Nutrition Links

November 2014

Diet Diversity and Home Gardens

- Diet diversity means eating foods from each of the following groups every day:
  - **Eggs**
  - **Dairy**: milk, yogurt, cheese.
  - **Flesh foods**: fish, poultry, livestock meats (goat, sheep, beef), and liver/organ meats
  - **Vitamin A rich fruits and vegetables**: papaya, mango, pumpkin, butternut squash, kkontomire, aleefu
  - **Legumes and nuts**: cowpea, soy bean, red beans, groundnuts, melon seeds
  - **Roots and tubers**: Yam, cocoyam, orange-flesh sweet potatoes, cassava
  - **Grains**: maize, rice, sorghum

Complementary Feeding from Exclusive Breastfeeding to Family Foods

- Complementary feeding means giving other foods in addition to breast milk.
- Around the age of 6 months, an infant needs more energy and nutrients than what is provided by breast milk.
- While introducing complementary foods, continue frequent, on-demand breast feeding until two years of age or beyond.
- A home garden can add nutrient-rich complementary foods and increase the diet diversity for the whole family.

News from the Field

Among Upper Manya households, how many have a home garden?

- **Yes**: 36%
- **No**: 64%

Crops grown outside home gardens in previous 12 months by Upper Manya households:

- **Maize**: 100%
- **Cassava**: 90%
- **Yam**: 80%
- **Cocoyam**: 70%
- **Sweet potato**: 10%

Data source: Baseline Infant Cohort Survey, 2013
PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The Nutrition Links Project is promoting gardens in selected communities in the district to encourage families to grow nutrient-rich plants for complementary food and family meals. Sixteen Project participants visited the demonstration garden at the Nutrition and Training Center in Aseewa. Participants learnt about the importance of a home garden, best planting time, soil improvement, proper ways of making ridges and beds, pruning of crops, ways of making compost, and preparing organic pesticides. Participants also discovered unique approaches to growing vegetables, controlling soil quality and water usage when land and/or resources are scarce. These include growing plants on raised beds, in old lorry tires or used sacks filled with soil, and directly on the ground.

Plants grown at the demonstration garden: Aleefu (Amaranthus), ayoyo (Cocorus), tomatoes, cocoyam (root)/kontomire (green leaf), green beans, soya beans, orange-flesh sweet potatoes, sweet pepper, onions, chili pepper, garden eggs, pawpaw, tomatoes, watermelon, citrus and okra.

Visits to the demonstration garden will encourage Project participants to plant a greater variety of crops in their own gardens.

Good sources of vitamin A orange-flesh sweet potato mash and kontomire sauce.