**AFRICAN CONSERVATION TILLAGE NETWORK**

*Partnering for improved food security, a better environment and regional development*

# September 2013 – Updates and Hottest Issues

## Conservation Agriculture helps farmers improve their agricultural productivity and soil fertility in Southern highlands of Tanzania

***''I used to cultivate in traditional way in previous years and harvest was very little because of drought and poor farming techniques, in our area maize is staple crop which is highly needed to feed the family but we harvest little because of poor farming methods .But now I have learnt that conservation agriculture help even when I get little rains will get something to sustain my family.'' Silla Ngongo***

ACT emphasizes the belief that the promotion of conservation agriculture to small-scale farmer is an effective means of sustaining livelihoods for communities in rural sub-Saharan Africa in the face of global challenges such as climate change and fluctuating food prices. In Tanzania conservation agriculture is increasingly getting adapted by small scale farmers' abeit at a slow pace, farmers in southern highlands have witnessed that conservation agriculture has positive impact in their lives.

*A Well grown Maize Farm under CA techniques - Mbeya District , Tanzania*

Seventy- five year old Shari Mwala in Mapogoro village has been in farming for over 50 years, the fertility of the soil decreases with the effect of turning the soil and burning the residues over the years. Shari decided to join Mafanikio (Success) FFS group to learn on how she can improve her tarnished land and get more crops to feed her two grand children, in addition to buying uniforms and paying school fees. Before CA adoption, she used to get 1 to 2 bags which was not enough for her family of three. Now she gets 8 to 9 bags per acre with less intensive work and costs.

With ACT intervention through the ABACO project supported by EC, many farmers in project villages have shifted the CA technology from the demonstration farms/plot to their own fields at home this has encouraged good number of farmers to adopt conservation agriculture as sustainable and modern agricultural farming method.

**For more information visit:**
http://www.actafrica.org/news.php?com=68&com2=6&item=152#.Ul0DPRCU-_J

## Investors in Africa urged to consider agriculture to boost food security

***"We don't know where the farmers are, what they are doing and what they need from us, but this has boosted food security in Nigeria. Any country that depends on another for food has a problem," Dr Akinwumi Adesina, the Nigerian minister for agriculture***

Speaking at the three-day agribusiness forum in Kigali that took place in early October this year, he adding that the future of Africa is bright if African countries rely on agriculture.

Food insecurity and poverty will continue to persist on the continent unless a proper strategy is formulated to encourage private investments in agriculture sector. The three-day conference attracted government officials across the continent, businesspersons as well as economists to devise ways of encouraging private investments in agriculture.

**For more information:**
http://www.act-africa.org/news.php?com=68&com2=6&item=149#.Ul0Q4BCU-_I

## ACT Participates in the Nairobi International Trade Fair

ACT participated in this year's Nairobi International trade Fair from 30th September to 6th October 2013. A Conservation Agriculture (CA) demonstration plot was set up in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture at the Ministry of Agriculture demonstration farm. The theme for the ACT exhibition was "***Promoting Conservation Agriculture for Food Security and National Development in Partnership with Ministry of Agriculture".*** ACT also displayed CA equipment and sensitized farmers and other show goers on the benefits of the CA technology towards sustainable food production, ecosystems management and maximization of profits and resilience to effects of climate change.

## New Resource: Now online: an educational series on family farming

*"Have you always looked for ways to learn more about the principles of sustainable agriculture? Are you curious about the values that underlay agro-ecological practices around the world? Have you been searching exercises and games to teach students about all of this? If so, Learning AgriCultures may be just what you are looking for"*

Now online: an educational series on family farming ILEIA decided jump into this gap and developed a series of teaching modules that help teachers explore the logic of family farming together with their students. This series, called Learning Agricultures, has become a rich educational resource, inspiring educators to present a fresh and hope giving perspective on the values and principles of family farming in today's world. Learning AgriCultures is now accessible online:
http://www.agriculturesnetwork.org/resources/learning

**For more information** http://www.act-africa.org/news.php?com=68&com2=6&item=150#.Ul0lQBCU-_I

# 7. Upcoming Events

### The 6th Soil Science Society (SSS) Biennial Conference to be Held in Nakuru, Kenya, on 21st - 25th October 2013.

This is a joint Africa-wide conference organized by the Soil Science Society of East Africa (SSSEA) in collaboration with African Soil Science Society (ASSS). The conference is ntended to critically analyse Land and Water Management (LWM) technologies, innovative products and services; and strategies benefiting small-scale agriculture in Africa.

**Theme of the conference:** Transforming Rural Livelihoods in Africa: How can land and water management contribute to enhanced food security and address climate change adaptation and mitigation?

**For more Info:** Contact: Dr. Barrack Okoba, Email: okoba2000@yahoo.com

6th – 8th November: The African Conservation Tillage Network, West and Central Africa will be participating at the Montpellier International workshop on the Assessment of agronomic, soil and socioeconomic impacts of Conservation Agriculture. ACT will be represented by Dr P. Djamen who will co-animate a roundtable session on the topic "Agro-ecology and Ecological intensification: what role in public policies for agricultural development in the South?" This meeting takes place from the 6-8 November 2013.

