



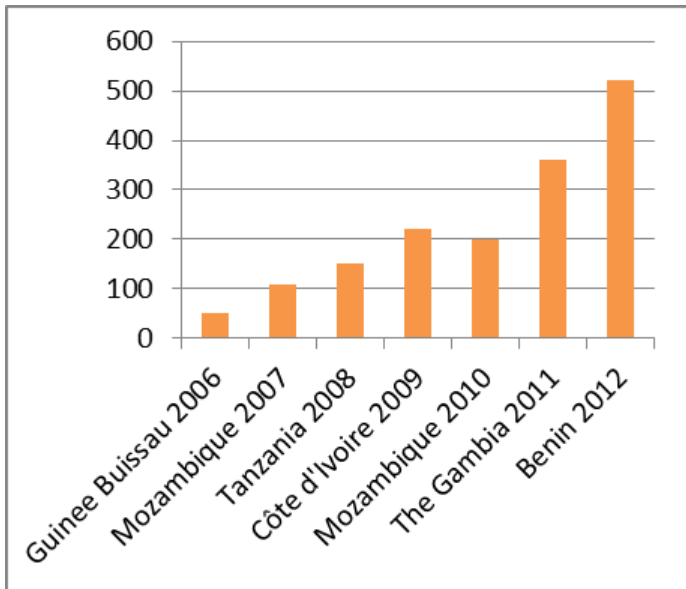
the future is now!

Evaluation

“The future is now!” This was the theme of our 7th Annual Conference in Cotonou, Benin from September 19-21, 2011. It was a huge event: 522 participants from 31 countries attended, a 45% increase in participation from last year’s conference in the Gambia.

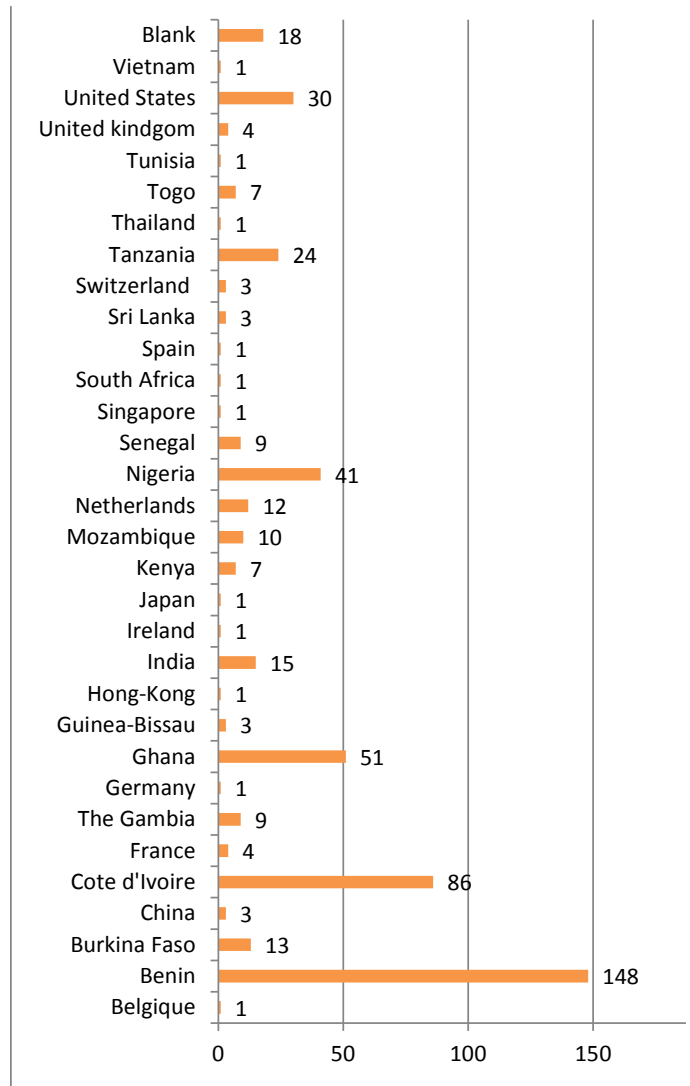
The trip also included a visit to SITAB SARL, a newly opened cashew processing factory designed to meet the highest international standards of processing, hygiene, and safety.

The second World Cashew Expo was held alongside the 7th Annual Conference of ACA. There were two equipment manufacturers displayed and 28 brochure booths exhibiting associations, service providers, and processors.



The ACA team would like to thank all the participants of the 2012 conference and we look forward to seeing you next year in Nigeria, Lagos on 16-19 of September 2013!

