



FAO LESOTHO

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

January 2014 – June 2014

This report compiles all information and communication activities undertaken by FAO
Lesotho from January 2014 to June 2014





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I. Press articles

→ 25th June 2014 – Lesotho News Agency (LENA)

7500 RECEIVE AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

Maseru, June 25 (LENA) -- 7,500 households received agricultural inputs for adoption of Cover Crops as part of Ministry of Agriculture Food (MAFS) and Security & Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Emergency and Resilience Programme.

According to a press release by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in response to 2012 food insecurity crisis, and (MAFS) designed a three-year cycle programme to assist 18,500 households with agricultural inputs and know-how on agricultural technologies helping communities to adapt to climate change, building their resilience to better withstand future shocks.

It continued to state that the programme promotes Conservation Agriculture (CA) and improved Home Gardening and Nutrition in all ten districts of the country.

It said CA entails sustainable agricultural methods based on three principles: minimum disturbance of the soil, permanent soil cover and crop rotations/intercropping.

'Soil erosion is a major problem in Lesotho, affecting both quality and quantity of harvests and by adopting CA, farmers not only ensure better harvest, but also contribute to the improvement of soil quality and its preservation,' it said.

It stated that after having distributed a package of maize and bean seeds, fertilizers, and a vegetable seed kit in the first year and trained on Conservation Agriculture (CA) and improved Home Gardening (HG), beneficiaries of the programme will receive support with cover crops so the soil can be protected.

The release said 11,000 received the support in 2013 saying it is now the turn for the additional 7,500 families who have received 25kg of wheat seed to start practicing cover crop in their fields.

It said they had planned to continue this support with the distribution of grazing vetch among these families at the end of 2014 where beneficiaries will be able to progressively practice the key principles of CA and discover its enormous benefits for the soil and increases in production.

The Emergency and Resilience Programme is implemented with financial support from the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO), Belgium, the UN Central Emergency Trust Fund (CERF) and the British Department for International Development (DFID).

FAO implemented the programme jointly with the MAFS through the extension officers operating in all Agricultural Resource Centres in each district providing training and technical support to beneficiaries.

420 training kits in English and Sesotho apart from leaflets for beneficiaries have been distributed to all resource centres of the country along with the wheat seeds. These partnerships share the ambition to scale up the promotion of Conservation Agriculture nationwide.

FAO Lesotho remains committed in supporting Basotho communities and continuing the promotion of diversified agricultural production protecting our environment and our children's capacity to produce nutritious food.

II. Press releases

The following press releases were produced by FAO Lesotho and sent to all media in Lesotho, from January to June 2014.

→ Spillover effects

Spillover effects of FAO Lesotho Emergency and Resilience Programme

Maseru, Jan. 10 2014 – FAO Lesotho and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) started the Emergency and Resilience Programme (ERP) in 2012, reaching by 2013 up to 18,500 vulnerable farming households from all 10 districts of the country. The ERP supports vulnerable farming households to improve and diversify their production adapting to Climate Change through capacity development on Conservation Agriculture (CA) and improved Home Gardening (HG) techniques as well as Nutrition awareness.

All ERP beneficiaries receive a package comprising a 5kg-bag of maize seeds, 5kg-bag of bean seeds, two 50kg-bags of basal and top dressing fertilizers and a 600g-kit of six different varieties of vegetables seeds. Together with these inputs, the beneficiaries receive trainings on CA, HG and Nutrition through MAFS extension network.

The ERP places capacity development at the core of its activities. Therefore special emphasis is being put on increasing extension officer's knowledge and capacity to train farmers with newly designed visual training materials. Besides, beneficiaries form groups of 15 families with support from a lead farmer. It is expected that making information available and demonstrating the success of these new technologies through the beneficiaries, the ERP will also contribute to encourage non beneficiary farmers to test and adopt CA and improved HG techniques. This ERP spillover effect among farmers has been reported in several areas of Lesotho.



