

Farmers Forum for Food Security

Proceedings of the
First Farmers Forum for the
Southern Highlands Zone
held at the Nazareth Youth Center, Njombe
13 - 15 November 2000



Organised by the Project
**Food Security and Household Income for
Smallholder Farmers in Tanzania
Applied Research with Emphasis on Women**

under the Tanzania Agriculture Research Project Phase Two,
Sokoine University of Agriculture
(TARP II - SUA Project)

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The Project Implementation Team of the Project

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Cover photograph: Farmers, researchers and extension staff from the Southern Highlands zone during the First Farmers Forum held at the Nazareth Youth Center, Njombe from 13 - 15 November 2000. In this photograph, participants are seen using the Scored Causal Diagrams method as a tool for examining in detail the causes and effects of problems and to identify the root causes which need to be addressed. The scoring procedure helps to analyse the relative importance of the problems and prioritise them.

Preface

Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF) and the Agricultural University of Norway (NLH) is implementing a research project Food Security and Household Income for Smallholder Farmers in Tanzania. The Project which started formally in September 2000 is financially supported by The Norwegian Government through the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

The primary Project components are:

- Client-oriented and demand driven on-farm/on-station research in production, processing, and marketing carried out.
- Farmer-Research-Extension linkages strengthened.
- MAF staff trained to improve research performance.
- Proposal for sustainable research funding mechanism developed.
- Impact of agricultural research assessed.

Among the major activities planned to strengthen Farmer-Research-Extension Linkage is organisation of Farmer Forums that will provide farmers with the opportunity to freely discuss problems, concepts, give feed back and share experiences.

Therefore, this document presents the proceedings of the First Farmers Forum for the Southern Highlands Zone held at the Nazareth Youth Centre, Njombe from 13 - 15 November 2000. The Forum was conducted in Kiswahili and the proceedings are available both in Kiswahili and English. The contents are the same with the exception that the English version does not contain the full texts of the opening and closing speeches.

L. D. B. Kinabo
Project Co-ordinator

Acronyms

ADP	Animal Draught Power
CD	Causal Diagram
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Food
NLH	Agricultural University of Norway
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation
PFM	Participatory Farm Management
SCD	Scored Causal Diagram
SUA	Sokoine University of Agriculture
TARP II	Tanzania Agricultural Research Project Phase Two



A group photograph of participants of the First Farmers Forum for the Southern Highlands Zone held at the Nazareth Youth Center, Njombe, 13 - 15 November 2000

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1. Opening

1.1 Welcoming remarks

Professor E. Batamuzi delivered welcoming remarks to participants on behalf of the Project Coordinator - Prof. L. D. B. Kinabo. He outlined the project objectives and expected outputs, and the way the forum was aimed at achieving those objectives. Later he welcomed the Guest of Honor Mr. T. Mssenga - the Acting District Director for Njombe to officiate the Forum.

1.2 Opening remarks

In his opening address to the participants, the Guest of Honor Mr. T. Mssenga expressed his appreciation to the organizers of the Forum and welcomed those coming from outside Njombe. The Guest of Honor noted the importance and the objectives of the Forum. He noted the launching of the project as an indication of SUA's commitment to sustainable development of agriculture and improvement of the rural life. The Guest of Honor declared the forum officially opened and wished all the best to the participants.

2. Background

The Food Security and Household Income for Smallholder Farmers Project under The Tanzania Agriculture Research Project Phase Two - Sokoine University of Agriculture (TARP II-SUA Project) organized the forum. The Goal of the Project is to improve the situation of the smallholder farmer through improved household food security and household income. One of the objectives of the Project is to establish a close linkage between researchers, farmers and extension agents that can bring about fruitful relationship in the alleviation of food insecurity and increase household incomes. The Forum was one of the activities aimed at achieving that objective. The objectives of the forum were:

1. To discuss farmers' problems related to agriculture and livestock production and
2. To share experiences and give feedback on proposed solutions to the problems

3. Methodology

The forum composed of four sessions. The first session was conducted in form of a training seminar. During that session a Participatory Farm Management (PFM) tool used for problem identification and prioritization was introduced to participants. One of the PFM tools, a Scored Causal Diagram (SCD) was used in the second and third sessions for problem identification and prioritization of the problems.

The second session was plenary discussion. Participants identified issues for discussion that were common to all participants as stakeholders to agricultural and livestock production. The description of the prevailing situations of the issues in discussion led to establishment of central or core problems to which cause problems were identified. Participants made lists of effects, which indicate existence of the core problems. In addition, they made lists of problems that cause the core problems.