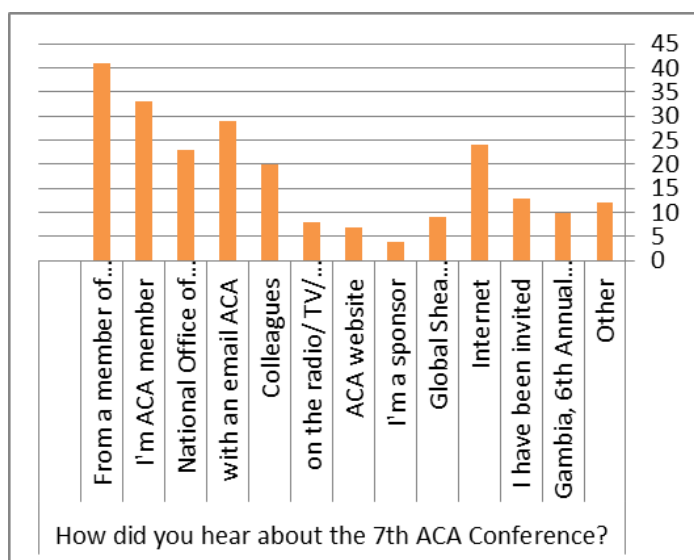
An opening ceremony and a cocktail started the four-day event including guest Hon. Madina Sephou, Benin’s Minister of Industry, Trade and Small and Medium Enterprises. The plenary featured six sessions about the industry and ended with “Today’s Challenges for Tomorrow’s Industry” with government representatives Benin, Nigeria, Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, The Gambia, Senegal, Mozambique, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, and Togo. The second day a forum was also well organized. The delegates had a choice of five sessions, as well as the B2B, where there could meet up with possible clients, service providers and manufacturers.



The next day 100 delegates went to visit a farm and a cashew factory. Field trip participants traveled to a 45 hectare cashew plantation in Dassa-Zoumé, where farmers have received training from ACi on grafting and intercropping to increase productivity of the site.

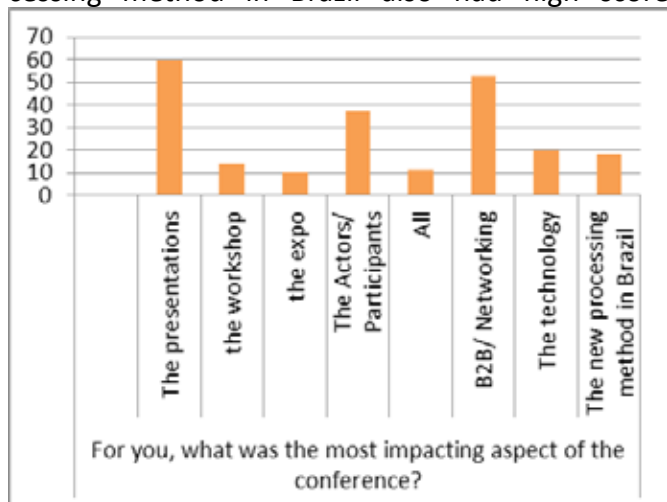
How did you hear about the 7th ACA Conference?

There are many people who come to The Conference who are Members, as well as people invited by a member or from someone from a National office of ACA. The second-most common mode of communication is via internet: an email sent by ACA, the ACA website and the internet as a whole. Other ways that has attracted delegates: the 6th Conference in the Gambia, colleagues, the radio and press and others who have been invited.



What was the most impacting aspect of the Conference?

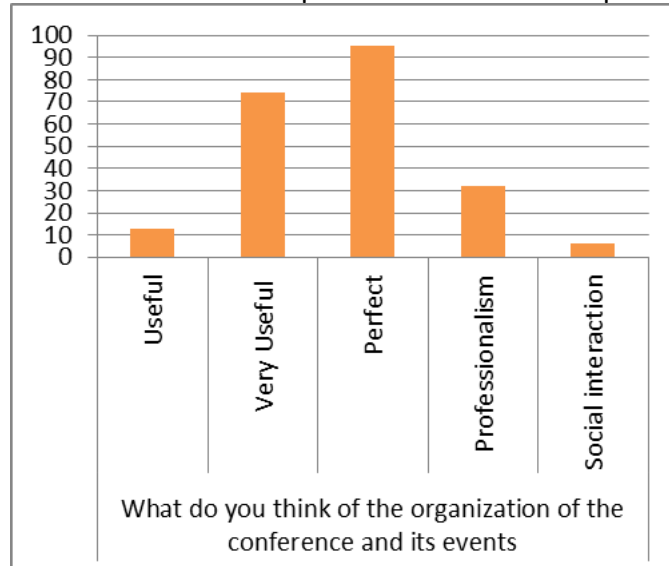
Clearly it was the presentations, the Networking and the participants, which together totaled 150 points. The technology and the new processing method in Brazil also had high scores.



What do you think of the organization of the conference and its events?

