

Field days in Malawi



Lead Farmer explaining on Soybean Production at a Field Day in Dowa

aimed at imparting more skills and knowledge to the farmers on Good Agriculture Practices for the four legume crops (Cowpea, Soybean, Groundnut and Bean) being promoted by N2Africa.

Many lessons have been learnt from the field days. These include variety performances with regards to time of planting, dry spells, fertilizer application, inoculation, and many more. Many farmers have also appreciated the effects of nodulation on Soybean especially in Salima District. Farmers have also learnt that for better markets they have to grow legume crops by variety like Soybean. Most farmers never knew that Soybean comes in many varieties as well.

Observations during the field days include the better performance of fertilized beans (*Phaseolus* Bean) with TSP fertilizer over non-fertilized ones. The pods of the fertilized beans looked very strong and healthy; and the



Farmers and Partners in a Groundnut Plot during a Field Day in Dedza

N2Africa Malawi has conducted field days from the 11th February 2011 to 5th May 2011. The field days were attended by N2Africa farmers, CIAT as well (the IFAD project staff), DAES and WVI as partners, the Government Departments, Chiefs and local people. The field days act as a forum for farmers and stakeholders to interact and learn from each other on the crops that have been demonstrated. The field days targeted demonstration plots by Lead Farmers, but in other places even the plots by the members of the group lead by the Lead Farmer were also visited as a support to the technologies being showcased at the main demonstration plot.

So far, 13 field days have been conducted in 4 districts (Dedza, Dowa, Salima and Ntcheu). Mchinji and Lilongwe Districts are yet to conduct their field days. The field days aimed at providing feedback on the technologies that N2Africa is implementing with the farmers are. They are also



Farmers at a Cowpea plot during a Field Day in Salima

beans inside filled the pods and look very healthy. Napilira is a preferred variety to Maluwa in Dedza in terms of outlook and no of pods per plant. On Soybean, all the varieties distributed have outdone the local seed fetched by the Lead Farmers in terms of number of pods per plant, quality of the plants, quality of the pods and physical nodulation. The fertilized groundnut (with TSP and D Compound) is maturing later than the farmer's check where no fertilizer has been applied. The Cowpea variety of IT81E-16 has also outdone the local one as well as Sudan 1 in almost of all plots. The farmers are appraising this new variety of cowpea in terms of number of pods per plant and the healthiness of the Cowpeas. It is a high yielding cowpea variety.

Farmers have requested if pesticides would be easily accessed by the farmers to curb pests that start destroying the crop while in the field. Soybean farmers have requested for Inoculants to be accessed easily also. Markets have been requested at all field days.