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STRENGTHENING EXTENSION SERVICES TO SUPPORT THE REJUVINATION OF COFFEE INDUSTRY IN TANZANIA

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Introduction

The Tanzania Coffee Research Institute (TaCRI) has released top hybrid coffee varieties that combine high yields and good beverage quality with resistance to the devastating diseases – coffee leaf rust (CLR) and coffee berry disease (CBD) for Arabica and coffee wilt disease (CWD) for Robusta. TaCRI has also packaged good agricultural practices (GAPs) for the new varieties including packages for the rehabilitation of old farms of the old varieties. Despite the above efforts to develop new varieties and packaging reserach recommendations, one of the challenges has been weak extensions services for delivery of clear extension messages to coffee growers leading to low dissemination of coffee technologies. We describe our approaches used in strengthening the extension services to support the rejuvenation of coffee industry in Tanzania.

Methods

The Tanzania Coffee Research Institute (TaCRI) has releasedIn addressing the problem of low productivity and production, TaCRI has put much empahsis on strengtheing the extension services for delivery of good agricultural practices (GAPs) to coffee growers. A number of extension methodologies have been well defined and applied to extension officers of the public and private sectors including lead farmers. Such extension methodologies that TaCRI is currently deploying in technolgy transfer include but not limited to provision of training courses to extension officers of all sectors, facilitatig the extension officers through provision of transport, conduct extension visits/study tours, developing and distribution of extesnion materials with clear extension messages in simple language. Further, we have adopted a farmer to farmer approach by training lead farmers (including provision of motorcyles) who then work with extension officers to train their fellow farmers on the application of good agricultural practices (GAPs) to increase productivity and hybrid seedlings multiplication for replanting programme.

Fig.1 Training of extension officers and lead farmers of good agricultural practices (GAPs)

Results/Discussion

Notable achievements have been realized whereby 12,918 extension officers and 4,206 farmer promoters/lead farmers trained in GAPs and hybrid seedlings multiplication thus improving access to planting materials of the improved hybrid varieties and application of GAPs by coffee growers. We have documented yield increase of up to 2 Kg of parchment per tree in areas where coffee farmers received technical backstopping on application of good agricultural practices by by the extension officers and lead farmers. Further, provsion of technical skills by officers and lead farmers to farmer managed coffee nurseries have aincreased access to hyrid seedlings of coffee varieties and farmers have replanted their farms with improved coffee varieties.

Conclusion/Perspectives

This paper has outlined various innovative strategies used in strengthening the extension services to support the rejuvenation of coffee industry in Tanzania. Therefore, multiple approaches/strategies in addressing weak extension services is a way forward to speed up the dissemination of research recommendations to coffee growers.

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