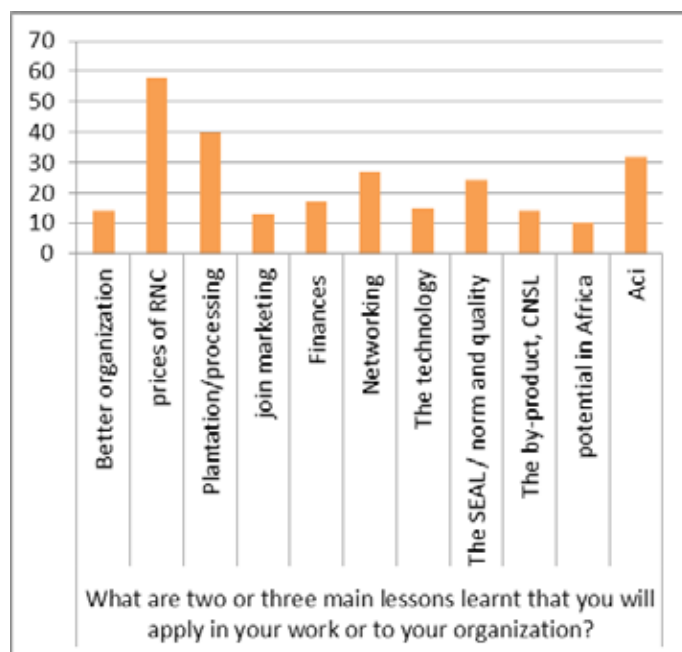
The Participants scored the organization of the conference very highly. For most of them it was perfect, scoring more than 90 points, and participants scored it "very useful" at 70 points. The profes-

sionalism was also important - rated at 30 points.



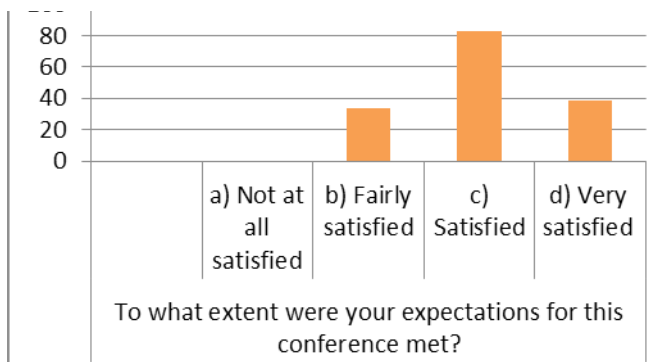
What are two or three main lessons learnt that you will apply in your work or to your organization?

The delegates score very differently what they are going to use in their work. The highest-rated were the prices of RCN, plantations and factory, ACi, networking, the Seal of ACA and norm and quality.



To what extend were you expectations for this Conference met?

We have received 284 evaluations by the delegates. The conference's success was reflected in the scores the participants gave. The participants were satisfied and very satisfied for most of the categories. The conference met their expectations. In the future we can continue and surpass ourselves on the Expo and the Forum.

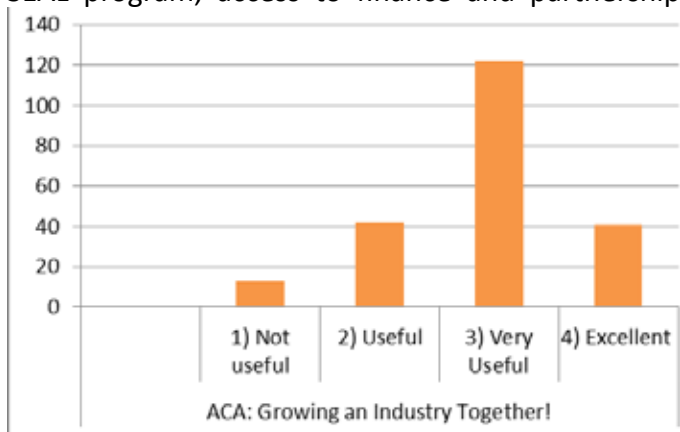


Day 1: Plenary Session

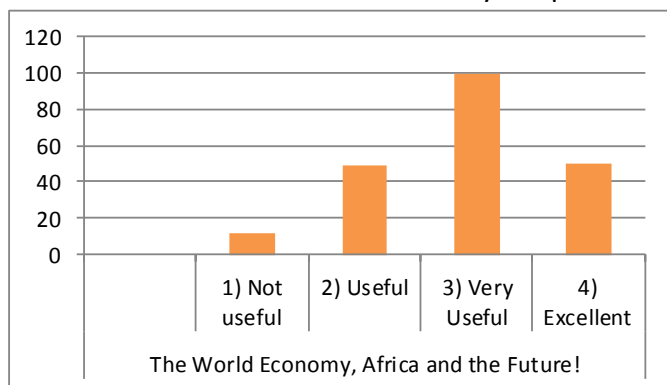
"I received a lot of information on trends, initiatives, perspectives, and had opportunity to exchange with many important actors"

"On the plenary sessions, there were items innovative and edifying."

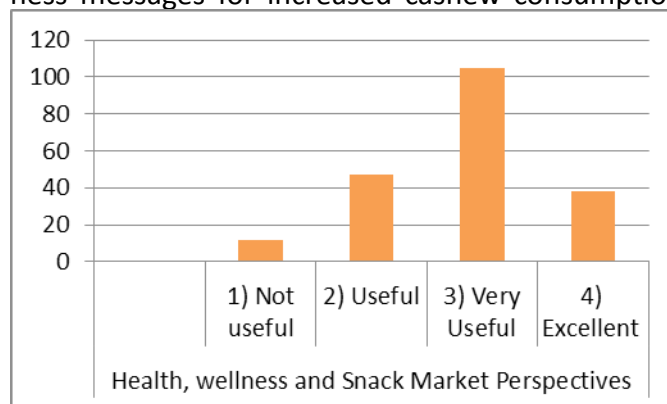
We started with **"ACA: Growing an Industry Together!"** In this session the ACA mission, achievement and service offers was shown and stakeholders share their experience what ACA is doing in the SEAL program, access to finance and partnership.



