

THE PEANUT

official newsletter of...



Issue 7, March 2015

Ghana project progresses



Our newest production facility in Ghana is on a roll!

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Malawi factory unhindered by floods



Get the updates from Malawi, where despite heavy seasonal rains, we have begun an exciting new building project.

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Brief Update: Sierra Leone

Although the overall caseload of Ebola virus has decreased in Sierra Leone, the country continues to report new cases of the virus. For this reason, PPB's feeding clinics remain suspended. However, our factory is functioning, and the team continues to produce thousands of boxes of therapeutic food for UNICEF. Cases of severe acute malnutrition are expected to increase in Sierra Leone this year, and Project Peanut Butter will be a source of hope in the community.



Above: Weigh training at PPB Ghana. Weighing ingredients can be time-consuming and tedious work at first, but practice makes perfect!

Ghana project to be fully operational within a few months

The transformation from what was once an unfinished warehouse into Project Peanut Butter's newest RUTF production facility is nearly complete in Kumasi, Ghana. A combination of local staff (some recently hired) and seasoned consultants from the USA has been working long hours as of late to make the PPB Ghana dream a reality.

These past few months have been filled with a variety of administrative tasks and food production trials. Electricity-insecure Ghana can be a challenging work environment at times! Machinery was dismantled and deep cleaned, and standard operating procedures have been determined for the mixing and packaging machinery. Technicians ran full 400 kg mixes of food through the line, troubleshooting along the way as difficulties arose.

(Ctd. on pg. 2) 1

(Ctd. from pg 1)

Ghanaian candidates were interviewed for the position of factory Quality Manager—a crucial role that must be filled to ensure that the RUTF produced is safe for malnourished children to consume. Jonas Sebigbon has been selected for this position and will begin on April 15. His background and experience in quality control are impressive, and we expect that he will make a fantastic addition to the PPB Ghana team. Additionally, the small but growing production staff was trained on hygiene and good manufacturing practices. They have begun to keep quality control records, and the first batches of food produced in Ghana have been fully documented and are ready for distribution to malnourished children.



Above: PPB employee Margo Stoner measures a child for malnutrition at a community health center in Ghana.

The Ghana team eagerly awaits an inspection in the second quarter of 2015 that will allow this factory to become a validated RUTF supplier for the UN agencies. In the meantime, though, there is plenty of work to keep everyone occupied! At PPB, the goal is not only to produce therapeutic food but also to distribute it to malnourished children in the community. Already, our team has been visiting community health centers in the region, investigating how children are currently screened for malnutrition, and beginning to search for potential clinic locations. It will only be a matter of months before

PPB Ghana is fully operational, and we couldn't be more excited to begin impacting and saving lives in this beautiful West African nation. ♦

Below: The PPB Ghana team poses for a group photo after their successful production trials.



PPB Malawi factory unimpeded by heavy seasonal rains

At the beginning of the year, Malawi made international news headlines as heavy seasonal rains wreaked havoc upon many southern regions of the country. The worst floods in living memory, which began on January 11, have disrupted the lives of over 1 million of the country's 16.4 million residents. In addition to wiping away tens of thousands of homes and stranding countless people who lived in low-lying areas, the floods destroyed an estimated 64,000 hectares of cropland and wiped out livestock. This means that the hungry season in Malawi, which runs from December to March, has only been exacerbated this year, as immediate food aid is required for a portion of the population and nation-wide crop yields will be lower than average when the harvest rolls around.

The good news is that PPB Malawi's factory and clinics are still up and running, ready to

respond to the expected increased demand for ready-to-use therapeutic food this year. The factory's power supply was unreliable for the month of January and into early February, but other than that, the factory has been largely unhampered by the heavy rains. In fact, our Malawi factory celebrated an exciting accomplishment at the end of February: we passed an audit by Doctors Without Borders and were thus officially certified to continue producing RUTF for the UN agencies, such as UNICEF.

Always seeking to improve and expand, PPB Malawi has recently taken on an ambitious new project: the construction of a peanut processing facility adjacent to the new factory. The factory currently purchases raw peanuts from local farmers and gives them to an external company for processing (sorting, roasting, and grinding into paste). *(Ctd. on pg. 4)*

Below: Malawi peanut processing facility construction crew engages in block work. The peanut processing and storage areas will be roughly 55% the area of the main factory building.



(Ctd. from pg 3)

Loss of control over any aspect of the supply chain can present numerous challenges pertaining to proper storage and safe handling of peanuts. With the completion of this new facility, PPB will have control over every step in the process, which can reduce costs and even better ensure the quality of the peanut paste used to make RUTF.

Leading the construction efforts are Alex Caskey and Mark Hstand, together with local Site Manager Simon Magombo and Site Foreman Nelson Chipiula; the team consists of many of the same individuals who built the factory from the ground up in 2013.

"Being able to see first-hand the important work that PPB does has been incredible."

—Mark Hstand

"We were very fortunate in being able to round up the all-star crew that did such an incredible job on the main factory building," says

Alex. "We know exactly where to go for

most of the supplies and building materials we need and are able to take advantage of relationships we formed with suppliers and sub-contractors last time around."

This long-awaited construction project will bring clear benefits to PPB Malawi as a whole, but its impact on the team leaders is equally compelling. "I am loving being back in Malawi working with PPB on the construction of another building. Being able to see first-hand the important work that PPB does has been incredible," Mark shares. Alex describes his work in Malawi last year as "without a doubt the most challenging and rewarding experience of my life—an incredible opportunity that I don't take for granted." The team hopes to complete construction by Fall 2015. ♦



Above: Malawi production workers, Thoko Maere (left) and Magret Mkaipilana (right) pose with bottles of recently-produced food for the ongoing Mamachiponde research study. The study has already enrolled over 700 pregnant women at 15 clinic sites throughout Malawi in order to understand which foods contribute to the best clinical outcomes for malnourished moms and their babies.

Below: Mamachiponde research associate Anna Nakayama and a local health aide measure the head circumference of a child born to a mother in the study.



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