AFRICAN CONSERVATION TILLAGE NETWORK
Partnering for Economic Growth, Improved Food Security and a Better Environment

Updates & News Alert

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No till direct seeding of grain legumes at Madrugada farm, Nakuru immediately following harvest of wheat (Photo Saidi/ACT).

Editor's view: Introducing the September-October 2020 CA Alert

The demand from agriculture by the global community is to increase the quantity and quality of food while creating rural employment, taking care of the environment, using less fossil fuel and purchased inputs, promoting biodiversity, efficiency, resilience, and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Therefore, as African countries endeavours to achieve zero hunger by 2025 and prosperity as envisioned by the African Union Agenda 2063, a radical transformation in agriculture is necessary. Prioritized interventions will also need to address the economic setbacks brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, for increased food quality and safety, which is also produced with less natural resources to be commercially, environmentally and socio-economically viable and sustainable. COVID-19 social distancing requirements demands far fewer people to achieve production tasks efficiently and timely, ideally feasible with Conservation Agriculture (CA) and Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (SAM) practices.

Mainstreaming sustainable agriculture systems in Africa is greatly necessary if sustainable and economically viable agriculture is to be achieved. On its flip side, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented another opportunity to accelerate the scaling of innovations. Farmers and agriculture stakeholders need to intensify production and coordinate their efforts to ensure timely support to production. These innovations should facilitate necessary adjustments to ensure that the agri-food supply chain does not contribute to the increase but rather the containment of the pandemic.

Notable in this issue is the identification of Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (SAM) in Africa, as an urgent matter and an indispensable pillar for attaining the Zero Hunger vision by 2025. This is as stated in the Malabo Declaration of 2014, Goal 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Prosperous Africa We Want, Agenda 2063. Doubling agricultural productivity and eliminating hunger and malnutrition in Africa by 2025 will not be realized unless mechanization is accorded utmost importance.

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Editor's view

From page 1

Kofi Boa of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation Centre for No-Till Agriculture, Amanchia, Ghana, shares unique insights how the benefits of Conservation Agriculture emerge and show from the first one to two years and continue to improve over time. He debunks casually expressed myths that it takes decades to see the benefits of Conservation Agriculture.

Various projects and other interventions focused on enhancing the promotion and adoption of CA have also been included in this issue. Projects like "Strengthening coordination, scaling up and governance of Conservation Agriculture in Southern Africa" (SUCASA) are being implemented in the region with an objective to strengthening partnerships across all stakeholders. This issue also highlights the renewed interest of Africa's agriculture sector stakeholders to wider and deeper knowledge and information management coupled with networking for SAM. The planned mechanization service provider courses in Eastern Africa and kick-starting the pan-African Webinars towards roll-out of SAMA are but initial steps.

In another dimension, ACT continues to encourage our beloved members and friends to safeguard themselves from the CVID-19 pandemic. ACT will continue to closely monitoring the situation, adopt precautionary measures as required including taking the necessary steps to ensure that our projects and network's activities continue in a safe mode.

ACT acknowledges the various sources, authors, reporters, organizations and practitioners whose articles appear in this September – October, 2020 issue, their diversity is a clear testimony of the enthusiasm and interest from various organizations, countries, researchers and scientists towards CA and SAM amid the current global pandemic. We encourage you to share your CA and SAM views and articles capturing the status and extent of adaptation and adoption in any and all Countries in Africa or beyond for sharing with others.

Please submit any articles, links or views worth sharing with the wider audience to kim@act-africa.org. Use the *#conservationagriculture, #africamechanize* to share links on articles, journals, news on CA and tag us on twitter *@ACTillage.*

Apologies for any cross posting or re-posting of some articles or information

Conservation Agriculture (CA) generates benefits starting from the first season

Soil in containers eroded from Slash and Burn plot (left) and from CA plots (right)

Several times you read or hear statements attesting to the fact that the benefits of CA start to show after a decade or more of practice (e.g. IFPRI, 2020) and you begin to wonder what benefits people are referring to. The seriousness of such statements is that they present oppositions that sap farmers' enthusiasm about CA especially at the smallholder level and they become reticent to even give it a try.

It is a common knowledge that most smallholder farmers operate within limited resource environments and are therefore very much risk averse. Rationally, such people will not have the time and patience to get tied up to a technology for as long as a decade to make a choice on a change that affects their entire livelihood. They will stay on for a perceived long-term benefit only if there are immediate (short term) benefits to encourage them to continue hanging on. The realization that most smallholder farmers in and around Amanchia in the Atwima Nwabiagya South municipality of the Ashanti region of Ghana adopting CA (no-tillage, residue retention and crop diversification with rotations and associations) within the first one to two years of exposure give indications that CA has some tangible short term benefits mostly overlooked by people

Making the Invisible benefits of CA Visible

that are looking for huge changes in soil chemistry within a twinkle of an eye.

