

Organic Production in Rwanda

Background

- Rwandans have always practised organic production extensively to ensure food self sufficiency
- But with high increase in population currently at 354 persons/km, organic matter drastically reduced
- Our hilly terrain accelerated soil erosion washing away the little organic matter
- The 1990- 1994 war & genocide destroyed most forests worsening the situation further
- The 1994 genocide totally destroyed capacity to manage land including organic matter production
- The above facts collectively led to a country that in 1994 had lost almost all organic matter
- ✓ lowering agricultural productivity hence unable to feed her population
- ✓ Use of inorganic fertilizers was useless due to lack of organic matter to hold them

Coping Mechanism

- Use of organic matter in an intensive manner started as a way to cope with reduced farm holdings & lower productivity
- With the villagisation policy, some families ended up with 30mx30m plot
- Hence the need to find means of obtaining enough food from these small plot
- Intensive use of organic matter led to surplus production leading to the emergence of market oriented production
- It also led to changes in government policy and legal reforms to facilitate organic production

Market Oriented Organic Initiatives

- Organic Chilli Production



- ✓ Involves 250 small scale farmers in a form of cooperative-Chillix
- ✓ Has an organic certificate
- ✓ Exports to EU
- ✓ Has changed the lives of members and workers-tuition, medical

Organic Apple Bananas Production

- Farmers cooperatives have been linked with an export company Floris
- Cooperative is made of 583 small holders
- Have been assisted to get organic certificate
- Govt assists in the supply on clean plantlets



Market Oriented Organic Initiatives

- Organic Geranium production
- ✓ Local company –Ikirezi in association with women cooperative produce organic geranium oil for export
- ✓ Cooperative involves 450 women
- ✓ Has got an organic certificate

Organic Silk Production

- We are working with Clinton and Hunter foundation to scale up Organic Silk Production



Organic coffee production

- Because farmers have been growing coffee applying fertilizers & pesticides, arrangements have started towards conversion
- We are facilitating farmers with the cost of certification
- We are also helping in building farmers capacities

What is the Government doing?

- Fertilizer strategy stresses the importance of the use of organic manure
- Seed policy emphasis organic seeds
- Established Rwanda Bureau of standards that carries certification and has been equipped for the purpose
- Rwanda horticulture Development Authority is promoting organic horticulture production for niche market
- Organic Centre Points and Zoning are being establishing
- Capacity building & farmers facilitation towards organic certification are top priorities
- Arrangements are underway with ADF & NUR to train local certifiers in an attempt to reduce cost of certification
- One cow per poor household programme
- Aggressive afforestation, agroforestry & reforestation programme to increase biomass for organic production
- Radical & progressive terracing
- General restocking of livestock

Constraints

- High cost of certification
- Weak capacities among both farmers and technicians
- Local certification needs accreditation to be acceptable
- Foreign certification bodies do not stay longer to help farmers
- Certification process is too long and farmers get certificates few months to expiry date.