chemicals every year, around a third of which is spent on phytosanitary products, and that the clinic would also look at these issues with a view to improving access.

While the clinic will focus on connecting researchers with producers, it will also provide training for agriculture workers in using phytosanitary products safely, in ways that would not result in environmental pollution.

Source: <http://www.scidev.net/global/biotechnology/news/phytosanitary-research-clinic-launched-in-burkina-faso.html>