

China
Agroforestry in the Mountains of Southwest China
News from the Field

October 2016

Conservation International

Vegetable and Bean Drought Damage

This summer was extremely challenging for Ganpu Village. Rainfall was exceptionally low, causing a serious drought. Most village elders claimed it was the driest summer they had ever experienced. The villagers even organized a traditional ceremony to pray for rain, which they had not performed in years. However, the drought resulted in a 30% reduction in crops such as Chinese cabbage. The drought also affected the demo site, including the growth of fruit trees, black beans and other crops. Fortunately, most other plants, especially red beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) and okra that were newly introduced to Ganpu, survived the drought and were harvested. The dramatic change in rainfall this summer was a clear indicator to all involved of the importance of using agroforestry systems to diversify the crops. There is a strong possibility this will increase resilience to climate change.



Red beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) and chilies CI/Fan Min ©



Harvesting soy beans CI/Fan Min ©



Okra among the fruit trees



Ploughing in recently cleared land CI/Wang Jin ©

Completion of Livestock Breeding Facilities and Septic Tanks

The construction of three breeding facilities for pigs and irrigation tanks, septic tanks, barns and cold storage facilities were completed in early August. Two piggens, a barn and cold storage facilities constructed with matching funds provided by the government to the project in Ganpu village. Additionally, fences have been set up around the demonstration area to limit the movement of pigs, avoid potential damage from goats in winter and protect solar-powered insecticidal lamps.



Breeding facilities CI/Fan Min ©

Discussion of Supplementary Agreement for Protected Areas

In September, the Environmental Protection and Forestry Bureau and members of the village committee and forest reform board of Ganpu Village met to discuss the community-led forest conservation. In light of current conditions, several items were raised as a supplement to the conservation agreement signed last year aimed at improving management of the area. Stipulations were specified pertaining to management, monitoring and evaluation of threats, including damage from goats and potential forest fires caused by worship ceremonies. Villagers who accomplish set patrol tasks will receive a bonus from agroforestry system harvests.

Communication

Photos and videos of the project site, as well as surrounding ecosystems, were taken as materials for project newsletters and videos. Articles referring to soil health and other aspects of agricultural ecosystems are published regularly through official CI China social media accounts.

Future Plans

Orchards will be managed and monitored during the winter months. Specifically, this will involve cover crop planting, mulching, pruning and the production of eco-friendly pesticides. Livestock breeding will begin and training on breeding methods and composting will be conducted. We will monitor the implementation of the conservation agreement and manage the agro-forestry demonstration area, while organizing study tours to agro-forestry and re-vegetation project sites. Seminars will be held on marketing methods for eco-friendly crops as we continue taking video and recording the project.

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