## The Montpellier International workshop on the Assessment of agronomic, soil and socioeconomic impacts of Conservation Agriculture: 6-8 November 2013.

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## Defense of Student's Research Thesis under the ABACO Project: 21th – 22th November

The Agro-ecology based aggradation-conservation Agriculture (ABACO): Targeting innovations to combat soil degradation and food insecurity in semi-arid Africa Project is implemented Semi-arid areas of East (Kenya, Tanzania), West (Mali, Burkina Faso) and Southern (Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Madagascar) in Africa. One of the component of this project is to involve farmers and research in co-innovation platforms to promote the adaptation and appropriation of technologies by local communities.

Three MSc students from the University of Bobo Dioulasso under this project will be defending their thesis during this month of November. Two of the MSc students are under the ABACO project abaco.act-africa.org and the third one under a partnership between ACT, Farm Foundation and Union Groupements Commercialisation Boucle Mouhoun –UGCPA- Burkina Faso. The students are supervised by ACT-WCA (Coordinator)

### The Research topics are:

- Effects of the mechanization of direct seeding and intercropping on labour requirements and weed management in semi-arid zones of Burkina Faso
- Analysis of the effects of the interaction tillage and intercropping of sorghum production.
- Impact of agricultural mechanization on the possibilities for the development of conservation agriculture in the Boucle de Mouhoun Region (Burkina Faso).

ACT-West and Central Africa is a member of the Jury panel.

## Conservation Agriculture Equipment Manufacturers and Inputs Suppliers Workshop; Diamond Jubillee Hall; Da res salaam Tanzania; 28-29 November 2013.

*"Enhancing Farmers' access to Conservation Agriculture Equipment Services"*

The workshop intends to bring together stakeholders from within the Eastern and Southern Africa countries (Angola, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda) to establish the CA equipment supply chain players, the services they provide, challenges faced and opportunities to unlock them to foster growth in the sector

through formation of a CoP. Specific emphasis will be on the CA equipment manufacturers based in the sub-regions.

**The workshop objectives include:** (i) To facilitate formation and networking of a CoP for CA equipment manufacturers, suppliers and service providers comprising CA equipment manufacturers, repair workshops, importers, hire service providers, and financial institutions from East and Southern Africa; (ii) To guide manufacturers on compliance to the standards, principles and guidelines of clients (with reference to those of FAO) for prequalifying to quality assurance by peers and international tenders; (iii) To develop a practical roadmap for expanding the development, manufacturing, supply, spare and repair servicing of CA equipment and (iv) To Participate and create business opportunities through the Tanzania Trade Fair.

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

### ACT Board Meeting: 29-30 November 2013; Dar es Salaam Tanzania.

The 6th Board meeting of the ACT Network to be attended by all ten Directors will be held in Dar es salaam Tanzania from 29-30th September. Besides the usual agenda of enriching an approving the Institutions Work Plans and Budgets for 2014, the Board will approve the New ACT Constitution which seeks for stronger participation of sub-regions; affiliated institution; and wider stakeholder participation in the Network functions through Communities of Practice. Contact the Secretariat atinfo@act-africa.org for more nformation.

### 1st Africa Congress on Conservation Agriculture 18-21 March 2014, Lusaka Zambia

Purpose to attend the **First African Congress for Conservation Agriculture (1st ACCA)** that brings together key CA stakeholders, including farmers and their organizations, from the continent to interact and co-own a permanent CA knowledge and information sharing platform that takes into account the needs of farmers and for increased benefits from CA technologies.

**Themes:** (i) Growing more with less – the future of sustainable intensification; (ii) Weather proofing agriculture - the adaptation of farming practices to address climate variability and (iii) Increasing Conservation Agriculture adoption - how innovative technology and approaches can drive greater adoption of conservation systems around the world.

**Register: Now for the conference, visit the website**

http://act-africa.org/events_register.php?com=68&com2=67&item=109 **For more information**, contact: info@act-africa.org

### The 6th World Congress of Conservation Agriculture to be Held June 22-26, 2014, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Attend the **6th World Congress on Conservation Agriculture (WCCA)** to learn, discuss and network about Soil Health and Wallet Wealth. Agricultural production systems are not sustainable unless they are profitable, and Conservation Agriculture (CA) holds the key to building and maintaining healthy soils and profitable farming systems.

**Themes:** (i) Conservation Agriculture and Sustainable Intensification; (ii) Conservation Agriculture and Climate Change and (iii) Conservation Agriculture and Innovative Adoption**.**

**Register: Now for the conference, visit the website https://www.ctic.org/registration**

*And for much more visit our website www.act-africa.org/newsroom , follow us on Twitter https://twitter.com/ACTillage and like on facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/African-Conservation-Tillage-Network/264719100333293?fref=ts*

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