

Small-holder farmers in Makueni County benefit from seed of the KDV4 maize variety supplied to them by their Village-based Advisors

Project update: January 2016

In Makueni County, maize is the most important food crop grown by small-holder farmers. However, they do not produce enough maize for their families to last the whole year. The major constraint to improved maize crop productivity is the use of late-maturing, low-yielding varieties and inappropriate soil/crop management practices. New maize varieties, such as the KDV4 variety from Dryland Seed Ltd., and improved crop/soil management practices have been developed, but farmers are unaware of them.

FIPS-Africa, with the support of *Seeds for Change*, is building the capacity of 40 self-employed Village-based Advisors (VBAs) in Makueni County to rapidly create demand for the KDV4 maize variety, and improved soil/crop management practices, and to sell seed to farmers.

VBAs create demand by disseminating small (25 g) packs of seeds, donated by partner seed Companies, to enable farmers to experiment with the varieties on their own farms in a low risk way. Having succeeded with the small packs, farmers request their VBAs to sell them seed in larger pack sizes.

Between September and November 2015, VBAs in the lowlands of Makueni County sold 3,640 kg seed of the KDV4 variety to 580 farmers.



Christine Mutindi (pictured above) is a FIPS-Africa Network Coordinator (NC) in Mbooni East. She sold 2000 kg of seed of the KDV4 variety through her network of 20 VBAs to 300 farmers. The following are farmers who benefited from buying seed from her VBAs.

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Ruth Syombua of Lung'u village bought 4 kg seed of the KDV4 variety. "This season I will harvest more than 10 (90 kg) bags from my half an acre. I used to harvest 5 bags from this plot. It is the first time I will be having enough food for the whole year."



Damaris Mainga says the rains were reliable this season, just as they were in 1997. "What I will harvest this season will be much more than what I harvested in 1997 because along with this variety, I have managed my crop well."

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Munge Msyule of Lung'u village bought 4 kg seed of the KDV4 maize variety. "I am impressed by the performance of this variety. It is promising and I expect to harvest at least 11 (90 kg) bags."



Angeline Msyoka bought 2 kg seed of KDV4. "I bought it because the seed I planted from the small pack did well on my own farm last season," she says. She expects to harvest 4 bags from her part of the farm where she used to harvest only 1 bag of maize.

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Emily Nduge of Mithumo village bought 4 kg seed of KDV4 after being impressed by its performance last season. She used to plant local 'Kikamba' varieties.



Catherine Mainga of Ngongwe village also bought 4 kg seed of the KDV4 variety after being impressed by its performance last season.

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Ruth Muoka of Ngongwe village is also happy with the performance of the KDV4 maize variety. She has been planting drought-tolerant maize but the KDV performs better than the rest she says.



VBA Angeline of Mithumo village also bought 2 kg seed of the KDV4 maize variety. “Farmers are full of joy when they see a variety so promising like the KDV4.”

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Douglas Mutisya of Yanzonga village by a plot where he planted the KDV4 maize. He expects to harvest 8 more bags from his half acre of land.



Christine Ndula expects to harvest 10 (90kg) bags of maize. Had she planted the local varieties, the small-holder farmer would expect to harvest only 6 bags from the same plot.

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Janet Muonga of Ivumbi village expects to harvest 5 bags of maize from her quarter acre of land. She could only harvest 2 bags of maize from the same plot two seasons ago. “I used to recycle seed of a local variety but through the VBA I learnt that I was wasting time and energy in the field. I now harvest enough thanks to her advice.”



Regina Makau of Nyaanya village has fallen in love with KDV4 because “it is early maturing and has bigger cobs compared to other varieties I usually grow on my farm,” she says. She planted 4 kg seed of the variety and expects to harvest 11 (90 kg) bags of maize. In a good season (with reliable rain), the farmer says she would only have been able to harvest a maximum of 8 bags.

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