

# Soy “pastta” tastes good for West Africa

## Malian smallholders get access to Ghanaian variety

**Linking seed multiplication and sale to off-taker agreements helps smallholders to access good seed of non-hybrid crops. Our [Seeds2B](#) team and partners are proving this in West Africa.**

Malian oilseed company JMI (*see box*) has about 2000 smallholders under contract. Since 2016, JMI has tested tropically-adapted soybeans with our Foundation (SFSA). As part of the USAID-supported [PASTTA](#) alliance, the company licensed a variety called *Jenguma*, bred by Ghana’s National Research Program. JMI produced its first 2.36 tonnes of certified seeds in 2018, enough for trials by 125 farmers on 50 hectares. Following multiplication in 2019, JMI plans to establish 2000 ha by 2022. This will involve about 5000 farmers, and produce about 2000 tonnes of soy for processing.

“Licensing agreements like this were new for us”, says JMI’s Africa Director Guillaume Salle. “Fortunately, SFSA was there to help.” USAID activities also contributed to success.

### From sunflower to soybean

JMI's R&D works hard to raise yield through improved cultivation and variety selection. In 2013, SFSA’s Oumar Niangado facilitated a sunflower partnership under our Seeds2B program. This led to variety testing in 2014. However, sunflower is labor-intensive and the seed expensive. So in 2016, JMI and SFSA looked at soybean as an alternative. They partnered with Mali’s national research institute and USAID’s Soybean Innovation Lab. The soybean trials joined a pan-African exchange program. Before this, Mali produced no soy seed, and had little interest. By 2017, however, 11 varieties were in trials there.

“JMI selected varieties grown with the low inputs typical for smallholders, and with its waste *jatropha* cake as a fertilizer”, reports SFSA’s Stacy Mwangala, the PASTTA Deputy Head of Party. “*Jenguma*, Ghana’s most widely cultivated variety, yielded 877 kg/ha, compared to the check variety’s 377. Importantly *Jenguma* is also resistant to pod shattering.”

To enable commercialization, SFSA provided JMI with a licensing concept, and facilitated the agreement with breeders at Ghana’s institute SARI. The first royalties are due this year. “Re-investment of profits greatly benefits public breeding programs”, comments Stacy. “We are delighted to be involved in making this happen.”

### The *Jatropha* Mali Initiative (JMI)

JMI is a Malian private company created in 2008. In 2013 it became a subsidiary of African Farmers Oilseeds. JMI aims to connect smallholders to the growing oilseeds markets in the region, and stimulate the local economy by producing edible and non-edible oils from sunflower and *jatropha*. JMI works with volunteer farmers who remain the sole decision-makers on their land. JMI provides them with seeds, free technical support, and the commitment to purchase all their grains at a contracted price. JMI also processes grains to extract oil and seedcake. Edible oil is sold as a foodstuff at the local market; seedcake is used as animal feed, mainly by local cattle farmers.

JMI's strategy relies strongly on research and development, with a strong focus on yield. The company invests considerable efforts in improving farmers’ cultivation practices and the range of varieties.