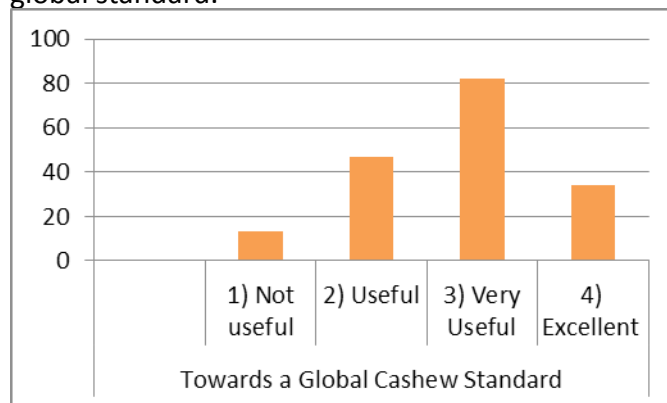
During **"The World Economy, Africa and the Future"** an American economist pointed out an analysis and predictions on the world economic outlook and on agribusiness in Africa. Also, a buyer explained key implications for future snack market trends and the cashew industry in particular.



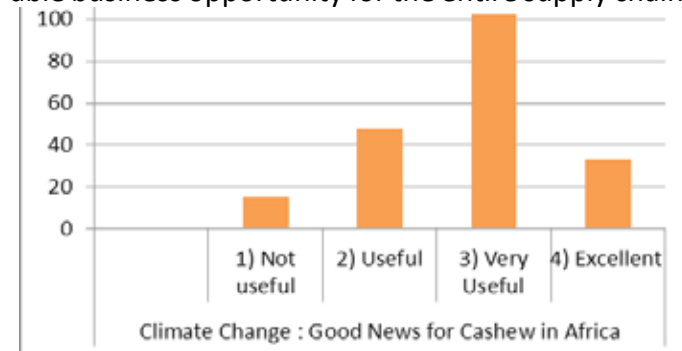
"Health, Wellness and Snack Market Perspectives" highlighted health and nutritional health promoting attributes of the nuts and especially cashew nut. It also recommended further areas of research with potential developing health and wellness messages for increased cashew consumption.



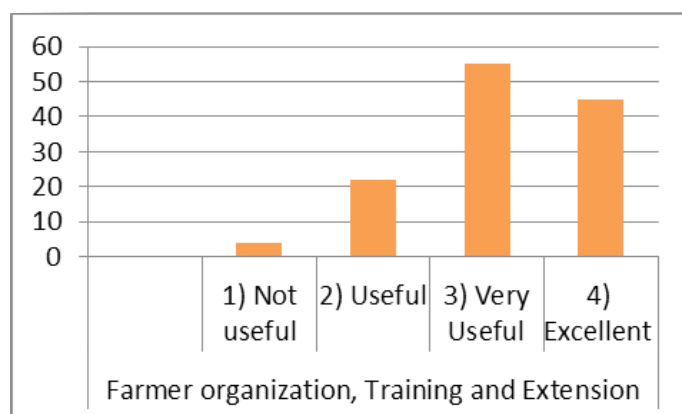
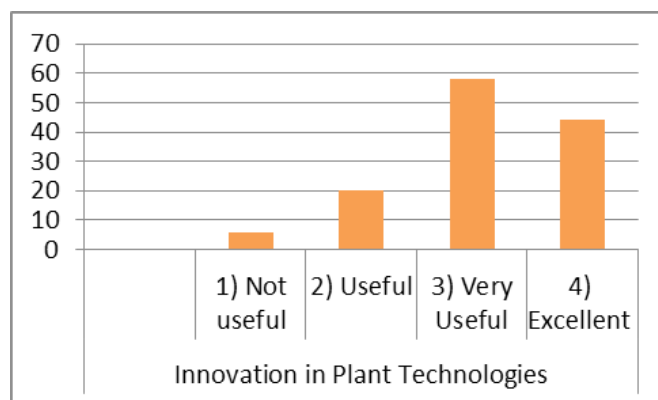
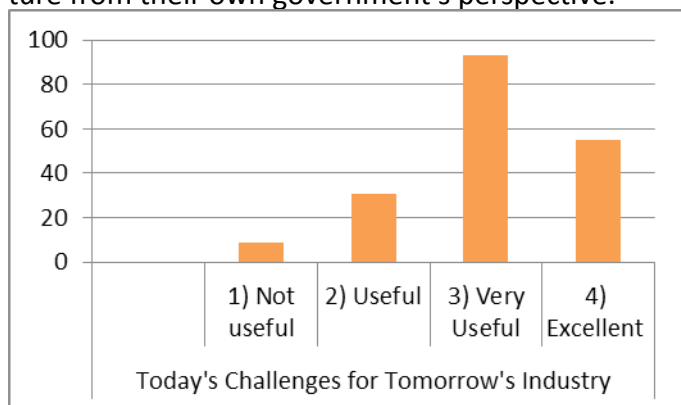
The session **"Toward a Global Cashew Standard"** set a focus on introducing and discussing the work of the World Cashew Taskforce, including objectives and priorities identified for activities. They also discussed issues from the perspective of cashew processor, buyer and retailers on the development of a global standard.