The fourth working session was a plenary discussion. Participants discussed and made recommendations on alternative solutions to the priority problems. They also determined the responsibilities of the stakeholders in implementing the solutions. Stakeholders considered for implementation were farmers, extension agents, researchers, the Government and non-governmental organizations.

4. Participants

4.1 Composition

Participants introduced themselves by names and where they came from. The participants to the forum were from Iringa, Mbeya and Songea Regions. Total number of participants including the organizers and the facilitator was 36. They included 18 farmers, nine researchers, five extension agents, three representatives from NGOs and one facilitator. Fifteen participants were women and 21 were men. Eight participants were women farmers. The list of participants is shown in Annex 1.

Institutions which had research representatives in the forum are:

1. Kifyulilo Agricultural Research Center Songea,
2. Uyole Research institute Mbeya, and
3. SUA

NGOs which had representatives in the forum are:

1. CARITAS Mbeya,
2. ADP Mbozi,
3. Small Holder Dairy Development Project

Farmer participants came from five different farming systems, namely:

1. Rice growers and livestock keepers in the Usangu basin
2. Maize and Irish potato growers. Coffee, tea and banana is also grown in the area. This include areas of the higher altitudes of the Rungwe Mountain ranges.
3. Maize growers in the lower altitudes of Mbozi and Songea Districts.

4.2 Participants expectations from the forum

After introductions participants had an opportunity to indicate what they expected from participating in the forum. Expectations indicated by participants included:

1. Knowledge on identification of problems related to low income and their solutions.
2. To know problems and their solutions
3. To build confidence in agricultural and livestock production
4. To enhance the capacity for making follow up to beneficiaries
5. To know how the households can be involved in the project (TARP II)
6. To improve knowledge on seed breeding

Indicators for **food insecurity** were identified to be:

1. Poor health especially to women and children
2. Unguaranteed food supply to households
3. Low labor performance
4. Lack of kindness
5. Malnutrition and other nutritional related diseases
6. Unbalanced dieties for households
7. Lack of harmony in households
8. Stunted growth in children

6.2 Intermediate and root causes to the core problem

A total of 57 problems were identified as causes to the core problem. Table 1 shows the description of the problems. SCDs developed by the groups (Annex 2a - 2c) show that the first 26 problems in Table 1 were intermediate problems and the last 31 problems were root problems.

17.	Poor soil fertility	Lack of nutrients in the soils necessary for crop production.
18.	Government do not protect local producers in the local market	Importation of farm products especially food before exhausting local supply
19.	Poor education on improved practices	Households apply poor practices unknowingly
20.	Unreliable rainfall	Unpredicted droughts and floods
21.	Poor quality of products	Product quality that do not dictate prices
22.	Poor and/or inadequate pastures	
23.	Poor relations among household members	Households members making decisions without consultations among each other
24.	Poor planning on use of food stocks and income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households do not have proper planning on the use of the available food and income. • Households members do not discuss together and have common understandings on households expenditures.
25.	Poor implements	Use of inefficient equipments such as a hand hoe
26.	Inappropriate use of inputs	Use of inputs contrary to recommendations
27.	Inadequate knowledge on nutrition	Households do not utilize available foodstuffs adequately such as eggs, milk, legumes, chicken meat and groundnuts.
28.	Households and the government do not realize that food products are also cash crops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households aim at producing food products for food even if they do not have alternatives sources of income. • Government to restrict farmers from selling their food products on commercial basis at their will.
29.	Poor life standards in rural villages	Lack of necessary social services
30.	Professionals not responsible enough	Researchers, extension agents and policy makers do not deliver adequate services.
31.	Lack of reliable and accurate data on local production	Government make decision basing on inaccurate data or information on production
32.	Urban migration for youth	Young people, boys and girls, run away from villages in search of good life in towns
33.	Procedures for exporting crop and livestock products difficult	Too much bureaucracy for exporting crop and livestock products

	properties	member of a households takes any household's property without consultation with other members, a husband is considered to have taken, but a wife or a child is considered to have stolen the property.
53.	Delaying of research results	Researchers do not act on new cases promptly
54.	Incomplete research	Dissemination of innovations without validation on specific locations.
55.	Inadequate extension agents	Farmers are not adequately accessible to extension services
56.	Lack of working facilities	Researchers and extension agents are not adequately equipped
57.	Lack of morale to work	Researchers and extension agents are not adequately motivated

7. Session three

During this session participants formed three groups according to identified farming systems. Each group selected from the CD the intermediate problems that are important in their farming systems. The groups scored in the CDs. The groups presented the results from the SCDs in plenary session.

