Scaling up improved legume technologies in Tanzania

The challenge

Improved technologies and practices for growing common beans, groundnuts, soybeans, and other legumes offer a cost-effective approach to enhance food and nutrition security and increase soil fertility. Despite the well-documented advantages of improved legume practices, such as intercropping, their use remains low in Tanzania. The main hurdles to their adoption are the lack of information available to farmers, failure to establish effective national extension services, and inaccessibility to high-quality seeds and fertilizers.

Innovations

The research led to the development of:

- A multimedia campaign to improve legume technology adoption
- An interactive radio series to provide mentoring in legume production
- An "agro-dealer hub" model to provide inputs locally

Key results

Successes of the multimedia approach:

- Six radio series reached an estimated 508,000 farming family members
- Shujaaz comics reached an estimated 75,000 young people
- 11,000 copies of support materials distributed to promote good agronomic practices

The adoption of better practices:

- An estimated 128,589 family members have begun using at least one improved practice (e.g. optimum row spacing or fertilizer application rate)
- 1,920 farmers attended field days demonstrating optimal legume production
- Influenced policies to improve seed variety registration, cut input costs, and expand community-based seed systems

Influencing input management:

- Tanzania’s Agricultural Seed Agency is now stocking seeds for soybean and common bean varieties
- The African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership developed an agro-dealer hub and trained 75 agro-dealers in business management
- Local companies now distribute soil inoculants to improve yields and nitrogen fixation

At a glance

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<tr>
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<th>An estimated 655,662 farming family members reached through the campaign</th>
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<td>11.8 tons of soybean seed and 8 tons of common bean seed produced</td>
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<td>19.6% of farmers reached have adopted improved practices</td>
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Partners

- Canada: Farm Radio International
- South Africa: African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership
- UK: Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International