CA is noted to be new in most farming communities but within these communities we see a shift to CA within just a year or two and in some cases, within just one growing season. This again testifies to the fact that CA has enormous immediate benefits that entice farmers to stay on.

A longer-term study initiated at Amanchia in Ghana in 2012 has offered insights into the shorter-term benefits of Conservation Agriculture (CA) in terms of reduced soil loss, enhanced earthworm population, retention of soil moisture, moderation of soil temperature and improved and stable yields of staple crops. Kofi Boa, Founder and Director of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation Centre for No-Till Agriculture, Amanchia, Ghana, shares unique insights how these benefits continue to show with the years and that has been a source of motivation for smallholder farmer adoption in Amanchia within one to two years of CA exposure.

Read more

No-Till Conservation Agriculture Experience in Guinea

Program for Design, implementation and Skills Training for Conservation Agriculture technologies' in Guinea was carried out during 2019 within the framework of the project called: Technologies for the Transformation of African Savannah Agriculture (TAAT-s) of the African Development Bank (AfDB), with the cooperation of the Institute of Agricultural Research of Guinea (IRAG), the Presidential Initiative for Rural Development (IPADER) and the Argentine Association of No-till Farmers (AAPRESID).

Two AAPRESID technicians developed soybean and maize crops in plots distributed in 4 localities: Faranah, Tiro, Kankan and Siguiri in close collaboration with IRAG technicians. An Argentine machinery company supported the project with a no-till planter and Argentinian National Institute of Agricultural Technology provided theoretical work on water balances, crop simulation and modelling to enrich and improve the planning and conclusions from the empirical observations and field studies being presented here.

Aapresid's vision is guided by the objective of promoting sustainable production systems of food, fibre and energy through innovation, science, networking and knowledge management. This approach refers to the responsible and efficient use of the world's limited natural resources to maintain the demands of its growing population. Read More

Webinar: Operationalization of the Framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa (F-SAMA)

Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (SAM) in Africa is an urgent matter and an indispensable pillar for attaining the Zero Hunger vision by 2025, as stated in the Malabo Declaration of 2014 – Goal 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals – and the Prosperous Africa We Want of Agenda 2063. Doubling agricultural productivity and eliminating hunger and malnutrition in Africa by 2025 will not be realized unless mechanization is accorded utmost importance.

Understanding this situation, AUC and FAO, through an Africa-wide consultative process, developed a Framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa (F-SAMA) that was launched in October 2018. It aims to inform policy and decision makers in the Member States, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa, and the wider development community dealing with agricultural development on the significance of mainstreaming SAM in the overall national and regional agricultural development programmes. Efforts to accelerate mechanization therefore require substantial political and financial commitment. Without long-term commitment, the prospects for African agriculture and farmers are likely to remain bleak. Therefore, any intervention brought forward need to consider activating this commitment. Directors/ Heads of Agricultural Mechanization & Engineering Services (DAMES/HAMES) need to be informed and equipped with comparable scientific evidence and business cases to make informed and convincing decisions to move forward the SAM agenda. As has been noted in many findings, a critical problem of agricultural mechanization in SSA is lack of information on successful and/or failed projects on which to draw useful lessons on why they succeeded and/or failed. Such information could be quite useful to DAMES/HAMES and the private sector as they develop their implementation programmes for SAMA.

Doubling agricultural productivity and eliminating hunger and malnutrition in Africa by 2025 will not be realized unless mechanization is accorded utmost importance.

As part of the roll-up effort, AUC, FAO and ACT have established webinar series focus on operationalization of the F-SAMA. The first virtual webinar, targeting the Directors and Heads of Agricultural Mechanization Services and organized to provide an opportunity to create a participatory environment for the establishment of a regional implementation mechanism of F-SAMA. The Webinar will provide the platform to share information and update on the progress made by member states in operationalizing the framework. In addition to presentations, facilitated discussion and questions and answers sessions will be implemented to generate more insights into the issues being discussed. Experts from FAO, AUC, ACT, Directors and Heads of Agricultural Mechanization Services in SSA, and other mechanization stakeholders, will share experience on the importance of mechanization. This will include during and post COVID-19 and discuss how to expedite operationalization of the F-SAMA.