In **"Climate Change: Good News for Cashew in Africa!"** the expert told us the impact of climate change and implications for suitability of cashew growing in Africa. He outlined key opportunities to turn the comparative advantage of the promising climatic conditions in West Africa for cashew into a sustainable business opportunity for the entire supply chain.



During this session “**Today’s Challenges for Tomorrow’s Industry: Growing the Crop and Spurring Investment**” the government representatives identify the most urgently needed measures to grow the crop and to attract investment into cashew processing in their country. They showcased selected best practices on implementation of policies supportive of the cashew industry and highlighted their country’s current policies and priority areas of action for the future from their own government’s perspective.



Day 2: Cashew Forum

“I’m very encouraged. This is the first time I’ve come to West Africa. There are large investments and smaller investments – it’s happening now. The food quality is building quickly. The supply chain is set up to handle raw seed – it’ll just switch to handling kernels.”

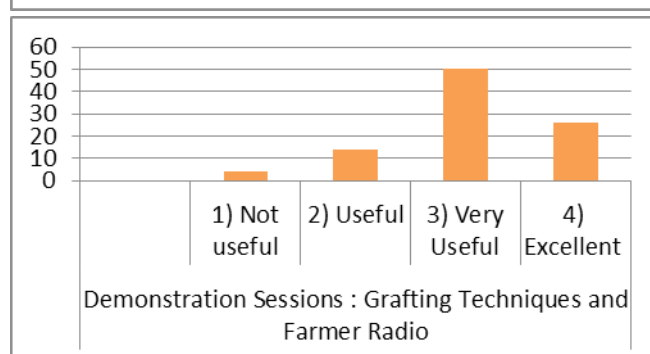
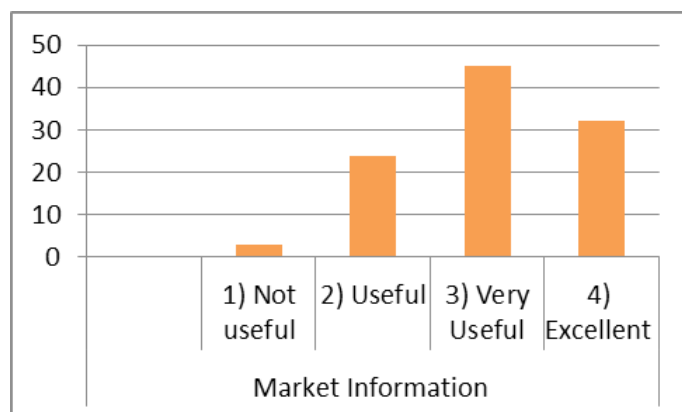
Farming and Innovation

This forum discussed the status of research and dissemination of improved plant material.

They also identified 2 best practices on farmer organization and training and introduce new models and approaches to farmer extension.

Market information was also covered, and two initiatives were presented. The prices of RCN are going to the cashew farmers via SMS.

The experts showed the source of planting material and how to do the selections of mother trees. Practical demonstration followed by discussions, practical exercise by some participants.

