

Participatory evaluation of an agronomic trial, a farmer field day organized by Development Rural Durable (DRD)

In Rwanda, N2Africa has 5 partners, among which 1 research institution (ISAR), and 4 non government organizations (NGOs), namely DRD, COCOF, EPR, and CARITAS, involved mostly in technology dissemination.

One way to facilitate technology dissemination is the participatory evaluation of agronomic trials established on - farm, from which farmers select the best technologies (e.g crop varieties) to be tested in their individual farms in the following seasons. On February 17, 2011 in NEMBA action site, Burera district, a participatory evaluation of an agronomic trial on 5 varieties of climbing beans was organized by DRD in collaboration with ISAR scientists, local leaders, journalist and N2Africa beneficiary farmers.

The ISAR researcher in charge of the trial was also present. In total, 24 men and 44 women farmers participated in the evaluation.

On the agenda of the field day, the following points were highlighted:

1. Participatory evaluation of variety trial on climbing bean:

The climbing bean varieties in the agronomic trial were: Gasilida, RWV 1348, RWV 2070, Cab2, G2331(Mamesa).

From a brainstorming exercise facilitated by Jacques Hakizimana, DRD coordinator, farmers identified the following criteria to rank the varieties by preference.

- Large seed size was ranked first
- Seed color as a second criteria
- High grain yield followed
- Early maturity was ranked fourth
- Resistance to heavy rains as last on this list

Using the above criteria, varieties were ranked as follow:

1. Gasilida
2. Cab2
3. RWV 1348
4. RWV 2070
5. G2331

Farmers selected 3 varieties - Gasilida, Cab2 and RWV 2070- for community based seed multiplication.



Variety Gasilida at podding stage, variety trial from Gakenke district



Group of women from Nemba action site, after the participatory evaluation of bean variety trial



Harvesting of the bean variety trial by ISAR scientists and DRD technicians before farmers final evaluation of the varieties

2. Community radio of Musanze (CRM)

DRD invited Musanze Radio in order to explain more about **N2Africa activities** to many people, because this radio is heard in the whole country and even some parts of DRC and UGANDA. The community radio of Musanze does spot adverts (radio drama, announcements, greetings, entertainments), radio talk, communities are received easily and the radio collaborates with the National radio, the public newspapers such as IMVAHO and La Nouvelle Releve. The Journalist called BIZIMUNGU Jean de Dieu followed the participatory evaluation of climbing bean varieties, and after interviewed the following people:

- First he interviewed **DRD Coordinator, Mr HAKIZIMANA Rwisebura Jacques** who introduced the N2Africa project. He explained the project description and vision of success, the role of different partners at all stages of the project implementation. Specifically the role of DRD which is mainly to work with communities to scale-up promising technology options, to assist farmers' groups in participatory evaluation of technologies tested, to organize field days, exchange visits and to lead training of Master farmers and other local facilitators.
- The second person interviewed was NZEYIMANA Felix, the ISAR researcher in charge of agronomic trials, who collaborates with DRD in research for biological nitrogen fixation by legume crops. Nzeyimana explained research and inoculant technology.
- Finally he interviewed two farmers, one man and one woman, Mbonigaba Phocas and Julienne respectively, who are members of the farmer group which was hosting the event. Both explained that they got new varieties of climbing bean from N2Africa, and they said that they were happy to choose themselves which varieties they have to promote. They also said that they were very proud to be the first to be able to transfer the technology to others, to disseminate the varieties chosen and they were able to make themselves the criteria of ranking varieties and to explain to new farmers who don't collaborate directly with N2Africa.

They told him that the varieties they have chosen have more yield. Phocas and Julienne said that they were very happy to have enough good quality seed to initiate a seed multiplication activity within the community, which will allow them the secure good quality seed for their own farms for next season, and also for dissemination to their neighbours.

This interview was aired on Community Radio Musanze the same day in the news.

Prepared by Jacques Hakizimana and Speciose Kantengwa.



A farmer- Julienne, interviewed by the journalist from the community radio of Musanze