You can **register** and **join** the **Webinar series** on operationalization of the Framework for Sustainable Agriculture Mechanization in Africa (F-SAMA) on www.africamechanize.org

CIMMYT and IITA collaborate to increase adoption of Conservation Agriculture in southern Africa

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) recently launched a project that aims to research the drivers and barriers to adoption of Conservation Agriculture in southern Africa, and to develop strategies for achieving adoption and impact at scale.

The project, Understanding and Enhancing Adoption of Conservation Agriculture in Smallholder Farming Systems of Southern Africa (ACASA), will apply social and scaling science to understand the biophysical, socioeconomic, institutional, and policy drivers and barriers to the adoption of Conservation Agriculture technologies and practices.

The ACASA project is supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and will be implemented in Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe in collaboration with partners and farmers in the region.

The project was officially launched online on September 16, 2020. Zambia's Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Michael Katambo, noted that it is a timely intervention, as the livelihoods and food security of smallholder farmers in southern Africa are increasingly being threatened by climate change and variability, which have led to a steady decline in the production of food staples and an increase in the number of food and nutrition-insecure people. Learn More

Bouncing back: With the help of Conservation Agriculture, Southern Africa can come back stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic

The theme of this year's World Food Day – **Grow, Nourish, Sustain**. Together – stands out at a time in which Southern Africa has been left reeling by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In an op-ed on the occasion of FAO's 75th anniversary, FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu said, "The UN's food agency was born in the wake of catastrophe. Three-quarters of a century later, its mission has been made more relevant to the world at large by another global scourge." Even before COVID-19 hit the globe earlier this year, almost 45 million people in Southern Africa were food insecure according to the Southern African Development Community's 2020 Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis.

While widespread lockdown measures have been instrumental in containing the virus across much of the region, in some cases their impacts on livelihoods and social wellbeing has been severe. Restrictions have affected the availability of and access to food by restricting food supply chains, consumer spending and purchasing power. And in many instances it is the poor and vulnerable in the region – those who depend on daily jobs or informal trade – that have been hardest hit. Lesotho, for example, has been suffering more than most: the number of those food insecure is predicted to have jumped to 899 287 – or 43 percent of the population – from around 500,000 in 2019. While in Zimbabwe, the COVID-19 lockdown has affected most urban households, and there are worries that increases in food insecurity could be seen among those who depend on petty trade, vending, casual labour, skilled trade and small-scale businesses owing to trading restrictions during the lockdown period. In Eswatini, around 14 percent of the urban population and 37 percent of the rural population will likely face crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) levels of food insecurity during the lean season from October 2020 to March 2021, owing to a lack of income-generating opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To feed themselves during this period, many households in Southern Africa are turning to agriculture to meet their food and nutrition needs and sustain their livelihoods. However, agricultural performance and output must improve if it is to effectively absorb the shock of shrinking remittances and lost jobs.

FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme will certainly help to plug the threat of chronic hunger that 130 million people are facing globally by the end of the year. In the long term though, farmers need to become more resilient to shocks.

For Southern Africa, Conservation Agriculture (CA) could play a pivotal role in boosting food security. On-farm evidence has proven its ability to sustainably manage resources, and increase yields and crop resilience during periods of drought. Conservation Agriculture has models that suit all categories of farmers from the subsistence to the highly-mechanized. Despite this, however, uptake in the region remains low. Read More

A look at sunflower performance under Conservation Agriculture

Producer-led transformation of agricultural production systems based on Conservation Agriculture (CA) principles is gathering momentum globally as a new trend for the 21st century. Worldwide the area under no-tillage is currently estimated at 157 million hectares. Since 2008/2009, CA cropland has expanded at an average rate of some 10 million hectares per year, showing the increased interest of producers and national governments in this alternate production concept and method. The greatest rate of adoption has been observed in North and South America as well as in Australia and Asia, and more recently in Europe and Africa, where the awareness of and support for CA are on the increase.

The principles of CA include minimal soil disturbance (reduced tillage or no-till), retaining crop residues on the soil surface to produce a layer of mulch as well as multiple cropping (for example crop rotation). Several studies have shown that the retention of crop residues on the soil surface, crop rotation and reduced tillage under CA practices may induce higher soil organic carbon (SOC) and nitrogen (N) levels compared with conventional tillage practices. By emitting less carbon dioxide and capturing more carbon in the soil, CA helps counter the effects of global warming. Important benefits of CA are that runoff and soil erosion are slowed down, water infiltration improves and soil quality is restored. This in turn improves the efficiency of grain production, while enhancing sustainability.