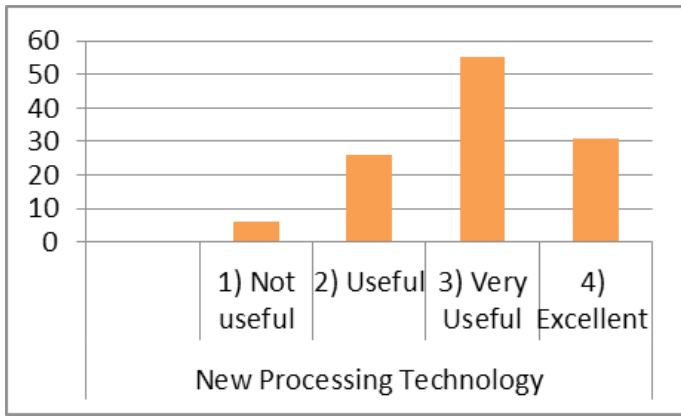


The Future of Processing

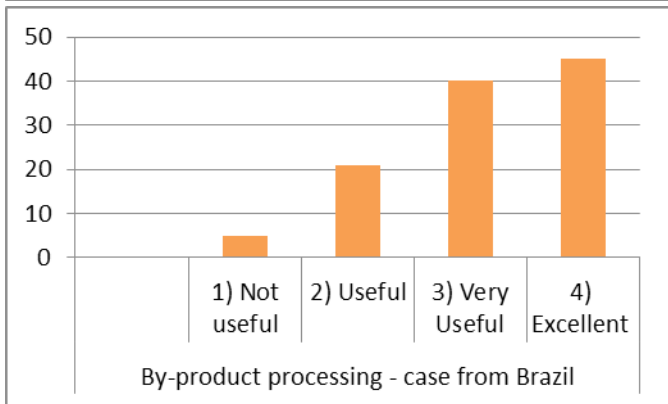
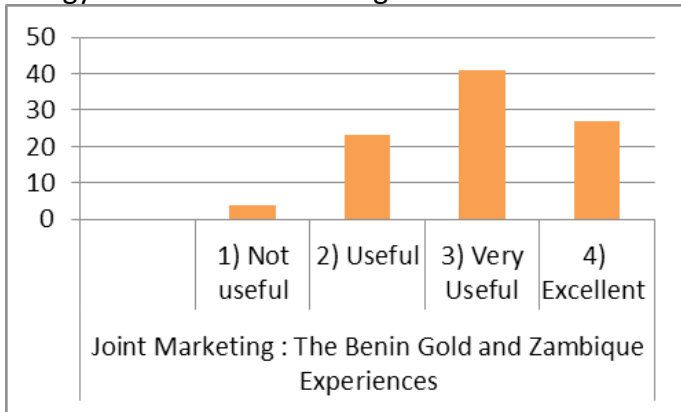
This session focused on processing. New shelling, peeling and grading technology from Vietnam, China, Sri Lanka and Brazil were presented. There were discussions about the technical constraint and improvements in the latest technology.

Sustainable ideas and realities

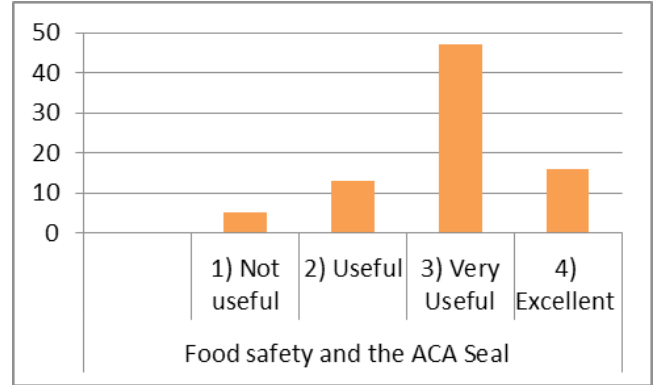
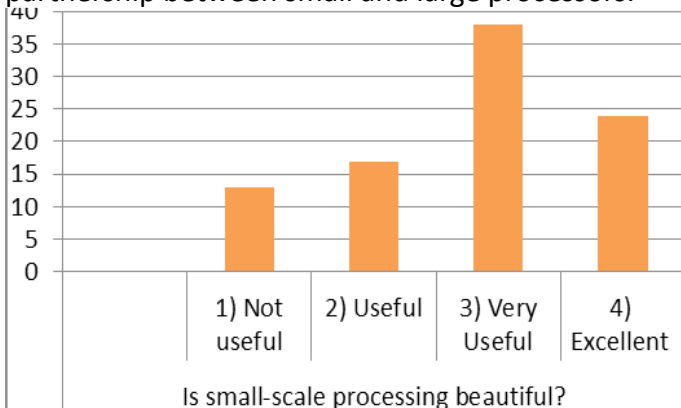
This session described the components of the seal and what buyers would be interested in seeing in terms of quality. The new regulations (FDA) were also discussed. The ACA Seal must be audited by 3rd party certifications. Demand for these types of certifications is increasing from all sides.



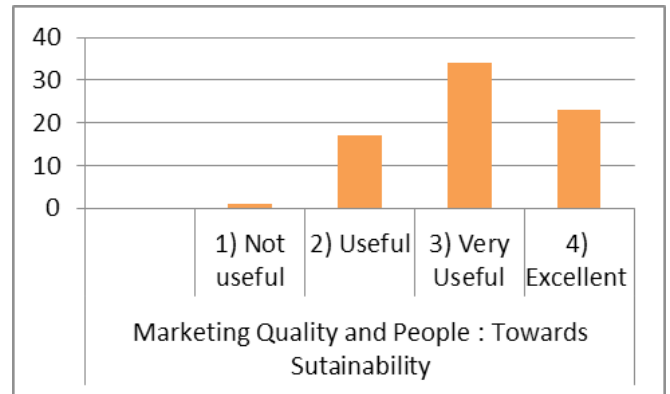
The Benin Gold and Zambique Experiences are different models for joint marketing. Brazil had by-product processing on small and large-scales, including technology used and markets targeted.



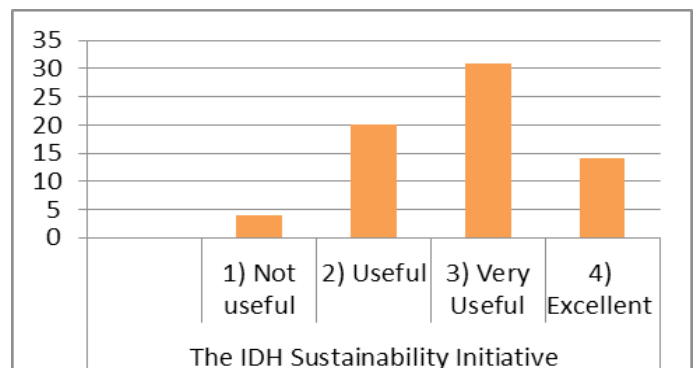
The IRD has a project on small scale processing. They show how to address finance and marketing challenges and also elements needed for a successful partnership between small and large processors.