7.1 Maize and Irish Potato Growers

The SCD presented by this group (Annex 2a) indicate that the first five priority problems are:

1. Inadequate knowledge on household nutrition
2. Lack of reliable and correct data on local production
3. Poor infrastructure
4. Policy that deny farmer of ownership of some precious indigenous trees
5. Too large packing of inputs

The SCD indicate that apart from focusing on nutrition education for households, it is important to improve market reliability so as to improve households income. Moreover, measures should be taken to enhance households' use of inputs to improve productivity. The SCD also indicate that environmental conservation has to be given adequate emphasis to improve rainfall reliability, which is important for better production.

7.2 Rice Growers and Pastoralists

The SCD presented by the group (annex 2b) shows that the first five priority problems are:

1. Poor supply of water for livestock and agriculture
2. Poor infrastructure
3. Government policies that deny farmers from accessing external markets
4. Inappropriate customs and traditions
5. Lack of reliable and correct data on local production

Table 2: Recommendations for solutions and responsibilities of stakeholders

	PROBLEM	SOLUTION	RESPONSIBILITIES			
			RESEARCHERS	FARMERS	EXTENSION AGENTS	GOVERNMENT AND NGOS
1.	Poor supply of water for livestock and agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement on traditional irrigation structures • Improving water distribution systems • Establishment of water users associations • Education on rainwater harvesting techniques • Enforcement of local By Laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To evaluate conditions of the tradition structures • To establish strategies to improve traditional irrigation structures • To investigate the reasons for poor performance of farmers' associations and provide recommendations for improvement • To establish sustainable techniques for rainwater harvesting • To investigate for appropriate locations for digging wells 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide real information on the conditions of the traditional structures • To participate in improving and maintaining the traditional structures • To establish water users association and develop appropriate systems for water distribution. • To participate in training and follow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To sensitize farmers to participate in evaluation of conditions of the traditional structures • To facilitate formation of water users associations • To promote participation of women in the groups • To provide routine evaluation of group development and activities • To educate farmers on research findings • To advise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To finance extension and research activities • To finance improvement and conservation of water sources. • To recognize and collaborate with farmers groups • To finance training • To assist in digging water wells • To enforce By Laws

	and correct data on local production	collection and information systems. •	and reliable data collection and communication systems	and correct information • To keep records on production	information in all production stages • To provide education to farmers on record keeping	research • To use available data in making decisions favorable to farmers especially on marketing policies. • Village governments to keep records on production areas.
4.	Poor infrastructure	• To improve village infrastructures: Roads, market places	• To invest appropriate and sustainable rural infrastructure	• To participate in improving rural infrastructure	• To provide advice on appropriate rural infrastructure	• To motivate farmers to participate in improvement of rural infrastructure • To provide financial assist in construction activities.
5.	Policies that deny farmers of ownership of some precious indigenous trees	• Abolish policies that deny farmers of ownership of trees in their fields.	• To determine effects of such policies on environment and advise the government accordingly			• To observe expert recommendations and to abolish the policy

9. Forum Evaluation

9.1 Participation

Participants indicated to have understood the PFM tool and applied it with ease. Participants conducted lively discussions in both plenary and group sessions. Women participants contributed substantially and exercised highest level of confidence. The forum provided evidence of cooperation among Farmers, Extension agents and Researchers. Furthermore, it constitutes a good promise of better understanding and collaboration between these partners in agricultural development. There were no obvious shortcomings in participation. However, participants evaluation showed that two participants indicated dissatisfaction in the use of mixed languages by some participants. The official language for the forum was Kiswahili.

9.2 Organization

In general, participants appreciated the way the forum was organized. Fifty five percent of 31 participants who made final evaluation for the forum indicated that the forum fulfilled above 50% of their expectations.

The most important issue that many (54%) participants complained for was time. They recommended that such forums should be conducted for at least four or five days. Some even recommended that the time to be spent on opening and closing could be shortened to provide more time for working sessions. Other participants suggested that the number of meals should be reduced and that the savings from such meals be added to their pocket money. One participant recommended that future forums should have excursion programmes to provide opportunity to visit farmers and verify some of the forum outcomes.

10. Closing

10.1 Remarks to welcome the Guest of Honor

In his remarks to welcome the Guest of Honor, Prof. E. Batamuzi on behalf of the Coordinator of TARP II - SUA Project, pointed out some of the findings that emanated from the forum and some of the recommendations which the participants made. He then welcomed the Guest of Honor Mr. A. Makiwa - the District Agricultural and Livestock Officer (DALDO) for Njombe.

10.2 Closing remarks

In his speech to mark the end of the forum, the Guest of Honor Mr. Makiwa congratulated the participants on the tireless efforts to accomplish the tasks aimed for the forum. He acknowledged the forum findings and the recommendations and declared the forum officially closed.

ANNEX 2a: Score Card Diagram by Maize and Irish Potato Growers