From the left, 'Me Pitso, Ntate Malaoa and Ntate Tsemame on Ntate Tsemame's field

In the village of Qoaling, Leribe district, Ntate Tsemame Tsemame, 'Me Matsokolo Pitso and Ntate Malaoa Malaoa explain why they dropped conventional farming to start Conservation Agriculture instead.

The three of them are senior; Ntate Tsemame started farming in 1997 when he retired from working in the mines, 'Me Pitso has been farming during her entire life and Ntate Malaoa recently finished his construction contract in South Africa and started farming four years ago

when he went back to his home.

They all grew up in farming families and therefore learnt conventional farming practices from their parents and relatives.

However, Ntate Tsemame and Ntate Malaoa explain why they were not interested in farming activities: "When we were young, agriculture was not seen as prestigious by youth and, especially for young men, one would rather go to surrounding towns or to South Africa to seek a better job than working the land."



They are still convinced that even today, youth do not see agriculture as a lucrative business but more as an activity for old people. As senior, they see a lot of business potential even though in reality they hardly produce enough to feed their family year round. They all insist that “the major problem is the investment that needs to be done to buy seeds and fertilizer and hire a tractor in order to start a business.”

‘Me Pitso and Ntate Malaoa started practicing CA in 2012 and Ntate Tsemame started in 2013. They all heard about CA and saw the better yields and the better look of CA crops. This encouraged them to seek for more information.

‘Me Pitso heard of the method from a relative who is part of the FAO Emergency and Resilience Programme; Ntate Tsemame and Malaoa saw neighbours practicing it. These neighbours are also beneficiaries of the FAO Emergency and Resilience Programme.

Conservation Agriculture can be practiced both manually and mechanically with animal or tractor drawn planters. For manual CA, a hand hoe is all you need. The main motivation of these three farmers to practice manual CA is the possibility to afford farming without investing their limited resources in cattle or tractors.

Ntate Malaoa explains: “By doing manual Conservation Agriculture last year, I harvested almost double than what I used to get in conventional farming using a tractor.”

For them, CA gives a chance to produce food with less investment than what is needed in conventional farming. CA also allows saving money with a more efficient use of seeds and fertilizers apart from improving the soil quality and reducing erosion.

“I have just started CA and I can already see that the soil looks more stable”, confirms Ntate Tsemame.

The motivation they show in practicing Conservation Agriculture is encouraging as they will also become CA advocates among their relatives and neighbours.

“We have just started the method but we can already share our experience with other farmers and show them our crops and fields. The results are good and convincing!” they say altogether.

They wish youth could see the potential given by agriculture as they cannot themselves start a farming business due to their advanced age.

Apart from manual CA, FAO Lesotho is also supporting the adoption of mechanical CA for those farmers who can afford the use of animals or tractors. For this purpose, 4 tractor drawn and 15 ox drawn CA planters were donated to MAFS. 30 extension officers were trained in the use of this equipment.

FAO Lesotho will continue to support the adoption of CA both manual and mechanical in 2014. FAO ERP programme has been supported financially by the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO), the British Department for International Development (DFID) and USAID.

→ Emergency and Resilience Programme

Maseru, 25th June 2014 – 7,500 households received agricultural inputs for adoption of Cover Crops as part of MAFS & FAO Emergency and Resilience Programme

In response to 2012 food insecurity crisis, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) designed a three-year cycle programme to assist 18,500 households with agricultural inputs and know-how on agricultural technologies helping communities to adapt to climate change, building their resilience to better withstand future shocks.



Pic. 1 - Grazing vetch planted as a cover crop in a CA maize field (1)

The programme promotes Conservation Agriculture and improved Home Gardening and Nutrition in all ten districts of the country. CA entails sustainable agricultural methods based on three principles: minimum disturbance of the soil, permanent soil cover and crop rotations/intercropping. Soil erosion is a major problem in Lesotho, affecting both quality and quantity of harvests. By adopting CA, farmers not only ensure better harvests, but also contribute to the improvement of soil quality and its preservation.

