

INNOVATIONS IN THE SEED SECTOR-THE EXPERIENCE OF SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION OF KENYA (STAK)

16th to 17th October, 2018 at Kenyatta International
Convention Center (KICC)

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Introduction

- Seed Trade Association of Kenya (STAK) was formed in 1982 to represent the interests of the formal seed trade
- Seed is one of the most critical inputs in agricultural production and has the greatest potential of increasing on-farm productivity and enhancing the country's food security-ONE OF THE PILLARS OF THE BIG FOUR



- The current national certified seed production is estimated at 40,000 metric tons
- About 80% of the seeds are still supplied by the informal sector while 20% by formal seed (where STAK representation is in)
- A shortage of quality seeds exists for crops such as potato, wheat and some pulses and certain varieties suited for arid and semi arid lands (ASALS)



- The importation of seed has steadily increased, particularly horticultural crops which cannot be produced locally
- The unpredictable weather and climate change issues has made planning a serious business and developmental challenge
- Appropriate use of fertilizers at the right time and in recommended quantities with certified seed results in optimum yields



Major Challenges in the Seed Industry

- Insufficient certified seed material. Apart from seed for the major crops like maize and wheat, the country still experiences shortage of seeds such as legumes and vegetables
- Low adoption of improved seed and complementary technologies; it is estimated that apart from maize and vegetables, the informal seed sector accounts for about 80% of the seed industry



- Inconsistent legal and regulatory framework –need to review seed policy (Gazettment of two seed regulations in 2017)
- Inadequate seed varieties for marginal areas
- Prevalence of adulterated seed in the market
- High cost of seed (some related to CESS)
- Insufficient technical skills and infrastructure for new technologies
- Low funding for seed research
- Inability for farmers to access fertilizers in a timely manner



- Climate change
- Disease incidences like Maize Lethal Narcosis (MLN) and Fall Army Worms
- Administrative challenges and bottlenecks with regard to Royalty payments and ordering of Early Generation Seeds (EGS) (especially maize)
- Lack of clear policies on Government subsidy programmes



- Wrong classification of pepper, coriander, watermelon as spices and not seed thus attracting tax
- Tax on seed consequently making seed expensive to farmers



Innovations in the Seed Sector

- Development of Climate Smart and resilient crop varieties (CIMMYT, AATF, ICRISAT etc.) with seed companies promoting these varieties
- Information sharing platforms such as Seed Sector Platform and *Mbegu Choice* www.stak.or.ke
- Kenya is among the Four COMESA countries that have harmonized their seed regulations



Cont

- There has been widening of space through Self Regulation i.e. Training of Seed Analysts and Inspectors (26 Inspectors and 3 Analysts)
- Seed companies working together with those in the fertilizer sector to ensure timely and appropriate fit fertilizer distribution
- Awareness creation on fertilizer use through field demos
- Use of Labels as one of the ways to manage fake seed



Sample of activated label (I393)

