



Partnerships

A quarterly newsletter of the African Agricultural Technology Foundation

16

Jul-Sep
2014



Seed companies in Kenya and Tanzania receive seed treaters to boost *Striga* maize seed processing...**2**



WEMA releases new drought-tolerant maize varieties in South Africa...**2**



Mechanisation helps boost cassava farm yields in Nigeria and Zambia...**3**

Dr Kyetere rallies support for African agriculture at World Agri-tech summit



Dr Kyetere at a hybrid rice trial farm in Malindi, Kenya

Dr Denis T. Kyetere, the Executive Director AATF, has said that Africa has untapped resources which if harnessed could unlock the great potential of African agriculture. Speaking at the World Agri-Tech Investment Summit in London in September 2014, Dr Kyetere called on potential investors and partners to join hands with people in Africa and help unlock that potential. He said that Africa has huge tracts of uncultivated land; numerous underutilised technologies; resilient scientists and smallholder farmers; and a growing population and middle class; that provides opportunities for markets and establishment of agri-businesses.

Emphasizing the importance of agriculture, he said that it is the backbone of most African economies and that any meaningful effort to secure Africa's future must address the persistent low agricultural productivity that plagues the continent.

He attributed the low farm productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa to pests and diseases; diminishing land sizes; declining soil fertility; wide spread land degradation; climate change and weather variability. These constraints are also compounded by inappropriate policies, weak institutions, market related failures and low use of technology.

"Solutions to the mix of challenges that face Africa's agriculture also require a mix of interventions both technological and non-technological" said Dr Kyetere. AATF's mandate, he said, addresses barriers to technology access and use which includes accessing, developing and delivering appropriate agricultural technologies for use by smallholder farmers and also contributes to the development of an enabling environment through initiatives that help inform policy and decision making in agriculture.

He urged participants at the summit to recognise this huge potential and contribute to unlocking it. "Investing in ideas, technologies and especially the people of Africa will definitely make a difference to overall performance" he said.

The World Agri-Tech Investment Summit is Europe's annual meeting place for the global agri-tech industry.

With a specific focus on the application of big data in agri-tech, and in-depth analysis of the market opportunity for biopesticides, seed treatment and drought-resilience, the 2014 summit brought together global leaders in resource-efficient agriculture with the world's most innovative technology developers and the international clean-tech investment community.

For more information on the AATF's work on technology access and delivery please visit <http://www.aatf-africa.org> ■

Seed companies in Kenya and Tanzania receive seed treaters to boost *Striga* maize seed processing

Freshco Seeds in Kenya and Tanseed International Ltd in Tanzania were the proud recipients of seed treaters acquired through the *Striga* Control in Maize project to boost their production of StrigAway Imazapyr Resistant maize seed. The seed treaters which were installed and launched in September 2014 bring efficiency in coating the maize seed with the Imazapyr herbicide which controls *Striga* weed infestation in maize. They will reduce time taken to coat the seed, increase accuracy, uniformity and drying, factors that will enhance the effectiveness of the herbicide coated maize seed to control *Striga*. The end result will be quality seed in desired quantities for smallholder farmers in the two countries.

Previously, the two companies used fabricated manually operated treaters that made the seed coating process time consuming and resulted in unevenly coated seed. The current seed treaters have capacity to coat three tonnes of seed per hour while the fabricated and manually driven treater takes a day to coat about one tonne of seed. The use of the treaters will enhance access to quality seed by smallholder farmers and enhance maize production.



Staff from Freshco Seeds and Bayer during the commissioning of the seed treater in Kenya

The *Striga* weed infests more than 900,000 hectares of land in the two countries and can cause yield losses ranging from 20-80 percent or total crop failure in severe infestation.

During the same period, Kenya Seed Company (KSC) joined the efforts to fight the weed in Kenya by launching its StrigAway IR maize variety H528 which

was marketed to farmers for the first time during the 2014 short rains season that began in August. Freshco Seeds also sold its variety FRC425 IR for the second season.