After having distributed a package of maize and bean seeds, fertilizers, and a vegetable seeds kit in the first year and trained on Conservation Agriculture (CA) and improved Home Gardening (HG), beneficiaries of the programme will receive support with cover crops so the soil can be protected. 11,000 received this support in 2013. It is now the turn for additional 7,500 families who have received 25kg of wheat seeds to start

practicing cover crop in their fields. It is planned to continue this support with the distribution of grazing vetch among these families at the end of 2014. In this manner, it is expected that beneficiaries will be able to progressively practice the key principles of CA and discover its enormous benefits for the soil and increases in production.

The Emergency and Resilience Programme is implemented with financial support from the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO), Belgium, the UN Central Emergency Trust Fund (CERF) and the British Department For International Development (DFID).

FAO implements this programme jointly with the MAFS through the extension officers operating in all Agricultural Resource Centres in each district providing training and technical support to beneficiaries. In order to facilitate this task, FAO and the National Conservation Agriculture Task

Force in Lesotho (NCATF) have developed visual training materials which are being used by extension staff of the MAFS to train farmers on CA. 420 training kits in English and Sesotho apart from leaflets for beneficiaries have been distributed to all resource centres of the country along with the wheat seeds. These partnerships share the ambition to scale up the promotion of Conservation Agriculture nationwide.

FAO Lesotho remains committed in supporting Basotho communities and continuing the promotion of diversified agricultural production protecting our environment and our children's capacity to produce nutritious food.

'Moho, re ka hlola tlala!



Pic. 2 - Grazing vetch planted as a cover crop in a CA maize field (2)

III. Web presence

All stories/articles/press releases sent to local media were also shared with FAO HQ so they could be uploaded on the FAO corporate website and corporate social media websites.

→ February 2014

- Spillover effects

<http://www.fao.org/emergencies/fao-in-action/stories/stories-detail/en/c/213745/>



Spillover effects of FAO Lesotho Emergency and Resilience Programme

02/12/2014
The spillover effects of the FAO Lesotho Emergency and Resilience Programme (EAP) are being felt in the rural areas of the country. The EAP, which started in 2012, has been instrumental in helping smallholder farmers to improve their livelihoods and resilience to shocks. The programme has provided technical assistance, training, and access to inputs, leading to increased crop yields and income. This has enabled farmers to invest in their farms and improve their living conditions. The EAP has also supported the development of local markets and value chains, further enhancing the resilience of the rural population. The programme's impact is evident in the improved health and nutrition of children and the overall well-being of the communities it serves.

- Infographics on Conservation Agriculture

<http://www.fao.org/emergencies/fao-in-action/stories/stories-detail/en/c/216752/>

<http://www.fao.org/emergencies/fao-in-action/stories/stories-detail/en/c/230707/>

<http://www.fao.org/emergencies/fao-in-action/stories/stories-detail/en/c/237589/>

FAO corporate Facebook

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
il y a 17 heures

'Me Maphoka is a woman #farmer in northern Lesotho. In 2012 she decided to try conservation #agriculture. A year later, the land spoke for itself: with conventional farming she used to harvest around 60kg of maize, now she is harvesting over 400kg.
Read this and other stories that show the challenges faced by #women farmers: <http://bit.ly/1p3rN4T>

J'aime · Commenter · Partager 52 partages

FAO in Emergencies website

<http://www.fao.org/emergencies/fao-in-action/stories/stories-detail/en/c/237589/>

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FAO promotes conservation agriculture in Lesotho through three year programme

Tags: Lesotho, Southern Africa, conservation agriculture, agricultural kits, gardening, Belgium, United Kingdom, CERF, resource partners.

30/06/2014

In response to the 2012 food insecurity crisis in Lesotho, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) designed a three-year cycle programme to assist 18 300 households with agricultural inputs and know-how on agricultural technologies helping communities to adapt to climate change, building their resilience to better withstand future shocks.

The programme promotes conservation agriculture (CA) and improved home gardening and nutrition in all ten districts of Lesotho. CA involves sustainable agriculture methods based on three principles: minimum disturbance of the soil, permanent soil cover and crop rotations/intercropping. Soil erosion is a major problem in Lesotho affecting both the quality and quantity of harvests. By adopting CA, farmers not only ensure better harvests but also contribute to the improvement of soil quality and its preservation.