In South Africa, the best adoption rate has been in the Western Cape, with nearly 80% of producers having no-till machinery. There is a strong group of no-till producers in the Bergville and Winterton areas of KwaZulu-Natal. These areas lead the way with CA in the country. As producers from all over the country realize the benefits of the system, especially in drier years, many adopt some form of CA.

Sunflower production under CA

In North America, the no-till sunflower adoption rate varies. The outcome of fields surveyed in 2011 showed that 100% of the sunflower area in South Dakota was under no-till, while 100% in Manitoba was conventionally tilled. Other states like Vermont was at 88% and Minnesota at 78% conventional tillage. There has been a positive trend during the past years for more sunflower hectares being planted using no-till farming practices in the Great Plains region. In the Pampas region of Argentina, the relative low adoption rate of no-till sunflower production is attributed to a lack of information on agronomic practices. Due to a lack of experience and knowledge, South Africa is lagging behind in the conversion to CA systems, especially with sunflower production. Although producers are eager to adopt CA, a lack of locally developed guidelines and experience deters CA adoption. Read More

Embracing mechanization

When combined with approaches to improve productivity, such as Conservation Agriculture (CA) practices, mechanization has shown to sustainably improve yields. In trials in Ethiopia, on average maize and wheat yielded 29% and 22% more, respectively, compared with conventional methods.

Smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe have embraced small-scale mechanization thanks to an innovative project led by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT).

When combined with approaches to improve productivity, such as Conservation Agriculture (CA) practices, mechanization has shown to sustainably improve yields. In trials in Ethiopia, on average maize and wheat yielded 29% and 22% more, respectively, compared with conventional methods.

This is according to results of the Farm Mechanization and Conservation Agriculture for Sustainable Intensification (FACASI) project, which, since 2013, has been helping farmers to access and use two-wheel tractors. From its inception, FACASI went beyond simply providing machinery to farmers, and instead proposed mechanization as a way out of poverty and towards food and nutrition security.

Initially launched in four countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe), in 2017 the initiative narrowed its focus to Ethiopia and Zimbabwe. In doing so, researchers have recognized the potential for mechanization to reduce the labour intensity associated with smallholder farming, the importance of applying CA techniques, and the potential to develop rural service provision businesses.

According to Lewis Hove, Coordinator of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) project Strengthening coordination, scaling up and governance of Conservation Agriculture in Southern Africa (SUCASA), which is aimed at increasing collaboration between partners in the region to scale up Conservation Agriculture, mechanization can play an important role when paired with CA. "Greater investment is certainly needed so that farmers not only receive CA training but are also linked with third-party service providers who can bring mechanization to their farms. And, of course, appropriate policies must encourage the scaling up of these practices and technologies," he said.

This was reiterated by Tirivangani Koza, of Zimbabwe's Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water and Rural Resettlement: "With the right funding and policies, there is a very wide and promising scope to scale-up this initiative." "The project demonstrated that small mechanization can create profitable employment," he added. Read More

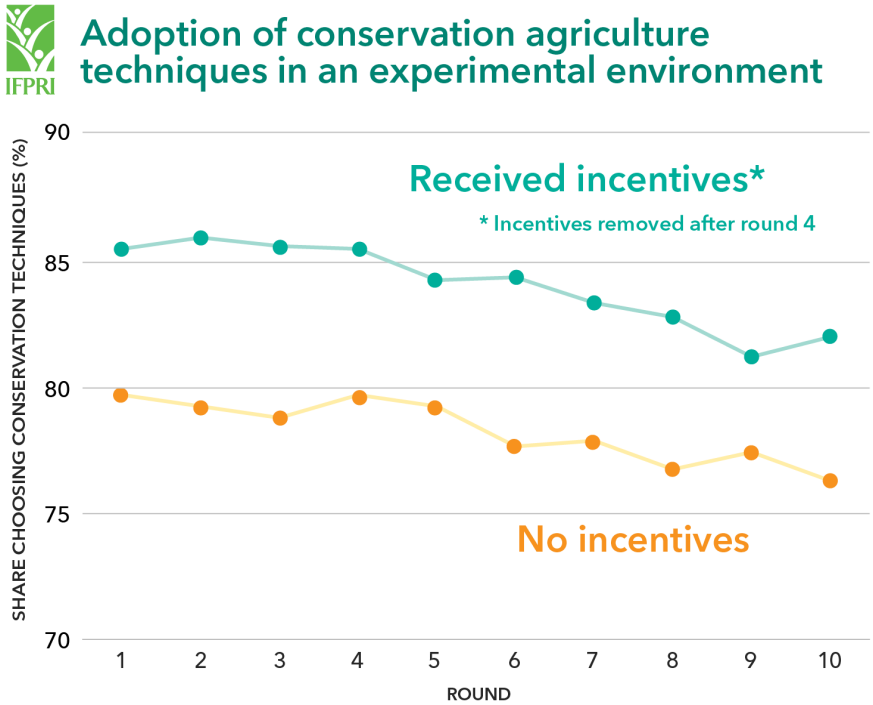
Exploring farmer adoption of Conservation Agriculture using a lab-in-the-field approach