For more information on the *Striga* Control in Maize Project contact Gospel Omanyia (g.omanya@aatf-africa.org) ■

WEMA releases new drought-tolerant maize varieties in South Africa

The Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) project marked another milestone this year with the release of two conventional drought-tolerant maize hybrids in South Africa in September 2014. The approval for commercialisation was granted to the Agricultural Research Council of South following their applications for Variety Listing submitted in late 2013. Farmers began testing the two hybrids in demonstration plots during 2013/2014 season with positive results and feedback. Additional 20,000 demonstration plots will be planted in 2014/2015 season starting in November.

WEMA's first conventional hybrid variety WE1101, also known by its brand name *DroughtTEGO™* was released in Kenya in 2013 and was planted by farmers for two seasons during the 2013 short and the 2014 long rains seasons with exciting results. Six seed companies participated in deployment efforts that



Dr Sylvester Oikeh, the WEMA Project Manager at AATF, Dr Kingstone Mashingaidze, the WEMA-South Africa country coordinator and Mr Molatsi Musi a farmer in South Africa, admire one of the new maize hybrids approved in September 2014

were complemented with 800 on-farm demos planted in Kenya and 34 field-days held in selected sites to create awareness and educate farmers on the hybrid. So far 27 *DroughtTEGO™* hybrids from the project have been released in four project

countries of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and South Africa.

For more information on the WEMA Project contact Sylvester Oikeh (s.oikeh@aatf-africa.org) ■

Mechanisation helps boost cassava farm yields in Nigeria and Zambia

Farmers participating in the Cassava Mechanisation and Agro-processing Project (CAMAP) in Osun state, Nigeria realised a boost in their 2014 harvests as they bagged between 28 and 33 tonnes of cassava per hectare compared to the 7 tonnes per hectare they previously harvested. In Zambia, farmers realised an average of 24 tonnes per hectare up from the usual average of five tonnes from the crop harvested between May and July 2014 that was planted in December 2012 and January 2013.

The harvested tubers also attracted higher purchase prices through structured market linkages between farmers and processors facilitated by the project. Processors collected the cassava tubers from farmers' fields, reducing the duration of time to market which is key to preserving the quality of the tubers and ensuring it is processed within 12 hours of harvest. Harvesting in the other three states of Ogun, Kwara and Kogi in Nigeria and other fields in Zambia is scheduled for later in the year.



Farmers in Osun state Nigeria waiting to load their harvested cassava onto a truck in July 2014

CAMAP uses a value chain approach to address constraints that smallholder farmers face in the cultivation of cassava. The project encourages use of improved high yielding and disease resistant cassava varieties; use of planters which ensures stems are well cut and properly planted; use of fertiliser and herbicides; and weeding. The project also supports market linkages which helps farmers get

good returns for their crop.

Project activities also kicked off in Uganda with the first mechanised planting in Apac and Nwoya districts being conducted between July and September 2014.

For more information on CAMAP contact George Marechera (g.marechera@aاتف-africa.org) ■

Pictorial



Dr Denis T. Kyetere, AATF Executive Director talks to participants who visited the AATF exhibition stand at the Alliance for A Green Revolution in Africa Forum held in September 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



AATF staff meet with the external panel of reviewers in August 2014. The panel was appointed to review AATF's programmes and management to provide stakeholders with an independent assessment of the Foundation's health and contribution to its goal and aspirations since it was created 10 years ago



Gospel Omany, the AATF Senior Manager, Project Management and Deployment with Dr George Bigirwa, Associate Director, AGRA-PASS during a field visit to maize farms in western Kenya in July 2014. AGRA is supporting the promotion of the WEMA DroughtTEGO conventional maize hybrids among smallholder farmers in Kenya



A cassava planter at work during the planting of the first crop in Nwoya district, Uganda under AATF's Cassava Mechanisation and Agro-processing Project