

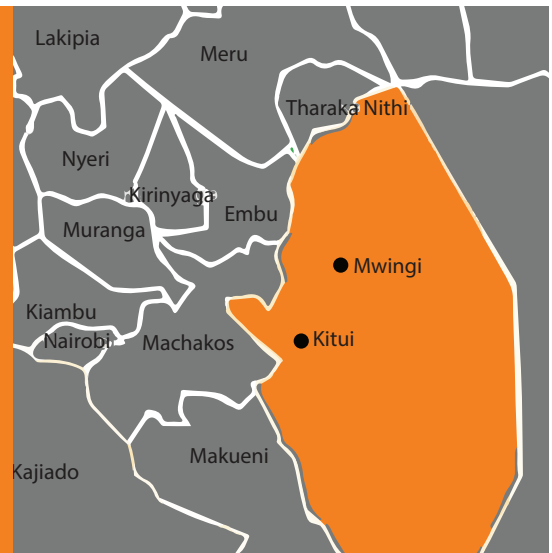
COMMUNITY BASED SEED SYSTEMS

LOCATION: Kitui County; Kenya
DURATION: 2014 - 2016

Farm Africa is helping 5,000 resource-poor subsistence farmers in Kitui County by supporting the community-based production of drought tolerant crop seeds.

The project enables farmers to improve their incomes sustainably by growing drought-tolerant, commercially attractive sorghum and green gram crops. The farmers are encouraged to work collectively in producer groups, which helps them increase production volumes and profit through joint marketing. Agronomy training is provided to improve crop production and postharvest handling; business training is given to enable farmers to access commercial markets at competitive prices.

Cowpeas, Kitui County, Kenya | Photo: Farm Africa



Map of Lower Eastern, Kenya
Project Areas: Kitui

TACKLING THE FOOD INSECURITY CHALLENGE

Kitui County, forms part of Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands. It is one of the most food insecure regions of Kenya, with more than 60% of the population relying on food aid.

Poverty levels in Kitui are among the highest in Kenya and still rising, despite falling in many other areas in the country. Many people still rely on subsistence, rain-fed agriculture that is highly vulnerable to drought, resulting in typically low productivity.

To help address these challenges, Farm Africa is working with 480 smallholder farmers to produce certified seeds for drought tolerant crops, generating income for the seed producers and making high quality seed locally available for neighbouring farmers to help boost yields.

AN INNOVATIVE SEED PRODUCTION MODEL

Improved drought-tolerant crop varieties such as sorghum, green grams, pigeon peas, and cowpeas, have proven to be successful in water-scarce conditions. However, these varieties have not been widely adopted by many small-scale farmers, due to unavailability in rural areas, price and caution. Many farmers are reluctant to invest without seeing the benefits first-hand. Farm Africa has adopted a Community Based Seed System (CBSS) model that also provides technical support to farmers producing quality seeds. The seeds are fully inspected by government agencies, and subsequently made available to other farmers via established agro dealer networks. The model also builds links with the private sector in order to make it sustainable.



STRENGTHENING THE SEED SYSTEM



Partnerships

Farm Africa signed a memorandum of understanding with FreshCo Seeds, which provides high quality parental seed to farmers and then buys back the multiplied seeds. Under this agreement, the farmers are registered as official seed producers with the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) and have their crops inspected and certified. Farm Africa also identifies agro dealers in the county to sell the seed. Other players such as the Ministry of Agriculture provide extension services, training and support to farmers and ensure project implementation and documentation of lessons learnt.



Outcomes

Expected results by the end of the project include:

- An established network of agro dealers to provide certified seeds to farmers.
- At least 5,000 smallholder farmers have access to affordable, drought tolerant, quality seeds.
- An increase in productivity per acre by 30% thus improving household food security and creating surpluses for sale. 480 farmers to profit from selling seeds to a seed company.
- Ministry of Agriculture staff are able to support and disseminate the use and multiplication of improved drought tolerant seed varieties among farmers.
- Project lessons and learnings are well documented and disseminated

