



KENYA MAIZE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM II

JULY 2012 NEWS UP DATE

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT # AID-623-A-11-00011

FIPS-Africa Village-based Advisor in Bungoma has reasons to smile again

With the support of USAID-funded Kenya Maize Development Programme II (KMDP II), Farm Input Promotions Africa (FIPS-Africa) has recruited and trained 14 Village-based Advisors (VBAs) in Bungoma District. Each VBA works in several villages and helps up to a thousand farmers to improve their livelihoods. One of these VBAs is Jane Adiza, who explains that working under KMDP has completely transformed her life. Jane dropped out of school after the death of her father in the 1998 US Embassy bombing. Life was hard as there were few employment opportunities in her village and she could not afford to buy inputs to boost her farm production. However, in February 2011, FIPS-Africa recruited her as a VBA and provided a start-up kit including vegetable seeds to begin a nursery. Adiza made KSh. 6,000 (72 USD) selling vegetables from her farm.

This income meant she could afford to buy hybrid maize seed for the first time. Growing local varieties of maize, beans and sweet potato, she harvested just four 90-kilogram bags. Using an improved variety of maize really worked - she harvested 11 (90 kg) bags from the same area of land.

“My life has changed a great deal. My husband’s face shone when I gave him money. He no longer has this vein running across his forehead. My social status has changed. The village calls me an agricultural officer and they no longer look down upon me,” she concludes. Life improved for her neighbours too, a local farmer Samuel Nyangesi explains “She has brought so much that we never had in the village. We never had *sukuma wiki* (kale) growing here but we now sell it. Today I use fewer maize seeds but harvest three times what I used to harvest. I could never have achieved this without the help and training I received from Jane.”



Jane Adiza discussing new maize varieties with a local farmer Samuel Nyangesi

Field Day in Bungoma

Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange (KACE) attended a Field Day organized by Cereals Growers Association (CGA) at a Children's Home in Bungoma on July 20, 2012.



There were 14 companies at the Field Day including Bayer East Africa and Seed Co Ltd among others. There over 1,000 farmers who attended the field day. The Guest of honor was the Provincial Director of Agriculture, Western province represented by Lucas Mukhamia. About 500 farmers visited KACE stand and were given brochures.



Alex Mutoro of KACE (left) explains to farmers how to access prices through their mobile phones during the Field Day

KACE announced a success story on market integration on West FM Radio on Monday 23, 2012 at 10.45 am. Following the announcement one farmer from Bungoma reacted immediately and sent out an offer of 4,000 pieces of Gloria cabbages.

Farmer Group Activities in North Rift

During visits to producer organizations in North Rift it has become apparent that some of the groups were experiencing problems of transparency and misappropriation of the members savings by the leaders. Two groups have been faced with this problem: Seum Umbrella group in Trans Nzoia received a grant for a shredder for animal feeds but the proceeds have not been accounted for. Temu Yuya group in Trans Nzoia Group is taking legal action against the group's treasurer after misappropriation of Kshs 200,000.

Sekemiat group on the other hand as performed very well and have as a result been able to acquire a loan from the Women Enterprise Fund and a green house grant from the Ministry of Agriculture. Another group taking action to improve the members' welfare is Chepchai Testai who are now applying lessons learnt during Excel training to resolve issues facing them. Another group Soylel in Trans Nzoia as come up with a business plan to ensure the animal feeds shredder received as a grant from KMDP will be put into successful income generating activities

A significant percentage of the maize crop in North Rift is exhibiting yellowing of leaves which is a result of leaching. In addition farmers who planted H614 are complaining that the crop is stunted and fear that the seed despite having come from Kenya seed may have been adulterated. The combined effect may reduce expected yields in the region.

Taking farming a step further

Farmers in Laikipia have taken farming a step further by taking advantage of ready markets to plant Irish potatoes and sweet peas. Dama youth group is highly motivated and has very good working relationship and team work. They planted potatoes in May and now the crop is doing very well. The group as also established small plots with traditional vegetables and green peas and intends to lease more land so that they can earn more from their efforts. The group intends to use the proceeds to better educate the members through enrollment at the Laikipia University campus.



The potato crop in the demonstration plot managed by Dama Youth Group



In Ngorika, Chamuka Muhangiri farmers group as had leadership problems and wrangles despite having been given an irrigation kit grant. Although the group as made some money form sale of tomatoes grown under irrigation they have not established a secure management system to ensure water supply at all times. One of the members however has taken advantage of the available water to plant sugar snaps which are doing very well and have a ready market in Nairobi for export.

Preparations for the EAGC Business Fair

Preparations for the EAGC business fair to be held at RVIST are in top gear and the demonstration plots are spectacular. Most of the maize crop is double cobbing. The root crops, pulses, wheat, barley sorghums and millets, oil crops and indigenous vegetables will be a major attraction during the fair the month of August.

The Demonstration plots in eastern Kenya make an Impact



Harvesting of the crops in the demonstration plots was carried out during the month. The pulses and bean crops have shown good yields with an average of 3 to 4 kilos per 5 by 5 meter plot (about 7 to 8 bags per acre). As a result of the performance the farmers are now looking for certified seeds to plant during the coming season.

The sorghum and finger millet crops have also performed well although damage by birds is a challenge to many of the groups. Sweet potato and Cassava crops have clearly indicated their potential as food security crop, while farmers who planted maize will not harvest much from their plots.

A farmer displaying part of the bean harvest from her groups demo plot

Aflasafe

Harvesting and sample collection of the maize crop under the BMFG funded project commenced during the month by the research team at Katumani. The samples are from plots that had been treated with safe aspergillus intended to reduce the prevalence of the toxigenic species as a means of reducing aflatoxins contamination in the region

Sila Nzioki of KARI Katumani and Guantai of ACDIVOCA discussing samples collected



ACDI/VOCA Kenya
Muthangari Drive 209
Off Waiyaki Way.
P.O. Box 1308 00606 Westlands,
Nairobi.
Tel 254 20 4443254
Email: scollins@acdivoca-kenya.or.ke