



2009 AWARD Fellow
Carla Menezes

Position:	Head of Nutrition
Institution:	Agricultural Research Institute of Mozambique (IIAM)
Country:	Mozambique
MSc:	University of the Free State, South Africa, 2008
Mentored by:	Dr. Sonia Maciel, Specialist in reproduction Agricultural Research Institute of Mozambique (IIAM)

Research area: *Animal nutrition, including the effects of sun-dried *Opuntia ficus-indica cladodes* on digestive processes in sheep.*

After obtaining a BSc in veterinary medicine, Menezes joined the former Animal Production Institute (IPA) in the area of animal nutrition. "Animal nutrition is very important, especially in areas where animals depend on food availability according to the dry and rainy seasons. I started working on feed analysis, looking at the nutritional values of natural pastures," says Menezes.

In 2007, Menezes was awarded a fellowship from the Africa America Institute for master's studies at the University of the Free State. Her thesis examined the effects of sun-dried *Opuntia ficus-indica cladodes* on digestive processes in sheep.

"I still want to grow further in my research career, looking at the various aspects of other available and potential feed alternatives, such as the cactus (*Opuntia spp*), which is well-adapted to Mozambique's dry conditions," says Menezes. "Knowing the nutritional value of this plant, it would be very interesting to further research its potential in concentrated mixtures, making commercial feeds less expensive and more available to smallholders, who are the main owners of cattle, small ruminants, and poultry in Mozambique."

In the future, Menezes plans to conduct doctoral studies in agro-economics. "There is a lack of available knowledge in agro-economics specifically concerning animal husbandry," says Menezes. "To make animal production more economically viable, one needs to be aware of all the costs and required inputs for each production system."

As an AWARD Fellow, Menezes wants to develop her research and leadership skills so she will be in a better position to help improve the livelihoods of smallholders by developing alternative feed packages that suit their needs. "AWARD is helping me to become more self-confident and has increased my motivation to carry out my research programs."

Menezes is one of 180 African woman scientists who have won an AWARD Fellowship. AWARD is a professional development program that strengthens the research and leadership skills of African women in agricultural science, empowering them to contribute more effectively to poverty alleviation and food security in sub-Saharan Africa. For more information, [visit www.awardfellowships.org](http://www.awardfellowships.org)