Climate change poses a significant threat to livelihoods of rural communities around the world. A key policy challenge is increasing the resilience of smallholder farmers while sustainably intensifying production. Adopting Conservation Agriculture (CA) techniques is argued to achieve this combination: By boosting water and nutrient retention in soil it mitigates losses from poor rainfall, while causing soil health to improve over time, increasing yields. However, because these yield improvements occur slowly, they can take a long time to pay off—a decade on average, according to one review.

This long timespan poses problems for both farmers and for researchers trying to better understand the dynamics of CA adoption. For farmers, the challenge is that realizing benefits takes years, but the costs are immediate. They must invest time in learning and applying new techniques, and use more labor or inputs for weeding. Since some benefits are in the form of public goods, such as reduced soil erosion, subsidies could be appropriate to help tide farmers over until private gains are realized. For researchers it is inherently difficult to conduct an experiment that may require many years before the full impacts can be evaluated. As a result, there is a lack of experimental evidence available to show whether CA programs can deliver benefits to smallholder farmers in developing countries.

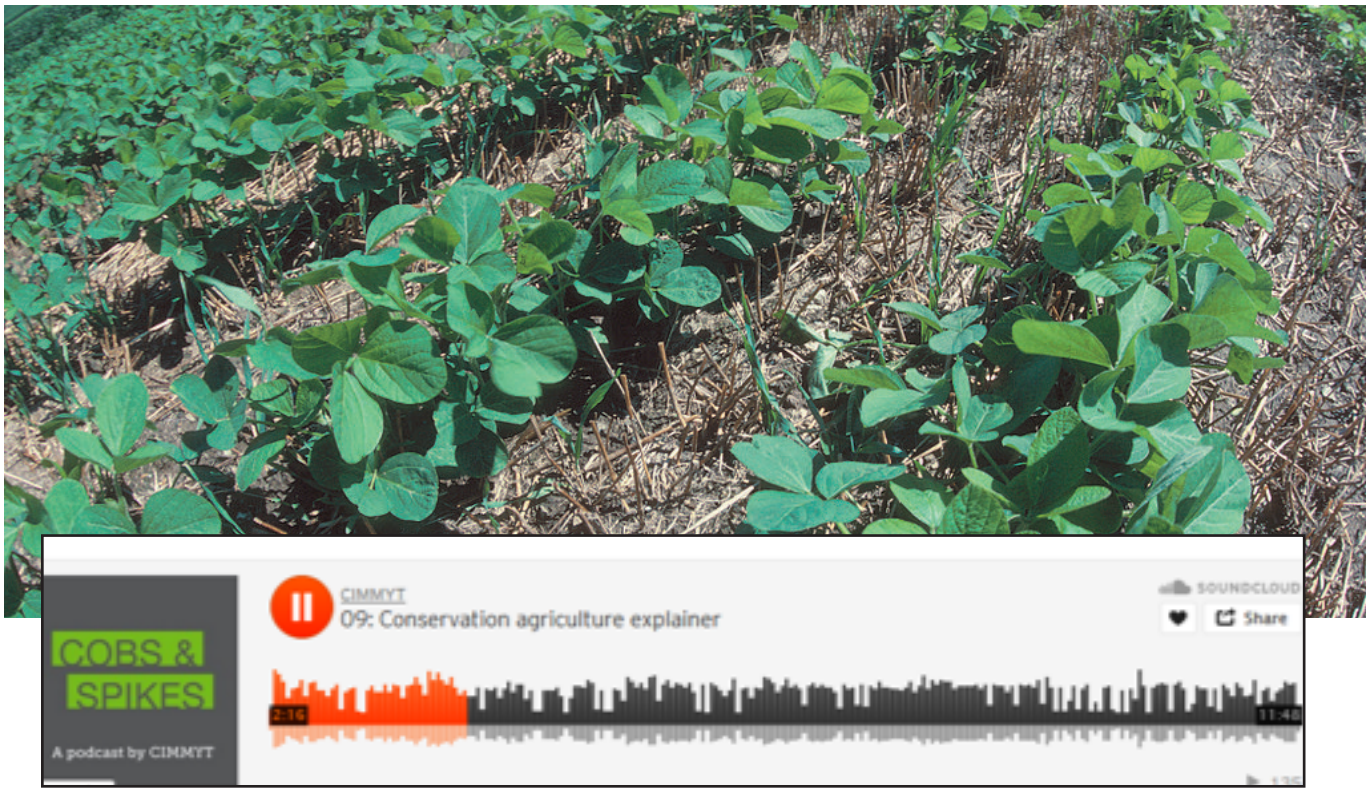
In our recent discussion paper, we attempt to address both challenges. To promote CA adoption, we propose a subsidy payment for a fixed time during the initial years of adoption, with the aim of enabling farmers to overcome the initial cost barrier and getting them close to the point where adoption begins to yield personal gains. We conducted an experiment that showed the potential efficacy of this approach.

