

SMALLHOLDERS' ACCESS TO FERTILIZERS IN AFRICA



AFRICAN LEADERS AND FARMERS NEED TO LAUNCH AN AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION TO ERADICATE HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION ON THE CONTINENT WITHIN A LIFETIME

Africa is changing rapidly. However, too many people (including a large number of farmers) will continue to be hungry and malnourished if more is not invested in agriculture.

African agriculture plays a prominent role in terms of economic growth, food security and poverty alleviation, with 63% of the population living in rural areas. In Sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture employs 62% of the population (or around half a billion people) and generates 27% of gross domestic product (GDP). Nevertheless, 226 million Africans are chronically undernourished and 5 million die of hunger every year. African agriculture is based on smallholder farming (less than 2 hectares): 80% of all farms are small and family-based.

Women play a critical role in smallholder farming. They are mothers and primary caretakers (in particular, providing nutrition to children) as well as farmers. They do most of the weeding, harvesting and processing. Although women make up 60-80% of smallholder farmers and produce 90% of the food in Africa, only 15% possess land titles, only 10% can obtain credit, and only 7% have access to extension services.

Small family farms are a critical engine of food supply in the world. However, in Africa they operate under great constraints with respect to their asset bases and access to inputs, technology, services and markets. Small food producers are a critical link connecting food security, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, economic growth and poverty eradication. Since a large proportion of these producers live in poverty, agriculture-led growth has a critical poverty-reducing impact.

Africa's smallholder farmers urgently need to become more productive in order to:

- grow enough and more nutritious food
- become reliable suppliers
- increase their incomes
- improve lives in rural areas
- create jobs and new economic opportunities for youth
- reduce gender inequalities by giving women access to productive resources

FINANCIAL SERVICES, FERTILIZERS AND OTHER INPUTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVE FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY BY INCREASING YIELDS AND PRODUCING BOUNTIFUL HARVESTS

To become more productive and profitable, farmers need access to farm inputs and services such as:

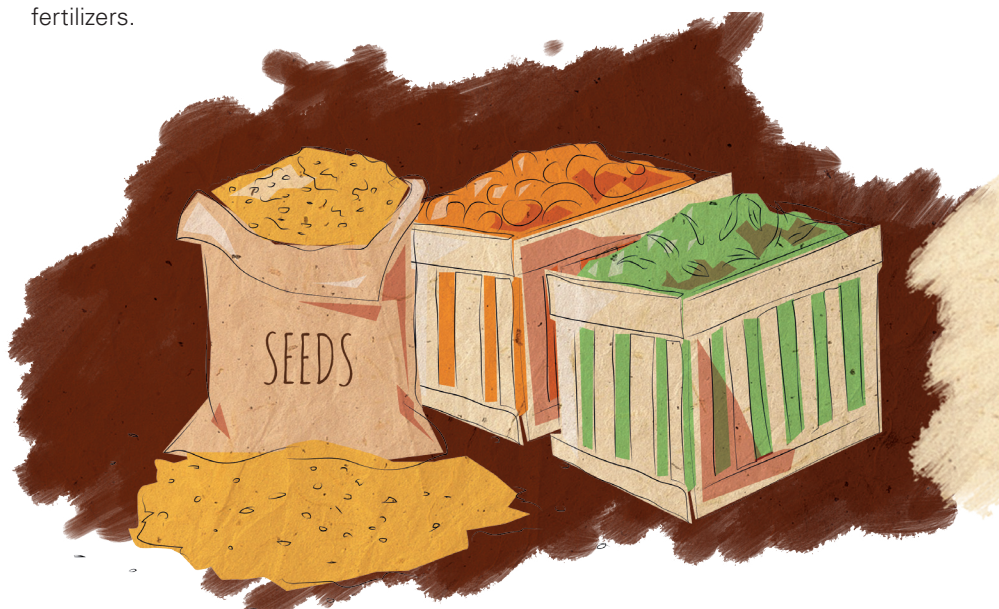
- financing to purchase inputs
- quality seeds of improved varieties
- soil nutrients/fertilizers
- crop protection products
- irrigation
- crop insurance

Half the food we eat today is produced thanks to fertilizers. The impact of fertilizers is immediate: within a single cropping season, farm productivity can be doubled or tripled. For every 1 kg of nutrient applied, farmers obtain 5-30 kg of additional product. No farm in the world is too small to use fertilizers.

WITHOUT ACCESS TO BASIC AGRICULTURE RESOURCES AND TRAINING, HARVESTS IN AFRICA ARE FAILING AND SOILS ARE BECOMING UNPRODUCTIVE

Many small family farmers in Africa live in remote areas isolated from quality seeds and crop nutrients (fertilizers, manure, compost). Yet 16 macro and micronutrients are essential to crops. Lack of fertilization management has been detrimental to African soils; it is estimated that 8 million tonnes of nutrients are lost per year and that 95 million hectares of land (75% of the continent) has been degraded to the point of greatly reduced productivity.

Despite the commitment by African Heads of State to sharply increase fertilizer use, application rates are still too low. In the Abuja Declaration of 2006 a commitment was made to raise fertilizer use to 50 kg/ha by 2015. However, the current average rate is still close to 10 kg per hectare while the global average is over 100 kg per hectare. Because of high transaction costs (especially transport costs), retail fertilizer prices in Africa are significantly higher than in the rest of the world and beyond the reach of the majority of small farmers. In this context, closing the yield gap may seem to be impossible.



ONE ACRE FUND IN RWANDA: DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

The star at the bottom left on the map shows where a farmer in Rwanda formerly had to go (on foot or bicycle) to buy quality seeds and fertilizer. The orange area indicates where One Acre Fund delivery sites are now located. This demonstrates the type of vast improvements that can be made in distribution.



- ★ Former seed and fertilizer distribution point
- One Acre Fund delivery sites
- Forest
- Water

GOOD POLICIES CAN CHANGE THE DESTINY OF FAMILY FARMERS IN AFRICA

We all have contributions to make to support Africa's farmers. We call on African leaders to work with the private sector, researchers and civil society in these areas:

- Provide access to credit, finance and insurance by retailers and farmers.
- Facilitate imports and the distribution of diverse fertilizer products.
- Invest in infrastructure: transport, handling, storage, and blending facilities.
- Develop mobile technologies to provide information on markets, extension services and prices.
- Train extension workers to help farmers organize themselves.
- Disseminate best practices based on the integration of organic and mineral nutrients and balanced fertilization.

FAMILY FARMERS CAN CHANGE THE DESTINY OF AFRICA'S AGRICULTURE

Farmers of all sizes want to improve their living conditions and make their farms profitable. When farmers improve their harvests, they pull whole communities out of poverty. Profitable smallholder African farming can eradicate hunger and malnutrition by going beyond subsistence.

Africa's smallholder farmers stand ready. They need our collective support!

The following organizations are building access to fertilizers for family farms in Africa:

- African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership (AFAP)
- Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)
- CNFA
- International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC)
- International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA)
- International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA)
- International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI)
- International Potash Institute (IPI)
- One Acre Fund (OAF)



