BRIEFING IV

TAAT CDTO TECHNICAL WEBINAR SERIES

Enhancing Commercialization of Africa's Agricultural Research Products
Sorghum and Millet Value Chains, and Soil Fertility Enabler Compact

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Key Messages

1. This was the first webinar to feature an enabler compact. The Soil Fertility enabler compact, also revealed agribusiness opportunities in the commercialization of the services that emerge within the enabler compact

2. Al-Amel Agricultural Women group Society in Ed Elfursan locally in South Darfur State in Sudan received training in sorghum seed production. They have been able to produce upto 7 tons quality certified sorghum and millet seeds, which is an important breakthrough for the group to start their business.

3. The Cooperative of Women Rice Farmers in Niena, Mali (COFRN) has a membership of 512 women and producing rice on 430 ha of land. With adoption of the UDP technology, acquired a loan from BNDA-Mali and invested in a briquetting machine to produce commercial urea briquettes and are so far producing approximately 10-50 tons per year!

On September 31, 2020, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) collaboration with African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) and the Sub-Regional Organizations (SROs) convened the fourth TAAT CDTO technical webinar of a series of 6 webinars. This was done in partnership with International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), and International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), These webinars are organized under the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) Program of the Feed Africa initiative and funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB).

The series on Enhancing the Commercialization of Agricultural Research Products started in July with participation from the stakeholders across the continent and beyond. There have been four held so far on Livestock, High-Iron Bean, Maize, Aquaculture, Rice, Wheat, Sorghum, and millet. These have served as effective outreach forums by TAAT highlighting agribusiness opportunities provided by the technologies. The aim has been to sensitize potential users and private sector actors on how to commercialize and scale the technologies. The fourth webinar attracted over 370 participants, 39% being youth and 20% women. This particular webinar was the first to feature an enabler compact. The Soil Fertility enabler compact as such, also revealed agribusiness opportunities in the commercialization of the services that emerge within the enabler compact.

How Technologies in Sorghum and Millet are being Scaled through Agribusiness

Dr. Dougbedji Fatondji, the TAAT Sorghum and Millet Compact Coordinator, hosted by ICRISAT, presented the following technologies being scaled; (1) Improved Cultivars (Sorghum), (2) Improved Cultivars (Millet). These are being scaled out in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan.

Dr. Fatondji shared knowledge on the sorghum improved cultivars are dual purpose, good quality flour, high biomass, high yielding, high micronutrient content or excellent grain quality for brewing, as well as early or medium maturing. Consequently, the Good Agronomical Practices (GAP) that make up the TAAT Technology Package include Zai pits and half-moons for water harvesting, contour bunds and tied ridges, fertilizer micro-dosing, and minimum tillage. The sorghum improved cultivars are also striga tolerant. He submitted that the millet improved cultivars are also dual purpose, hybrid, biofortified with Fe and Zn, early maturing, nutritious, white grain, big grain, and they are good for milling. Additionally, the millet improved cultivars are tolerant to smut, to head miners, tolerant to borers and head miners or resistant to downy mildew, tolerant to striga, and tolerant to pests.

A case study of the Al-Amel Agricultural Women group Society in Ed Elfursan locally in South Darfur State in Sudan was presented. The women's group acquired critical skills in seed production, at the TAAT field school training. They have been able to produce certified seeds at community level under the technical supervision of Nyala ARC research station. Fathia Mohamed Ahmed, the society chair lady stated that

"during growing season our group received seed extension services from research and extension personnel. Our group produced about 7 tons of quality declared seeds. It is an important breakthrough for the group to start our business. Now our goal is to promote our quality declared seed to NGOs in the state to sell it at premium price. The focus is to grow and to increase agricultural business activities in near future".

Al-Amel Agricultural Women group Society in Ed Elfursan: South Darfur State in Sudan

Sorghum and millet stover processed as animal feed: Demonstration of stover chopper

Showcasing Proven Technologies in Soil Fertility

Dr. Ekwe Jean Dossa, Soil Fertility Enabler Compact coordinator hosted by International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), presented different means by which the compact has been supporting 7 TAAT crops value chains across multiple countries. The support includes SMaRT (Soil testing, Mapping and Recommendations Transfer) approach for balanced fertilizer recommendation and increased agricultural productivity. The soil fertility enabler compact also facilitates a responsive private sector-led input delivery system to support the scaling up of agricultural inputs-based technologies as well as upscale proven fertilizer input-based technologies to support the TAAT Crops Value Chains.

The following is a breakdown of crop value chains being supported in 6 African countries; Benin *(Cassava, maize, rice)*, Burkina Faso *(Rice, Sorghum & Millet, Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato)*, Ghana *(Cassava, Rice, Maize, Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato, Wheat)*, Mali *(Rice, Sorghum & Millet, Wheat)*, Nigeria *(Cassava, Rice, Maize, Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato, Sorghum & Millet, Wheat), Tanzania (Cassava, Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato, beans, Wheat)*.

The technology highlighted by Dr. Dossa, the Urea Deep Placement (UDP) technology, was developed by IFDC and its partners to improve nitrogen fertilization in irrigated systems. An experience of the Cooperative of Women Rice Farmers in Niena, Mali (COFRN) was showcased. The cooperative has a membership of 512 women and producing rice on 430 ha of land (rainfed and lowland rice ecosystems). With the adoption of the UDP technology, they acquired a loan from BNDA-Mali and invested in a briquetting machine to produce commercial urea briquettes. COFRN is so far the only women's organization among the 8 pioneer investors to produce briquette in Mali. Their annual briquette production is approximately 10-50 tons.

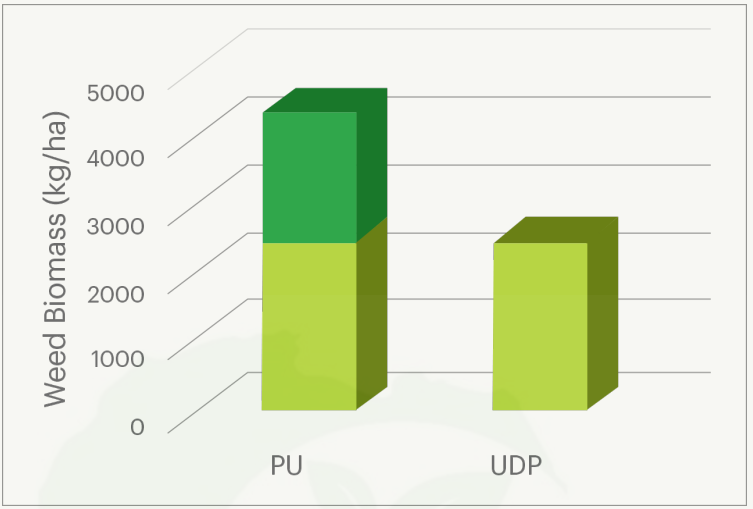

Figure 1: Showing Benefits of UDP

To access the webinar videos, click https://www.youtube.com/user/FARAAfrica

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