Rather than setting up a long-term randomized control trial, we first evaluate the subsidy mechanism using a framed field experiment. To do this, we partnered with Innovations for Poverty Action to conduct sessions with 1,400 smallholder farmers in northern Ghana. In a one-hour experiment, each farmer was asked to choose between CA practices and conventional techniques over ten rounds, each representing an agricultural season. Participants' choices were incentivized: They received a real payment for each round depending on the choice they made. They were thus likely to make choices based on what they thought would bring them the highest payout, rather than what they thought the "correct" answer was. Payments were set up to mirror the hypothesized payoff structure of CA versus conventional practices—in other words, higher immediate costs but greater long-term benefits from CA—and by a randomly determined rainfall realization (reflecting CA's better resilience in seasons with poor precipitation). Read More



Source: Ambler, Kate; de Brauw, Alan; and Murphy, Mike. 2020. Increasing the adoption of conservation agriculture: A framed field experiment in Northern Ghana. IFPRI Discussion Paper 1932. https://doi.org/10.2499/p15738coll2.133739

Cobs & Spikes podcast: What is Conservation Agriculture?



Farmers worldwide are increasingly adopting Conservation Agriculture. In the 2015/2016 season, Conservation Agriculture was practiced on about 180 mega hectares of cropland globally, 69% more than in the 2008/2009 season.

What are the benefits of this method of farming? How did it originate? In this episode, we answer common questions on Conservation Agriculture and talk to Simon Fonteyne, Research Platforms Coordinator with CIMMYT's Integrated Development program and Conservation Agriculture expert. Listen to the podcast

Strengthening coordination, scaling up and governance of Conservation Agriculture in Southern Africa (SUCASA)

Working together to bring food and nutrition security to Southern Africa's farmers.

Southern Africa is warming at twice the global rate and with rainfall patterns growing increasingly unpredictable, floods and droughts are becoming more common. This means livelihoods are being threatened and in 2019 almost 42 million people in the region were food insecure.

Through the Malabo declaration, African heads of state declared that 25 million farmers should adopt climate resilient production systems by 2025 to protect their food and nutrition security and livelihoods.

By adopting Conservation Agriculture farmers will become more resilient but for this to happen all players must work together. Learn More

Conservation Agriculture on a roll in Zimbabwe

The Government of Zimbabwe had set a target to train 1.8 million farmers in Conservation Agriculture (CA) by October 2020 in time for the 2020/21 cropping season. One million farmers have already been trained in the country.

Pfumvudza concept - Anew government initiative is aimed at increasing farmers' resilience

To help achieve this ambitious goal, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Foundations for Farming (FfF) have been training government extension staff to implement the ***Pfumvudza*** concept – which comprises CA practices – to help bring food self-sufficiency to Zimbabwe. It is hoped that the project will address the problems of low levels of productivity and production, making the country's farmers and households more resilient to climate shocks and ultimately ensuring food security in Zimbabwe. The scheme also offers real potential for commercialization by encouraging smallholder farmers to produce surplus food to earn a regular income.

Pfumvudza is a crop production intensification approach under which farmers ensure the efficient use of resources (inputs and labour) on a small area of land in order to optimize its management. "Pfumvudza means a new season of increased productivity; it is a season of producing more on less land and with less resources; a season of climate proofing our agriculture through … [the] adoption of Conservation Agriculture," said the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water and Rural Resettlement, John Basera.

The concept has been successful in helping farmers to produce grains including maize, sorghum and millet, while it also encourages the rotation of legumes such as beans, ground nuts or cowpeas. According to Matthew Mbanga, CEO of FfF Trust, "The secret to the project's success has been its scalability. Conservation Agriculture drastically reduces the workload for farmers and limiting the size of plots makes it even more manageable."

