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Ecological intensification' swaps pesticides for biodiversity



While farmers often turn to pesticides and herbicides to get as much produce as possible from their land, there's something new on the menu that could employ nature's own resources instead.

Intensive agriculture aims to achieve the highest yield at the lowest cost possible. It's a resource-heavy practice and can cause biodiversity loss, soil degradation, pollution of water resources, and high greenhouse gas emissions. 'The current trend in agriculture is that everything should be done on a larger scale and if you have a problem you spray with pesticides, or add artificial fertilisers,' said Professor David Kleijn, an expert in plant ecology and nature conservation at Wageningen University in the Netherlands.

By 2050 it is estimated that the world's population will reach 9 billion, putting pressure on the global food supply. According to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), if global population and food consumption trends continue, the world will need to produce 60% more food by 2050.

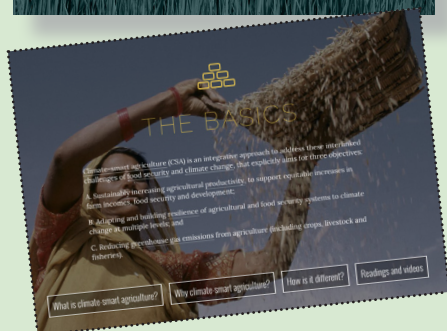
Conventional intensification seems to be the most likely choice, but there are alternatives, such as indoor farming and emerging techniques referred to in agricultural circles as ecological intensification. Ecological intensification uses services provided by nature to benefit farmers, like incorporating semi-natural habitats into farms to attract insects. These organisms are often natural enemies of pests that would

otherwise eat cash crops, or they are pollinators, such as bees, that can increase yield.

A solution therefore, may rest in using other ecological intensification practices for profitability, such as precision farming with drones, reducing the amount of ploughing, or tillage, needed in order to maintain the long-term nutrient content of the soil, and using crops grown for the enrichment of the soil, known as cover crops.

More details available on: http://horizon-magazine.eu/article/ecological-intensification-swaps-pesticides-biodiversity_en.html

Climate-smart agriculture Guide (101)



CSA Guide is a web portal presenting the climate-smart agriculture (CSA) approach to food security and sustainable development. It is aimed at practitioners, decision-makers and researchers who work with or are interested in CSA. An extensive portfolio of content, a highly visual design, and user friendly interface will allow users to find specific points of interest or follow the flow of information from the basics section, over entry points to CSA, CSA plan, CSA finance, a resource library and case studies. The website was developed by the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) for the World Bank in collaboration with a range of other partners and institutions.

This site is a gateway to implementing **climate-smart agriculture**. It will help you get started and guide you right through to implementation on the ground, connecting you with all the resources you need to dig deeper.

Access the CSA Guide at: <https://csa.guide/>

Inaugural Kenya National Conservation Agriculture Conference



The first National Conservation Agriculture Conference kicked off on 10th May 2016 at Safari Park Hotel. The two day conference whose theme is '*Kuimarisha Kilimo Hifadhi, Boresha Kilimo, Boresha Mapato, Boresha Maisha*' is supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, European Union and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The Conference brought together key stakeholders to discuss Conservation Agriculture (CA) and its impact on agricultural productivity. Participants were drawn from both levels of government, development partners, farmers and farmer organizations, manufacturers of farm inputs and machinery and agriculture experts and students from learning institutions.

It was officially opened by Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries Cabinet Secretary Willy Bett who was represented by Livestock Principal Secretary Dr. Andrew Tuimur and closed by Fisheries Principal Secretary Prof. Micheni Japhet Ntiba.

The Vice Chair and Governor H.E Salim Mvurya, from Kwale County, represented the Council of Governors. Other Governors present were; H.E Joshua Irungu (Laikipia County), H.E John Mruttu (Taita Taveta County), Amason Kingi (Kilifi), and H.E Hussein Dado (Tana River County). The Council of Governors emphasized their support towards Conservation Agriculture initiatives which includes; mobilization of farmer organizations, incentives to cooperatives and support to capacity building.

