

# strides

in *Striga* management



A quarterly progress update by the African Agricultural Technology Foundation for stakeholders in the *Striga* Control Project

July, 2010

*better tools, better harvest, better lives*



(Left to right) Mr Isaka Mashauri, Managing Director Tanseed international, Mr Lutindi, a Tanseed IR Maize seed out grower and Dr Gospel Omany, Seed Systems Manager, AATF admire maize cobs during a visit to assess the progress of IR Maize seed production in Ruahambuyuni, Tanzania.

## Reading materials on *Striga* control

- AATF (2009) Baseline Study of Smallholder Farmers in *Striga* Infested Maize Growing Areas of Central Malawi ([http://www.aatf-africa.org/userfiles/BS-striga\\_Malawi.pdf](http://www.aatf-africa.org/userfiles/BS-striga_Malawi.pdf))
- AATF (2009) Baseline Study of Smallholder Farmers in *Striga* Infested Maize Growing Areas of Eastern Tanzania ([http://www.aatf-africa.org/userfiles/BS-striga\\_Tanzania.pdf](http://www.aatf-africa.org/userfiles/BS-striga_Tanzania.pdf))
- AATF (2009) Baseline Study of Smallholder Farmers in *Striga* Infested Maize Growing Areas of Eastern Uganda ([http://www.aatf-africa.org/userfiles/BS-striga\\_Uganda.pdf](http://www.aatf-africa.org/userfiles/BS-striga_Uganda.pdf))

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## Seed production upscaled in Kenya and Tanzania

In an effort to stimulate the production of Imazapyr Resistant (IR) maize seed in Kenya, a network of agro-dealers in Western Kenya has been formed to facilitate the distribution of the maize seed and flow of information between farmers and seed companies. Through this network, seed companies have been able to estimate the demand for IR maize seed which has stimulated them to produce more as they are assured of a ready market. As a result, Western Seed Company was able to produce 30 tons of certified IR maize seed by March 2010, part of which was distributed through the WeRate Agro dealer network and planted in the 2010 long rains season. The agro-dealer network members have been trained on *Striga* biology and control; and handling of IR maize seed and are passing the information on to farmers during sales.

In Tanzania, TANSEED International is producing over 10 tons of IR maize seed under irrigation in Iringa as an emergency strategy following total crop failure during the 2009 long rains season occasioned by drought. The crop will be harvested in July 2010.

## New IR maize varieties set for release

In Kenya, an additional open pollinated IR maize variety was released in December 2009 by Freshco, a seed company based in Nairobi. The company is in the process of multiplying breeder and foundation seeds with support from AATF, and are targeting the first sales of the certified seed for 2011.

Another six IR varieties originating from the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) are undergoing National Performance Trials and Distinctness Uniformity

and Stability tests at the National Agricultural Crops Research and Resources Institute in Uganda. In Nigeria, five promising three-way cross and five top-cross IR hybrids are undergoing on-farm testing by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture for the second season.

## Capacity building

In realisation of the role that community based initiatives can play in boosting the availability of IR maize seed, partners in the *Striga* control project in Kenya organised a workshop from 3-6 February 2010 in Kisumu, Kenya. The workshop which covered issues ranging from technical aspects of seed production, regulatory requirements and marketing of seeds was attended by over 30 participants drawn from community based organizations, farmer groups, and non-governmental organisations. Resource persons were drawn from the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, Maseno University and AATF.

## Strategic IR maize technology demonstration

During the 2010 long rains season, the *Striga* project stepped up its awareness efforts aimed at capacity building and technology demonstration in East Africa. Over 300 strategic demonstration plots were installed and maintained in the region. Farmers' field days have been planned around the demonstration plots to further educate farmers on the efficacy of the IR technology. A monitoring exercise by AATF in May 2010 revealed commendable progress with preliminary results indicating that some farmers have managed to substantially reduce *Striga* on their farms after three to four years of planting IR Maize.