All 1.8 million beneficiaries of the Presidential Inputs Scheme, now called the Climate-proofed Presidential Inputs Scheme, are each expected to establish three Pfumvudza plots over the 2020/21 agricultural season. Read More

Leaf versus whole-canopy remote sensing methodologies for crop monitoring under Conservation Agriculture: a case of study with maize in Zimbabwe

Enhancing nitrogen fertilization efficiency for improving yield is a major challenge for smallholder farming systems. Rapid and cost-effective methodologies with the capability to assess the effects of fertilization are required to facilitate smallholder farm management. This study compares maize leaf and canopy-based approaches for assessing N fertilization performance under different tillage, residue coverage and top-dressing conditions in Zimbabwe.

Among the measurements made on individual leaves, chlorophyll readings were the best indicators for both N content in leaves ($R<0.700$) and grain yield (GY) ($R<0.800$). Canopy indices reported even higher correlation coefficients when assessing GY, especially those based on the measurements of the vegetation density as the green area indices ($R<0.850$).

Canopy measurements from both ground and aerial platforms performed very similar, but indices assessed from the UAV performed best in capturing the most relevant information from the whole plot and correlations with GY and leaf N content were slightly higher. Leaf-based measurements demonstrated utility in monitoring N leaf content, though canopy measurements outperformed the leaf readings in assessing GY parameters, while providing the additional value derived from the affordability and easiness of using a pheno-pole system or the high-throughput capacities of the UAVs. Read More

What is sustainable intensification?

Sustainable intensification is an approach using innovations to increase productivity on existing agricultural land with positive environmental and social impacts. Both words, "sustainable" and "intensification," carry equal weight.

CIMMYT conducts research on sustainable intensification to identify ways farmers can increase production of crops per unit of land, conserve or enhance important ecosystem services and improve resilience to shocks and stresses, especially those due to climate change and climate variability.

For example, CIMMYT's research on sustainable intensification in India has helped shape policies that increase farmer income while reducing pollution and land degradation. Sustainable intensification takes into consideration impact on overall farm productivity, profitability, stability, production and market risks, resilience, as well as the interests and capacity of individual farmers to adopt innovations. It is not limited to environmental concerns, but also includes social and

economic criteria such as improving livelihoods, equity and social capital.

Certain methods and principles are needed to achieve the goals of sustainable intensification. In collaboration with farmers and other change actors, CIMMYT carries out research-for-development projects to test and scale a range of technologies and approaches that contribute to these results. The research focuses on combined resource use efficiencies of crop production inputs: land, plant nutrients, labor and water. One example is Conservation Agriculture, the combination of crop diversification, minimal soil movement and permanent soil cover. International scientific analysis has found that conservation agriculture can, in many places with different characteristics, play a crucial role towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Learn More

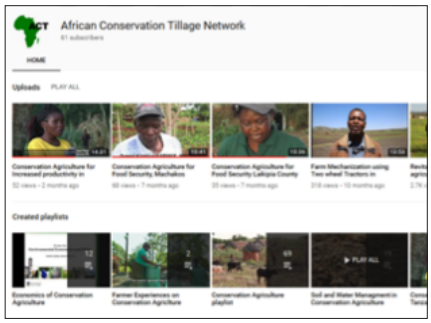
Interesting videos and success stories on CA

Farmer Hellen Ndonga on benefits of Conservation Agriculture

Ploughing with animals used to take 5 days but ripping my field now takes 2 hours. Since I changed to conservation farming. I have time to take care of my family, run a business and I even have time to bake!" Hellen, Zambia. View More

Watch farmers' experiences and stories on CA on ACT-YouTube channel

ACT as a CA knowledge hub, strives to bring to the globe diverse farmers practices and experience on CA. Many farmers and actors in the agricultural sector from different countries appreciate and acknowledge the transformational effects of Conservation Agriculture on agricultural productivity and sustainability. To get more stories and farmers' perspectives, watch the several videos and clips commissioned and produced by ACT and partners in our YouTube playlists http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCofLj9eI5ShyQny3xcWR4DA



Reminder: Different declarations on Conservation Agriculture made in different regions: Get updated and evaluate

