



July 2015 Issue: Updates and News Alert

1. Second Eastern Africa Sub-regional Workshop on Climate-Smart Agriculture held in Kampala - Uganda

Sub-regional Climate-Smart Agriculture Platform for Eastern Africa launched. On 28th July 2015 in Kampala, Uganda: Experts from the Eastern Africa sub-region launched a new climate-smart agriculture platform that will aid in scaling up climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices in the region.



The Platform will support East African countries to address sub-regional issues related to upscaling of CSA and will contribute to continental initiatives such as the Africa Climate-Smart Agriculture Alliance and the AU/NEPAD goal of having 25 million farming households in Africa practicing CSA by 2025.

This happened during a two day workshop in Kampala, Uganda hosted by the FAO Sub-regional Office for Eastern Africa and the Uganda Climate-Smart Agriculture Task Force with support from the COMESA-EAC-SADC.

Speaking at the meeting, the Uganda Minister for Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries Hon. Tress Bucyanayandi (in above photo) said that there is need for drastic and innovative measures to help Uganda and indeed the whole of Eastern Africa to adapt to climate change.



For more information:

<http://www.fao.org/africa/news/detail-news/en/c/318721/> or

<http://www.act-africa.org/news.php?com=68&com2=6&item=299#.Vb9uovOqqko>

2. CIMMYT-CCAFS Initiative Develops 500 New Climate Smart Villages in Haryana, India

The Department of Agriculture (DoA) of the Indian state of Haryana, in collaboration with CIMMYT-CCAFS, developed an action plan to mainstream climate-smart agriculture (CSA) in the state and develop 500 new climate-smart villages (CSVs), at a workshop held on 8th June 2015. Over the past three years, Haryana has successfully adopted CSA technologies and practices through a CSV initiative of CIMMYT and the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS). Demand-driven policies and engagement by local governments are essential to ensure CSVs continue to expand throughout the country

For more information:

<http://blog.cimmyt.org/cimmyt-ccafs-initiative-develops-500-new-climatesmart-villages-in-haryana-india/>

3. 2nd Africa Ecosystem based adaptation for Food Security Conference, 2015 held in Nairobi-Kenya

The 2nd Africa Ecosystem based adaptation for Food Security Conference was held in Nairobi-Kenya under the theme “*Re-imagining Africa Food Security through harnessing Ecosystem based adaptation approaches now and into the future under Climate Change*”

Ecosystems approaches, an alternative to conventional approaches, aims at maintaining and improving the fertility and productivity of ecosystems. These approaches often include conservation agriculture practices such as crop rotation and inter-cropping; and biological control of pests. Such approaches are implemented to prevent soil erosion, improve soil fertility and enhance biological diversity. And with this, is an enhancement of productivity of ecosystems and consequent improvement in potential yields.



High level opening session at the ebafosec conference

The role of ecosystems in adaptation is recognized at the international level under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Focusing on ecosystem based adaptation driven-agriculture and building climate resilience could unleash hidden economic assets that can spiral growth, improve food and nutrition security, and create employment to unprecedented levels.

For more information:

<http://www.act-africa.org/news.php?com=68&com2=6&item=301#.Vb9vQfOqqko>
<http://www.afsac2.aaknet.org>

4. Conservation Agriculture Training for Community Extension Workers in Njombe - Tanzania

ACT East and Horn of Africa Sub-region, in collaboration with the Rural Urban Development Initiatives (RUDI), BriTen and CRDB Microfinance unit is implementing an integrated project geared towards increased agricultural productivity in the breadbasket area of the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. With a target of 45,000 smallholder farmers in the four districts of Ruvuma region (Namtumbo, Songea, Ludewa and Kilolo), the AGRA funded project focuses on the main priority crops namely maize, rice, beans and soybeans.

To enhance project implementation, fifty community extension workers working within the villages where the demonstration plots have already been set were trained in Njombe Tanzania from the 21st to 31st July 2015 on extension delivery and services techniques, microfinance, conservation agriculture, marketing and warehouse receipt systems. With the enhanced skills, the trainees are expected to assist the government extension officers in liaising and contributing towards increasing smallholder farmers' incomes and food security.