Topic covered included: How to implement ACA seal, what impact it has on an actual factories; What is sustainability, how can we learn from other sectors; Certification and seal programs as a way to reform management: "how working within a certain system can improve your bottom line". Consumers are looking for a story including social, economic and environment background.

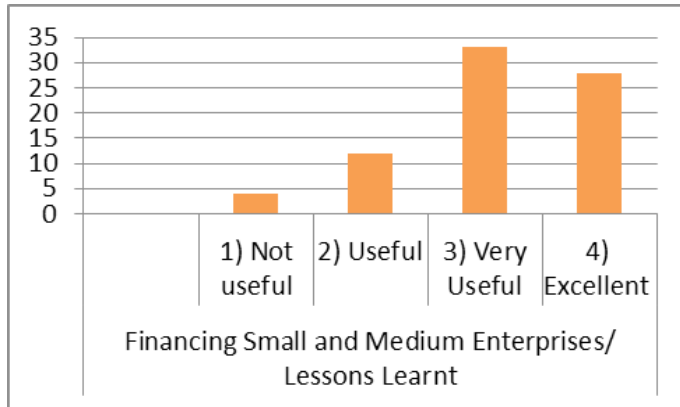


IDH and its role and its partners: Intersnack mainstreaming and sustainability agent and Olam - sustainability partnering. The funding agency tries to replicate lessons learnt from other sectors.

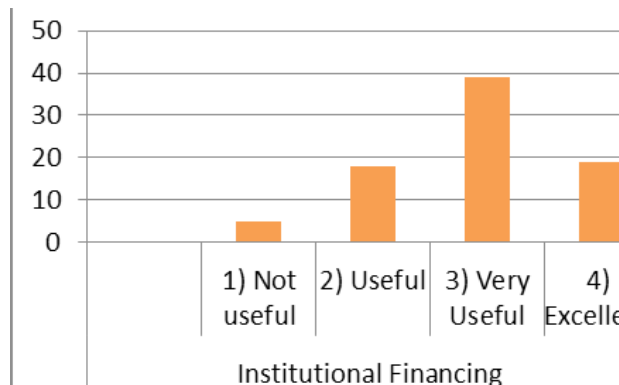


Finance and Investments

Increased understanding of stakeholders in how SME finance can be enhanced. Need to support financial institutions in developing more responsive products. Need for a look at commodity financing. There is an issue of interest rates for the sector.

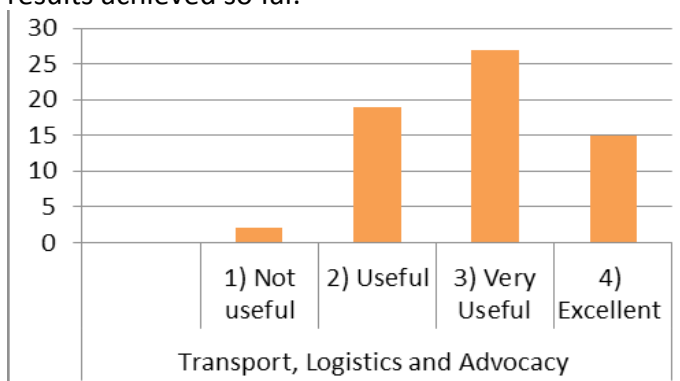


On institutional financing, three banks explained the financing mechanisms and tools that could be relevant for investment in the cashew industry. They described initial steps for investors in the cashew industry in Africa to tap into their institution's resources.

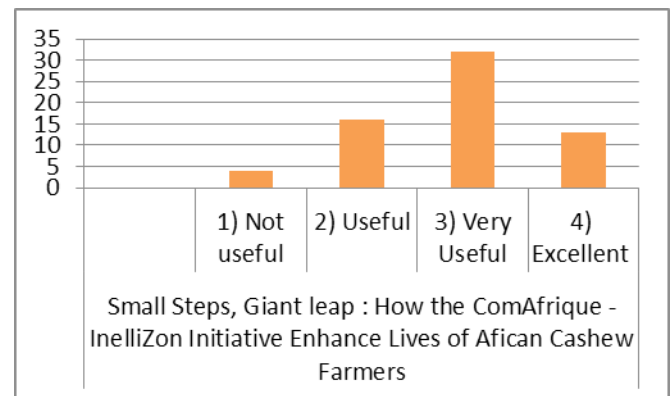


Open Forum

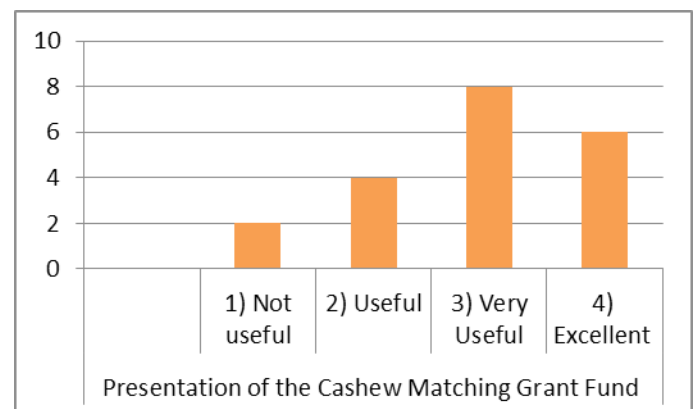
In this session, transport companies identified the key transport issues affecting competitiveness in Africa, with particular emphasis on agriculture. They highlighted new way of private sector advocacy and results achieved so far.