- The **2018** Action Statement from Stakeholders of the Second Africa Congress on Conservation Agriculture 2acca action statement (https://tinyurl.com/ya84qham)
- The **2014** Declaration of the First Africa Congress on Conservation Agriculture (http://www.africacacongress.org/system/files_force/uploaded-files/declaration-of-the-first-africa-congress-on-conservation-agriculture-2014.pdf?download=1),
- The **2009** New Delhi Declaration on Conservation Agriculture (www.fao.org/3/a-i2215e.pdf),
- The 2001 Declaration of First World Congress on Conservation Agriculture held in Madrid https://rb.gy/az3anz

Events and Opportunities

Virtual webinar: Operationalization of the Framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa (F-SAMA)

As part of the roll-up effort of F-SAMA, AUC, FAO and ACT have established webinar series focus on operationalization of the **F-SAMA.**

The first virtual webinar, targeting the Directors and Heads of Agricultural Mechanization Services is planned to take place on **Tuesday, 17th November 2020, 09:00 - 11:30 hrs (GMT).** This is organized to provide an opportunity to create a participatory environment for the establishment of a regional implementation mechanism of F-SAMA. The Webinar will provide the platform to share information and update on the progress made by member states in operationalizing the framework. In addition to presentations, facilitated discussion and questions and answers sessions will be implemented to generate more insights into the issues being discussed. Experts from FAO, AUC, ACT, Directors and Heads of Agricultural Mechanization Services in SSA, and other mechanization stakeholders, will share experience on the importance of mechanization. This will include during and post COVID-19 and discuss how to expedite operationalization of the F-SAMA.

You can **register** and **join** the **virtual Webinar** on operationalization of the Framework for Sustainable Agriculture Mechanization in Africa (F-SAMA) on www.africamechanize.org

Online /virtual trainings course on Mechanization Service Provision

ACT in support of FAO has organized an online course on Mechanization Service Provision for Four countries namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. This activity is a follow up to the successful Regional Workshop on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (SAM) Hire Services Provision in Uganda in December 2019 and aim to reach out to National SAM service providers. Initially the trainings for the SAM Service Providers was to be done practically at an agreed training venue. With the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, we have to adjust and provide the training online.

The objective of these trainings is to capacitate the rural mechanization based entrepreneurs, lead farmers, SMEs or cooperatives and machinery operators who are considering or already running mechanization hire service business. These specifically include machinery owners, operators, repair service providers and machinery fleet managers.

The MSP training will be offered two levels (a) for the machinery owners or managers (investors), and (b) for the machinery operators. Tentative dates for the trainings are as below:

Investors: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia – 16th November 2020

Machinery Operators:

- Kenya and Uganda: 18-20 November 2020
- Tanzania and Zambia: 23 – 25 November 2020

For more information, contact: kim@act-africa.org.

The 8th World Congress on Conservation Agriculture (8WCCA), POSTPONED to June 21st to 24th, 2021 in Zollikofen, Bern, Switzerland 2021

8WCCA
8th World Congress on Conservation Agriculture
Bern, Switzerland
POSTPONED to 2021

On behalf of the International Organizing Committee, it is a pleasure to confirm the new dates and arrangements for the 8th World Congress on Conservation Agriculture (8WCCA). They are as follows:

- The Congress will be held from June 21st to 24th, 2021 in Zollikofen, Bern, Switzerland,
- The indoor sessions during the first three days will take place at the INFORAMA Rtti in Zollikofen and at the School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Science HAFL, close to the Swiss capital of Bern, Switzerland. The two locations offer a variety of Conference Rooms of different sizes. Besides, there is a set of field tests at INFORAMA, including the long-term trial "Oberacker".
- The Field Day will be held on the fourth day of the Congress and will follow the same structure and arrangements as planned initially. It will take place at the estate "Witzwil" only 40 minutes away from Bern.
- The 8WCCA programme outline remains the same.
- Abstracts which have been accepted will be processed as foreseen unless for those authors who wish to withdraw their submissions. For this, all authors will be contacted soon by email to confirm their intention to either maintain or withdraw their abstracts.

The postponement announcement is available on: **Download the Announcement**

The Road to the 8WCCA: Webinar series Top of Form

Under the patronage of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the European Conservation Agriculture Federation (ECAF) in collaboration with the 8WCCA Organizing Committee, is organizing a series of events to highlight the theme and subthemes of 8WCCA on Conservation Agriculture.

Webinar series: Farm and ecosystem level benefits of CA systems to farmers, society and environment

You are invited to join this **webinar on Nov 5, 2020 03:00 PM** in Amsterdam, Berlin, Rome, Stockholm, Vienna. You can register for this Webinar series Road to 8WCCA

The webinar will highlight empirical and scientific evidence on some of the benefits in different regions through CA-based farming systems focusing on improving carbon, water and plant cycles in CA.

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Norad

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