FAO distributed a package of maize and bean seeds, fertilizers, and a vegetable seeds kit and trained farmers on conservation agriculture (CA) and improved home gardening (IHG). In the first year of the programme, beneficiaries of the programme then received support with cover crops so the soil could be protected. 13 000 received this support in 2013. An additional 7 300 families received 28kg of wheat seeds to start cultivating cover crop in their fields. This support will continue with the distribution of grazing vetch (a type of cover crop) among farmers through 2014. In this manner, it is expected that beneficiaries will be able to progress the key principles of CA and discover the empirical benefits for the soil and increase in production.

The Emergency and Resilience Programme is implemented with financial support from the European Union's Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), the Government of Belgium, the UK's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the UK's Department For International Development (DFID).

FAO implements this programme jointly with the MAFS through the extension officers operating in all Agriculture Resource Centres in each district providing training and technical support to beneficiaries. In order to facilitate this task, FAO and the National Conservation Agriculture Task Force in Lesotho (NCATF) have developed visual training materials which are being used by extension staff of the MAFS to train farmers on CA. 420 training kits in English and Sesotho apart from leaflets for beneficiaries have been distributed to all resource centres of the country along with the wheat seeds. These beneficiaries share the ambition to scale up the promotion of Conservation Agriculture nationwide.

FAO Lesotho remains committed to supporting communities in Lesotho and continuing the promotion of diversified agriculture production that protects the environment and the capacity of future generations to produce nutritious food.

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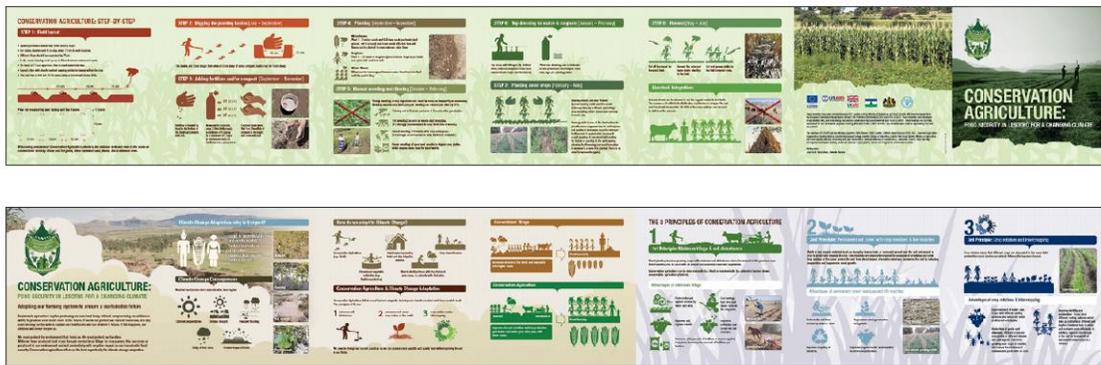
Lesotho TV – Thahameso morning programme

On the 1st of July 2014, two members of the Emergency and Rehabilitation Unit participated in the Thahameso morning programme of the Lesotho TV. They answered questions related to FAO Lesotho programme and communicated on Conservation Agriculture messages.

IV. Training material

→ Conservation Agriculture

The Conservation Agriculture (CA) leaflets designed with the Lesotho National Conservation Agriculture Task Force in 2013 as part of the CA training material were re-printed in large quantities (42,000 copies in Sesotho and 8,000 copies in English). They are being distributed nationwide.



→ Armyworm material

Under the ECHO funded “Emergency and Preparedness Response to Armyworm Outbreak in Lesotho 2013”, the following awareness material was developed by MAFS armyworm technical working group:

- 16,000 Brochures (armyworm characteristics and reactions) - 8,000 in English & 8,000 in Sesotho
- 1,700 Posters (identification, life-cycle) including 20 laminated posters
- 800 Forecasting instructions sheets



MAFS also disseminated TV and radio messages on armyworm in the beginning of armyworm potential threat season through MAFS radio and TV air time slots.