There are four (4) major resolutions that were reached after deliberations with all key stakeholders in attendance (available on link)

Get more information on:

<http://www.kilimo.go.ke/index.php/2016/05/16/national-conservation-agriculture-conference-held/> or

<http://cog.go.ke/index.php/newsmed/new/305-inaugural-kenya-national-conservation-agriculture-conference>

<http://goo.gl/Ub3wIS>



Two Wheel Tractor Newsletter April - May 2016

TWO WHEEL TRACTOR NEWSLETTER MAY 2016

Another Zimbabwe 2WT planter prototype to undergo evaluation.

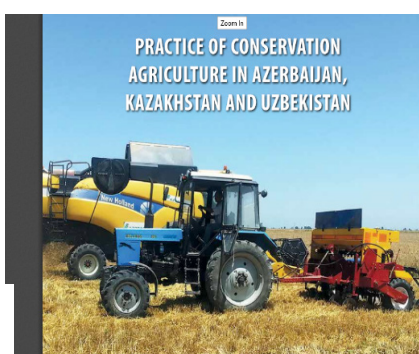


The latest two wheel tractor (2WT) newsletter by R. J. Esdaile, Agricultural Consultant in Australia (rjesdaile@bigpond.com or rjesdaile@gmail.com) report on the following:

- Another Zimbabwe 2WT planter prototype to undergo evaluation.
- Ideal service providers planter specification (based on 2015/16 observations) in Zimbabwe
- Can we increase the tractive ability of a 2WT through various simple adjustments?
- Progress with mechanical lift systems in 2WT planters

For more information: <http://goo.gl/9O0RpU>

Practice of Conservation Agriculture in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan



Another FAO-ICARDA publication on Practice of Conservation Agriculture (CA) in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan was prepared based on the findings of the project on CA for irrigated areas in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan implemented during 2011-2013. The book summarizes and presents information on possible ways to adopt CA approaches under the conditions of the countries mentioned above and makes recommendations for their further promotion. The Guidelines cover such topics as the significance and current state of agriculture in the project countries, permanent raised-bed planting technologies, zero-tillage technologies,

weed varieties and main measures to control them, crop rotation, overview of CA machinery and equipment, and laser-assisted land levelling. The Guidelines target agricultural scientists, specialists, trainers, extension consultants and interested farmers. The information in these Guidelines will contribute to the promotion of CA, increase of productivity and sustainability in irrigated areas of the target countries but also to countries with similar conditions in Asia and Africa.

Get the publication on <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5694e.pdf>

Climate-Smart Agriculture Project to Improve Productivity and Resilience of Niger's Agriculture Sector

The World Bank Board of Executive Directors approved on May 26, USD 111 million in new financing to boost productivity in Niger's agriculture sector and improve its resilience to climate risks. The Niger Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) Support project, which is the first World Bank project in Africa designed specifically to deliver climate smart agriculture - namely increased productivity, enhanced resilience and reduced greenhouse gas emissions - is aligned with the Government of

Niger's 'Nigeriens Nourish Nigeriens' (3N) Initiative. The 3N is Niger's national strategy to spur sustainable agricultural development and increase food and nutritional security.

The Niger CSA project will directly benefit around 500,000 farmers and agro pastoralists in 44 communes. It will increase distribution and use of improved, drought-tolerant seeds, and increase the number of farmers using irrigation. The project is also expected to expand the use of agroforestry and

Conservation Agriculture techniques. It will promote the reclamation of degraded agro-pastoral land, livestock and other high potential value chains while improving smallholder's access to markets....

Get more information on: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/05/26/climate-smart-agriculture-project-to-improve-productivity-and-resilience-of-nigers-agriculture-sector>

Announcing re-focused CA news alerts in Africa

Beginning July 2016, your Conservation Agriculture Network (ACT) will country-focused articles in its Monthly News Alerts. The articles will capture and discuss the status and extent of adaptation and adoption of CA in a particular country for each month's

alert. To start with, the July 2016 alert, will focus on Zambia. The September and November issues will focus on Zimbabwe and Kenya respectively.