"Small steps, Giant leaps: ComAfrique- Intelizon Initiative" enhances lives of African Cashew Farmers. They bring solar electricity to villages in The Gambia by sponsorship. Each villager must pay 1 dalasi for one day instead of 6 dalasis for candles for a day.

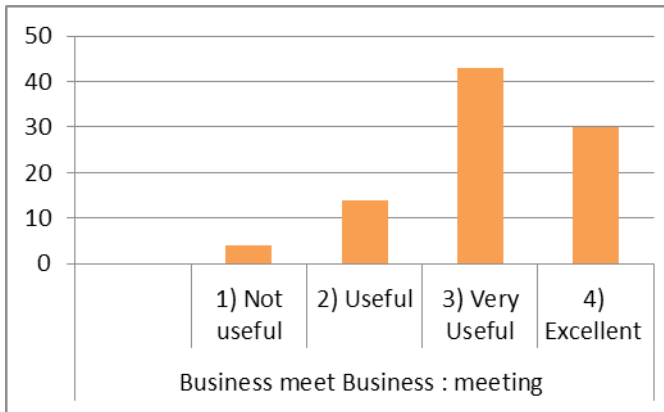
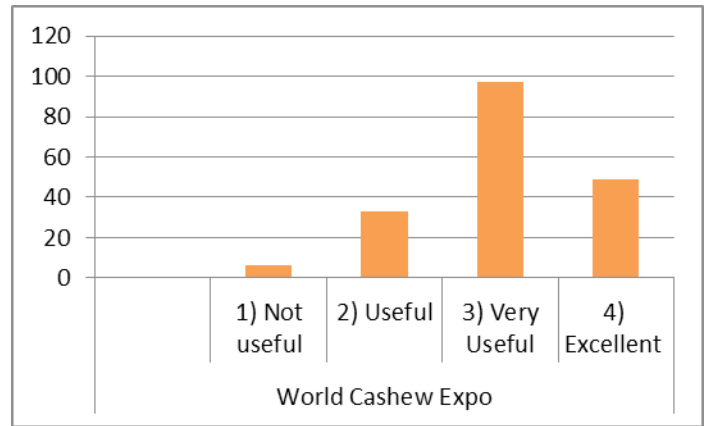
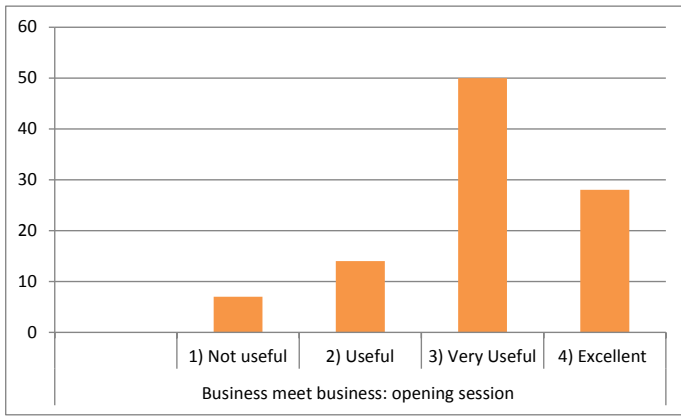


ACI presented the Cashew Matching Grant Fund. The main objective of the fund is to facilitate the achievement of improved quality and quantity of cashew produced, enhanced knowledge transfer to cashew farmers, strong linkages and ties between processors/buyers and farmers, improved access to price and production information as well as improved cashew value/supply chain (sustainable supply chain).



Networking

We set up 350 meetings between delegates in the Business to Business events: connecting producers to buyers to service providers to financiers to experts. 70% of the conference attendees who participated in. There were also opening sessions in the morning where the participants seek private appointments. Lunch, coffee break, the Gala dinner and the field trip allowed delegates to know each other better.



The World Cashew Expo

This was the second World Cashew Expo running alongside the 7th Annual Conference of the ACA.

Two equipment manufacturers were present: one from Sri Lanka and one from China. Budhi Industries for the second time were present, showcasing the same peeling machine as last year. Shanghai Huanxin Machinery Co Ltd also brought a peeling machine. They presented peeling machines for medium-sized processors. Exhibitors were overwhelmed by delegates who wanted to know more about the machines. They presented in the conference session about “New processing Technology”.

Cashew stakeholders exhibited as well. ARECA took seven booths; some processors of Benin presented their companies and their cashews. Financial institutions displayed brochures and there were associations who showed the cashew value chains in their country. ACi took also a booth explaining what they have done in the past four years - how many farmers they reach processors and helping structuring the value chain in Benin, Burkina, Ghana and Mozambique.