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Maize Production and Seed Protection in Institute of Agronomic Research for Development (IRAD)-Ekona in the South West Province of Cameroon

Reference to the third workshop on Sustainable Agriculture we would like to present to you the production of maize and seed protection in the institute of agronomic research for development. To grow good healthy corn requires soil of adequate fertility, sustainable climate, a compatible variety of seed plus good management. Each of these factors are both necessary and sufficient conditions for maize production. Of these, experience has shown that low soil fertility is a major reason why maize may not do well on some given fields.

Soils suitable for maize production include:

-Deep permeable fertile soils.

-Medium texture (loam) soils.

-Soils that have plenty of organic matter and soils with a rich supply of nutrients.

Most farmers in Cameroon do not classify their soils based on scientific classification. They used indigenous knowledge to classify them. A common approach has been to classify all black soils as being fertile and all brown soils as being less fertile. We of the cereal section of the Organisation for Environmental Protection and Management are out to educate the local population on how to cultivate maize and how to also preserve the seeds. From the above classification of fertile soils which are good for maize production, should a farmer follow the scientific advice and new technological approaches then we can say the farmers will then maximize yields.

We also supply the local farmer with sufficient information on soil management and the improved varieties of germ. Planting materials for maize can come from two sources;

-A farmer's own seed stocks.

-Certified seed multiplication center (IRAD)

Certified seed of varieties suitable for various localities can be obtained from the (IRAD) since the seeds are carefully treated and selected by qualified researchers. Each variety is tested and selected for colour resistance to disease, taste yield, height, maturity and stability. After obtaining the improved seeds for planting, they now grow on different localities with varying yields depending on the types of soils. Generally maize is ready after 7-8 weeks, after flowering but this varies with the date of planting and the altitude of the farmer. After harvest, the maize is being consumed by the local population as food and some is sold in the local market. Little or nothing has so far been done for the maize to be sold internationally.

We are always appealing on the Government of Cameroon to aid us financially so as to increase the heritage and of farm land to enable us sell internationally. The financial aid is going to help us buy modern tools for farming, it will also help to sustain the cultivation of maize by the local population as maize is almost a staple food now in Cameroon.