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January–June 2014

strides

in *Striga* management

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

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Striga Project receives boost from Feed the Future to upscale maize production in East Africa

Early this year, the Striga Control in Maize project received funding from the Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation initiative to upscale the commercialisation of StrigAway™ (Imazapyr Resistant (IR) maize seed - the herbicide-resistant seed treatment) that controls the Striga weed. With this three-year grant, AATF and partners will upscale commercialisation of StrigAway™ to improve maize productivity, one of the most important food crops in East Africa. The funding will help AATF and its partners, BASF, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and local seed companies, promote the technology package in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

By the end of the three-years it is expected that there will be a total of 4,000 demonstration plots and nearly 1,000 metric tonnes of certified IR maize seed sold to over 20,000 smallholders in the target countries. Technical support to local seed companies will ensure the quality maize seed is commercially multiplied, treated, and available for purchase through a vast network of agricultural input retailers for smallholder farmer customers. AATF will work with partner seed companies to promote StrigAway™ including leading a campaign to increase the understanding of the product.

The more than US\$3 million grant that was made through Fintrac, a programme funded by the US Agency



Farmer Bertha Otor from Siaya county, Kenya displays a cob harvested from StrigAway maize that she planted on her Striga infested farm during the launch of the new initiative in February 2014 as Dr Gospel Omanyang, the Senior Manager, Deployment and Commercialisation at AATF looks on

for International Development (USAID) is Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation's largest grant to date.

For more information visit <http://striga.aatf-africa.org/news/african-agricultural-technology-foundation-aatf-receives-feed-future-funding-improve-maize>.

News Briefs

Two Kenyan seed companies join the fight against Striga

Freshco Seed Company and Kenya Seed Company have joined the war against the Striga weed in maize and produced 112 tonnes of StrigAway™ IR maize during the first half of 2014. Freshco was able to sell the seed to farmers in western Kenya during the 2014 long rains season while Kenya Seed will market the seed they produced during the short rains season beginning August 2014.

During the same period, the uptake of the StrigAway™ IR maize seed among farmers in Kenya was enhanced through establishment of demonstration plots, field days and training. Of the 170 demos established, half were managed by women. Some of the demos were used to host 18 farmer field days during the month of June 2014. The project also facilitated the training of 40 agricultural extension officers on the handling and use of the



Antonina Ouma one of the women farmers who established a StrigAway IR demonstration plot in Mbita, Homa Bay county, Kenya during the 2014 long rains season

StrigAway™ IR maize technology enabling them to contribute to knowledge dissemination on Striga control among farmers.

Imazapyr herbicide for *Striga* control registered in Uganda

May 2014 marked a significant milestone for Uganda with the registration of the Imazapyr herbicide as a chemical for seed coating in Uganda. This development will now allow for the production and commercial sale of StrigAway™ IR maize seed and to farmers in the country. Sales of the seed to farmers by Nalweyo Seed Company (NASECO) will begin in August 2014 ahead of the October planting season.

StrigAway IR maize seed production enhanced in Tanzania

Farm Africa Ltd, a large scale seed grower with irrigation facilities been contracted by the Project to produce of StrigAway™ IR maize seed in Tanzania. The grower will begin planting the seed in July 2014. Meru Agro Seed Company has joined the fight against the weed in Tanzania and began testing four new IR maize hybrids developed by CIMMYT during the year. The engagement of the two firms is expected to significantly boost IR seed production in Tanzania.

Pictorial



Farmer Enos Owino displays a StrigAway maize cob that is ready for harvest at a demonstration plot in Kanyabala, Homa Bay county, Kenya during one of the 2014 long rains farmer field days.



An agro-dealer in Western Kenya explains the attributes of the new StrigAway IR FRC 425 maize variety to farmers at a field day. The variety was planted for the first time during the 2014 long rains season.



Caleb Adede, Project Officer for the Striga Control in Maize Project at AATF appreciates a farmer for managing a StrigAway IR maize demonstration plot well during the just ended long rains season.

In the media

- Africa Can Eradicate Striga, 28 May - 04 June 2014 <http://www.africanexecutive.com/modules/magazine/articles.php?article=7865&magazine=499>
- AATF receives Feed the Future Funding to improve maize production in East Africa 5 February 2014 <http://www.bioportfolio.com/news/article/1806726/AATF-Receives-Feed-the-Future-Funding-to-Improve-Maize-Production-in-East.html>

For more information: Contact Dr Gospel Omany, Senior Manager, Deployment and Commercialisation Unit African Agricultural Technology Foundation, © 2014. AATF encourages fair use of information in this newsletter provide the source is fully acknowledged. P O Box 30709-00100, Nairobi, Kenya | Tel: 254-20-4223700/735992204 | Fax: 254-204223701 | Email: aatf-africa.org | Website: www.aatf-africa.org