Transforming Rwanda’s Coffee Sector

Partnership to Enhance Agriculture in Rwanda through Linkages (PEARL)

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Three Take-aways

❖ First, know the story of PEARL
❖ Second, is a message of sustainability in:
   - rural livelihoods
   - production systems
   - institutions
❖ Third, universities are exceptionally well-positioned to *integrate education, research and outreach* in creative ways to address issues of global importance... (poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability, resolving conflicts, etc.)
PEARL Project Background and Goals

- Funded by USAID (through HED)
- Implemented in two 3-year phases (2000-2006)
- PEARL’s overarching goals:
  - Assist Rwanda in its efforts to rebuild key agricultural institutions (higher education and research) from the impacts of the war and genocide of 1994
  - To raise incomes through demand-driven value chain development (coffee and other high value crops) and market linkages.
PEARL Partners

- National University of Rwanda (NUR)
- National Agricultural Research Institute of Rwanda (ISAR)
- Michigan State University (MSU)
- Texas A&M
- Private Sector Partners
PEARL’s pillars of activity...

- **Degree training** in the U.S. for 19 NUR faculty and ISAR researchers across the agricultural sciences.
- **PEARL Outreach Center** established as an institutional hub for faculty and researchers to engage with stakeholder groups in addressing the needs of Rwanda’s rural communities.
- **Value Chain Development** in coffee and horticulture. Approach through integrated framework...
PEARL: Supply side... focus on quality, working with Rwanda’s producers meet standards for a top tier specialty coffee
Coffee production & processing for quality...

- Production: techniques for pruning, mulching, harvesting of ripe cherries, etc., delivery in 6 hrs.
- Attention to grading and washing of parchment in channels between tanks.
- Attention to progress of fermentation process.
- Application of pollution abatement measures for pulp and waste water.
Production & processing for quality (cont.)...

- Attention to rigorous hand sorting in pre-drying of wet parchment.
- *Cupping of lots* to sort production by quality and isolate problem coffee.
- *Profiling* of coffee quality for more focused marketing.
- Investments in applied research in the VC, focusing on improved quality and sustainability.
PEARL: Demand side... working with industry partners to access markets and respond to consumer demands in specialty coffee.
Creating market access...

- Build image utilizing publicity potential.
- Strengthen capacities in coffee subsector through relationship building.
- Develop a verifiable traceability system to track coffee lots to the washing station and the farmer association levels.
- Develop coffee appellation maps in support of traceability and the establishment of “terroir” coffees.
Market access (cont.)...

- Expand *cupping capacities* of growers, washing stations and dry mills.
- Develop a *certification* strategy and support local certification systems.
- Broaden *IT capabilities* at washing stations.
- Conduct regular strategic *buyer/roaster tours* during the coffee harvest period.
- Participate at major annual specialty coffee *trade shows*.
- Host annual *Cup of Excellence* Competition and Auction.
PEARL’s Impact on Sustainable Rural Livelihoods and Institutions

- Transformation of coffee sector
- From 0 to over 100 community-based washing stations over past 6 years
- Thousands of jobs created to run washing stations
- Increased incomes (more than tripled cash income from coffee)
- >100,000 producer hhs (>500,000 family members)
- New schools and businesses opening in communities
- Money for school fees
- Construction of housing
- Community healing
- Connection with University/ISAR
Universities hold comparative advantage in international value chain development through...

- Mission to solve problems and improve lives through education, research and outreach
- Large pool of trained human resources (agronomy, processing, marketing, management, etc.)
- Access to technologies required to meet grades and standards.
- Neutral partner/"broker" (trusted by communities and by industry)
- These factors come together to fill a gap between industry and communities of smallholder producers
Drawing on University and ISAR Resources for Applied Research, Education and Outreach

- Basic agronomy: inputs use, shade grown, pruning and harvesting
- Research on pests affecting coffee quality (potato taste)
- Environmental impacts of coffee washing stations
- GIS for washing station placement
- Local training in agribusiness management
- Training in market development in coffee and horticulture. Relationship model.
- Training/adoption of best practices in wet milling, dry milling, cupping labs
- Program M&E
- Building regulatory systems and certification capacity. Training lab technicians and inspectors.
- Public awareness (e.g., Radio Salus serial dramas).
- Media relations