For more information: <http://tinyurl.com/act-africa-org-news>

5. Five Steps for Successful No-Tilling

It's a demonstration that Steve Alspach has done dozens of times. But the results always seem convincing. The soil scientist for Oklahoma's NRCS office lined up five aluminum pans of no-tilled and conventionally tilled soils with varying levels of cover or no cover, side by side. Then an oscillating sprinkler soaked the soils with the equivalent of a 1.5-inch rain. Clear glass jugs below the pans collected both the runoff and infiltration water.



After this demonstration was over, he took the aluminum pan with clean-tilled soil, dumped it upside down onto a plastic tarp, and noted the bottom of the pan was dry, meaning little or no moisture filtered through the soil. Based on his experiment and experience, Alspach suggests five principles as follows:

- 1) **Keep the Soil Covered.** Keep residue on the soil surface as much as possible to protect soils from the impact of raindrops, wind, or intense heat.
- 2) **Don't Disturb the Soil.** Beneficial fungi are always present in healthy soils, but are destroyed with tillage.
- 3) **Feed Soil Biology.** Many growers in the southern Plains are leaving fields fallow for 2-4 months or even longer, which means soil organisms don't have enough food to sustain themselves when crops are being raised, Alspach says.
- 4) **Mimic Mother Nature.** Planting a monoculture of wheat year after year just feeds soil organisms that consume wheat stubble, but not other organisms that could be beneficial to crops.
- 5) **Consider Livestock.** The standard method for grazing throughout the Great Plains and much of the U.S. is allowing a certain number of cattle on acreage; leaving the gates open and letting them eat what they choose. But he'd like to see growers move toward

For more information:

<http://www.no-tillfarmer.com/blogs/1-covering-no-till/post/4898-steps-for-successful-no-tilling-dnt>

6. Kenya National Conservation Agriculture Awareness Event 2015 held in Nakuru County

The **National Conservation Agriculture Task Force (NCATF)** of Kenya is a multi-stakeholder consortium established by representative individuals, organizations and institutions working or implementing projects related to the promotion of Conservation Agriculture (CA) and climate change issues.

The taskforce organized and coordinated a CA awareness event sponsored by FAO-Kenya from the 14th – 17th July, 2015. The event involved several sensitization meetings and activities which culminated in a highly attended Farmers' Field day at Pastor David Langat's Saptet Farm in Togat Sub-location, Arimi Location Elburgon Ward, Nakuru County. The event brought together several members of the taskforce: FAO-Kenya, African Conservation Tillage Network, Supreme Council

of Kenya Muslims, Nakuru, Participatory Approaches for Integrated Development, Ministry of Agriculture staff (*at National level and County level*) and the Farmers, to share experiences and practically appreciate the potential of CA in adaptation and mitigation to climate change and transforming smallholder farming.



David's CA farm (top) & Conventional farm (bottom) – Taskforce members

In Langat's demonstration farm, different CA practices demonstrated superiority of the technology over conventional systems. These adopted CA practices include: *sub-soiling and ripping, surface cover (mulching), chemical weed control and crop intercropping*. Conventional and CA fields conspicuously brought out the effects of CA on crops performance. Notably, ripped portion of the farm with crop residue cover was much better than ripped part with no residues; demonstrating complementarity of the three CA principles¹ and amplifying the role of soil organic cover.

The event's field day was graced by the County Minister of Agriculture, Dr. J Chepkwony and attended by other dignitaries from the Ministry and members of the Nakuru County Assembly.

For more information: For more information:

<http://www.act-africa.org/news.php?com=68&com2=6&item=303#.VcGXuvmoMYE>

7. CIMMYT-China Science Week: Modern Conservation Agriculture Systems

CIMMYT-China, the Gansu Foreign Expert Bureau and Gansu Agricultural University (GAU) in Lanzhou City sponsored an international farming systems research workshop from 30th June – 4th July 2015. Jack McHugh, CIMMYT-China Systems Agronomist, and Li Lingling, Vice Dean of the Agronomy Department at GAU, were the lead organizers of the event. CIMMYT international CA researchers and national scientists came together to build the agroecological capacity of researchers across China, discuss successes, present the science and practical agronomy that underpins CA, demonstrate and discuss farming systems research, and conduct field displays of CA benefits. Bruno Gérard, Director of CIMMYT's Global Conservation Agriculture Program (GCAP), led the workshop's opening ceremony. Experts from Australia, Bangladesh and The Netherlands joined GCAP's global team to present a diverse mix of experiences designed to inform participants, expand their research boundaries and encourage them to commit to future cross-regional collaboration on themes of sustainable intensification and natural resource management.

