

Field Report – Makonde, Runene, Friday 25 September 2015

Background information

Runene is one of the project 3 pilot sites for FACASI, a baseline study was done for the area and a demo plot was set up in the area last season. A kit of a two wheel tractor and a Fitarelli single row planter were given to the ward last season. Focus has mainly been on Makonde, Kasoko area on selection of service providers and Runene was somehow “forgotten”. The Mechanization department at district level in Makonde are not interested in the area and have been asking FACASI to move out of the area as they think that it a low potential area, having conditions of Natural Region IV. However FACASI still want to spread the technology to this area as CA would improve their farming hence the visit.

Objectives

- Update of FACASI activities in other sites
- Proposal to set up a demonstration plot
- Planned operation of the available machinery in the group
- Introduce business development officer to the group

Findings

Farmers were happy to note that the SP business is being set up in other sites, and expressed their interest in being service providers in the next season.

A proposal to have a group of youths as service providers was welcome by the group and a local businessman expressed his interest in procuring a multipurpose sheller to offer services.

Nyson Primary School was selected as the best site for setting up a demonstration plot for the season. FACASI wanted an area where there is water where all year round demonstrations for the two wheel tractor and or implements will be set up, unfortunately there was no such site since water is a problem in the area with very low water tables.

Last season the demo plot was established late and the crop ended up dying due to the prevailing weather conditions, however effectiveness of the single row planter on planting was seen since all the crops had germinated well.

Equipment was brought to the area and was said to be belonging to the ward, however FACASI would now want Runene to operate as a group with a business unit offering services to the community. The members who had remained active with the machine would be the members of the group and would share ownership of the business kit.

Some farmers expressed concern of the single row planter and their rocky terrain proposing trying a double row planter, but other members who had grown to Kasoko and seen the double row planter told the other that the single row planter would be the best considering their terrains, siting the only improvement needed on the single row planter was use of heavy metal so that the disk cuts into the soil. In the previous season farmers were using weights(a bag of sand) which they would put on the planter handles for the disc to cut into the ground. This however caused damage to the handles which were now cracking but they have been repaired.

Farmers were told to start operating a business as a group and the proceeds should be used for maintenance of the equipment, whilst the group would decide what to do with the remainder of the proceeds

The group would operate as a lab group where FACASI can come in anytime to take the equipment for use for project activities

Concerns were raised on mobility offering services with the single row planter which would need someone to walk behind it when operating. Farmers were promised a FACASI trailer that is not being used to use it to ferry the planter from one location to the other and for other business as well.

Farmers were told about the need of a licensed operator for operating the two wheel tractor, and they advised their trained drivers to take the necessary measures for the job.

Farmers asked the possibility of applying ground manure using the planter, they were advised to be innovative and try the various measures they might be thinking, like attaching a bag of manure and a pipe which would be dropping manure into the field on planting with the planter, since FACASI has not yet tried it.

The group requested for various plates for the planter so they can plant a number of crops, their planter came with one.

Farmers were happy to see the business development officer who would help them with establishing their business and its operations

Conclusion and recommendations

The equipment in Runene was originally given to the ward; hence the active members should now form a closed group with a few members for management of the business since some would want to come on board if they know that it involves money.

The group should mobilise their proceeds from the planting season so that they can buy a multipurpose sheller and continue building up their business kit and remain in business.

Runene farmers can use the trailer for transport business, they can also forge deals with the cotton farmers so they can ferry their cotton to the buying points for a fee since they will be having a trailer.

Pictures



Meeting with farmers in Runene



Youths who attended the meeting in Runene