We encourage YOU to share your country specific CA views and articles in

time for the planned CA news alerts. We also encourage bookings for proposed focus country articles for 2017.

Please submit articles, links or views to: kim@act-africa.org

Upcoming Events

Advanced Course - Asia: Conservation Agriculture: Gateway for Sustainable Intensification of Smallholders

Conservation Agriculture (CA) practices are increasingly accepted across the globe and are considered as harbingers for sustainable intensification of smallholder production systems. Its positive impact on natural resources, and adaptation to and mitigation of climate change effects are widely acknowledged.

In Asia, CA is a relatively new introduction and hence capacity development is vital for development, adaptation and scaling-up CA-based technologies to achieve impact on smallholder farmers.

This course on CA shall offer unique capacity development opportunity to the scientific community associated with natural resource management research for development. It was initiated during 2010 and is seventh in a series being organized by CIMMYT and BISA under the aegis of CGIAR Research Programmes on WHEAT, CCAFS, and in close collaboration Indian NARS.

The course links the advances and multidisciplinary approach for sustainable intensification of maize and wheat based system, restoration of natural resource degradation and climate resilient production systems with expertise across Asia, Africa and Americas. The course has become a regular flagship activity wherein selected young men and women CA researchers from NARS as well as international organizations and NGOs can be benefit. It is offered at CIMMYT-BISA Ludhiana, Punjab, India

For application and other details contact: Dr ML Jat at m.jat@cgiar.org; or tel: +91-9999108787

The 22nd Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP22):

Marrakech COP22/CMP12 UN Climate Change Conference 2016



The 22nd Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP22) will be held in **Marrakech, November 7 to 18, 2016.**

COP22 will take over the reins from COP21 during which important progress was made. It will focus on action items in order to achieve the priorities of The Paris Agreement, especially related to adaptation, transparency, technology transfer, mitigation, capacity building and loss and damages.

For Salaheddine Mezouar, President of COP22, this conference is an *“opportunity to make the voices of the most vulnerable countries to climate change heard, in particular African countries and island states. It is urgent to act on these issues linked to stability and security,”* he declared. COP22 will be one of action.

The COP stands for the “Conference of the Parties.” It is the supreme decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), opened for signature in 1992 during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and later entered into force in 1994.

Through this instrument, the United Nations has equipped itself with an action framework to fight global warming.

Get more Information: <http://www.cop22.ma/>

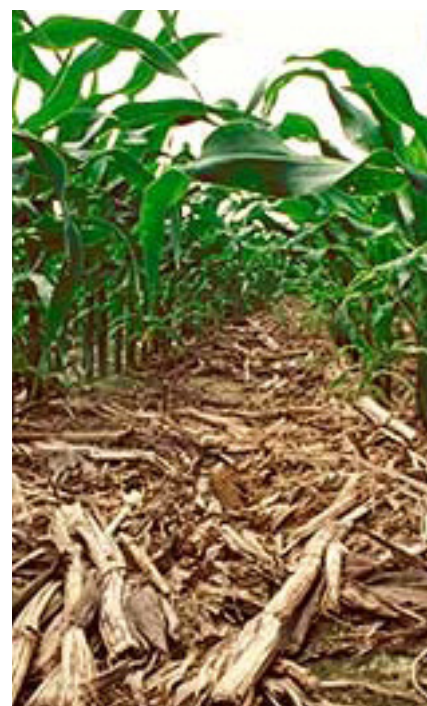
25th National No-Tillage Conference 2017 Dates Announced



More than 100 cutting-edge, money-making sessions over 4 days, delivering insightful learning and unlimited networking with the best of the no-till community.

Early Bird registration is open for the 25th annual conference to be held January 10-13, 2017, at the **Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark**. It's just \$284 to **register**, which is a savings of \$85.00 off the onsite rate of \$369.

Additional farm or family members can also be registered for just \$259. This rate will expire August 31, 2016!



For more information, please contact: **Executive Secretary | African Conservation Tillage Network**
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Norad

ACT acknowledges the partnership and financial support provided by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) towards Promotion of Conservation Agriculture in Africa