For more information:

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/f5e2b90ace260789647f778e4/files/e_informa_1944.pdf?utm_source=CIMMYT&utm_campaign=03de2ddd62-&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8232f74550-03de2ddd62-207268693

¹ (1) *Minimum Soil Disturbance* (low disturbance no-tillage and direct seeding); (2) *Maintenance of organic soil cover* (with crop residues, mulch or live cover crop); and (3) *Crop rotation/association* (involving at least 3 different crops).

8. Polite Reminder. Are you an ACT alumnus? If yes, contribute to the impact study for ACT trainings on CA in Africa

Capacity building is one of the thematic focus areas of ACT in its thrust to promote Conservation Agriculture in Africa. Over the past 16 years, ACT has directly trained about 1,000 research and extension workers and some 100,000 farmers in collaboration with partners. The geographical coverage is some 20 Africa countries spanning Eastern, Southern and West Africa.

The Network is desirous to know how these training courses have made impacts on trainees and communities and use the feedback to develop more response courses over more inclusive target groups. If it happens you have been involved in any our CA training or knowledge based activities, ACT wishes to seek your opinion on how you have used the knowledge and skills gained from the training or the CA- based activity you participated in through the online survey available in the link ([structured questionnaire](#)).



Survey questionnaire for ACT trainings and knowledge based activities on Conservation Agriculture in Africa

Capacity building is one of the thematic focuses of ACT in its thrust to promote Conservation Agriculture in Africa. ACT has been implementing diverse knowledge based activities with the

Your views will be used solely for the purpose of improving the CA training and promotional programs to enhance effective promotion of the technology.

Online questionnaire is available at:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_PE-vh8h8v77pdK4fBXS5M5PX4g7VKt9L-GtDvOFbJmk/viewform?c=0&w=1

If you have problems with filling the form online, you can download it in the link provided below and fill it offline and email as an attachment to kim@act-africa.org. ACT Survey Questionnaire:

<http://tinyurl.com/surveyquestionnaire>

Thank you very much for taking off your valuable time to respond to this questionnaire.

9. Upcoming Events

a) **International Soil Conference on Sustainable Uses of Soil in Harmony with Food Security on 18-20 August 2015 at Cha Am, Thailand**

Land Development Department (LDD), Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives Thailand, in collaboration with International Union of Soil Sciences, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Institut de recherche pour le developement, Asian Development Bank, Soil and Fertilizer Society of Thailand, Soil and Water Conservation Society of Thailand and Kasetsart University organize and will host the International Soil Conference on Sustainable Uses of Soil in Harmony with Food Security on 18-21 August, 2015 at The Regent Cha Am Beach Resort Phetchaburi, Thailand.



For more information about the conference and importance dates:

☞ <http://www.act-africa.org/events.php?com=67&item=251#.VUcUw9Kqqko>

☞ <http://www.apaari.org/events/isc2015.html>; http://www.idd.go.th/WEB_ISC2015/Index.html

b) No-Till Conservation Agriculture Conference 2015



No-Till Club in its pursue to actively promote and facilitate environmentally friendly, economically sustainable conservation farming, for the benefit of all is proud to present another conference to assist you in your pursuit of a more sustainable farming enterprise! To be held 1st to 3rd September 2015 at ATKV Drakensville, near Bergville with the theme “*Reap the Results of a Responsible Attitude in Agriculture*”



For more information and **registration**:

<http://notillclub.com/index.php/events/icalrepeat.detail/2015/09/01/12/-/no-till-club-conference-2015> or contact SANDRA 082 472 5987 | 033 330 2062 | ntcsandra@gmail.com |

c) Resource links for updates

- ⇒ Be checking on this link for constant updates:
<http://www.act-africa.org/news.php?com=68&com2=6&com3=>
- ⇒ You can join the CA Community of Practice (CA-CoP)- moderated by Amir Kassam
http://www.fao.org/ag/ca/CA_CoP.html
- ⇒ See May 2015 CA-CoP postings:
<https://listserv.fao.org/cgi-bin/wa?A1=ind1505&L=CA-Cop-L>

..... *And for much more visit our website www.act-africa.org/newsroom*

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