Fig. 1 – Brochure in English and Life Cycle in Sesotho

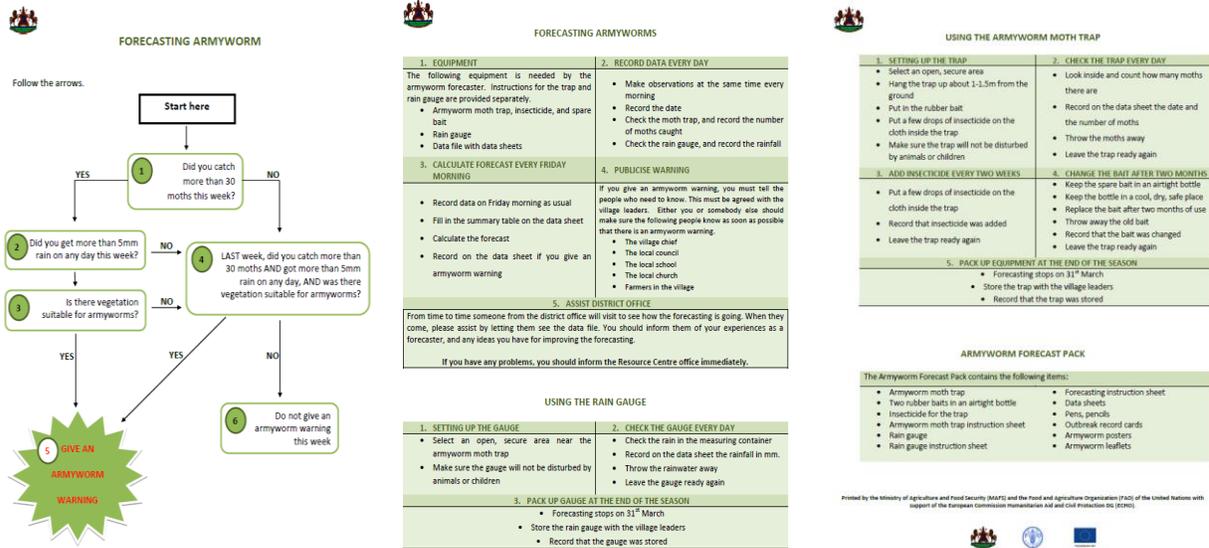


Fig. 2 - Forecasting instructions sheet

The project has also supported the reprint of 250 copies of "The African Armyworm Handbook", a reference book out of print that has proved instrumental at technical level to prepare this proposal and the EWS details.

Printing additional copies of this book allowed improving preparedness and control capacities among technical practitioners and decision makers in Lesotho and countries in Eastern/Southern Africa.

These copies have been distributed by FAO and the Natural Resources Institute.

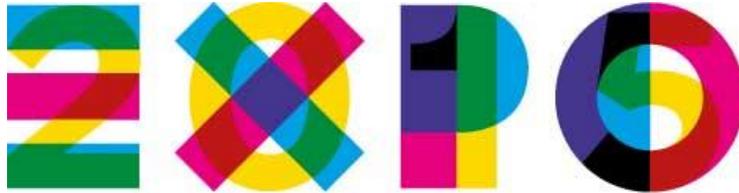


Fig. 3 - African Armyworm Handbook

V. Awareness raising and advocacy

→ Expo Milano 2015

The Emergency and Resilience Programme will be presented as a potential candidate for participating in the *Expo Milano 2015: Call for Best Sustainable Development Practices on Food Security*. The deadline for submitting the application is September, 15th 2014.



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→ Green Star Award

FAO Lesotho is submitting an application for the Lesotho National Conservation Agriculture Task Force (LNCATF) to be presented as a potential candidate for the Green Star Awards, initiative organised by Green Cross International, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Green Star Awards rewards initiatives “preventing, preparing for, and responding to environmental emergencies”. The 2015 ceremony award will be hosted by Norway in June 2015.

Deadline for submission of applications is on November, 10th 2014.



*For excellence in preventing,
preparing and responding to
environmental emergencies*