

Mechanizing Potato Farming (Agrimech Collaboration with GIZ)

Agrimech in partnership with GIZ NuSePP Project (on potato in Nyandarua County) has conducted Potato Value-Chain Investor Field-days with great success. Through these days, the place for mechanization and the huge savings that bring seasonal costs from about Ksh 95,000 to Ksh 35,000 have been appreciated. For example, farmers observed that what took some 50 workers to do all day in a potato harvesting operation took only 2 hours with a 2-row potato harvester.



The Young and the Old, the Farmer and the MSP, the Machinery Seller, County Leaders and others, all came out to learn together... The greatest part of such days is what follows in terms of real mechanization service and change for the farmers... Farming does not have to be so difficult and dirty?!... Modern farming is cool and attractive to youth...





Farmers learn the “Mechanization Way to Modern Farming” and the place for specialized fertilisers... Potato farming is all about the size of the ridge the farmer is able to form. The easiest and most impactful for high yields is the one made so easily by the tractor... Mechanization will NOT create unemployment for our Labourers... It will release them to do more honourable and less tiring jobs with their very able hands... What 20 labourers do in 4 days, can be done in one morning, planting potatoes with machinery... So, which is the better way? and why wait?



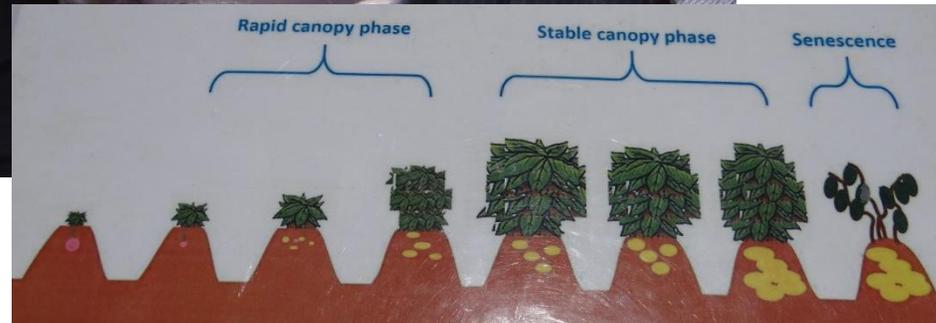


Farmers learnt of all manner of machinery and their specialized uses. Then they left wondering why they thought their Mechanization Service Provider (MSP) Kamau (in their village) was mechanized with only a plough and harrow for all crops...? The questions that kept coming up are, “How do I get these machines working on my farm!?” and “At what price?”... Development and progress is about getting good answers to these clever farmers’ questions, among the many others that came in continuously!!





*This picture is the Ultimate Demonstration of Modern, Mechanized Potato Farming. The Soil Ripper to the Right breaks all obstruction (Hard Pan) - to change soil into a Sponge Mattress, ready to receive and hold the upcoming rains. The resulting conditions are easily served with fertilizer by hand or from a Fertilizer Spreader (a Machine). The machine to the left, The Bedder, beats the soil on the Right to a soft texture, and forms ridges (or beds) in one pass. The resulting bed is ready for potato seed, to be placed by the next machine, with the same tractor. This potato is assured to thrive, come poor or harsh rains. This way, the Plough, Several Harrows, Ridger and Labour to plant are replaced, effectively and with results that are seen in terms of costs saved and yields that are doubled and even quadrupled, - simply from the way soil is prepared. **This is Conservation Agriculture for a Tuber-Crop!***



Farmers learn from a Potato Seed Company the power and benefits of planting quality seed (THE RIGHT WAY, TO DERIVE MAXIMUM BEBEBITS) ...That is AT THE TOP of the ridge. Not in the furrow, please (See picture to the Right)

Mechanizing Cereal farming



Depending on the final soil condition needed by the farmer, a plough with related discs like in 1 and 2 can be used. For conservation Agriculture a Chiseling operation like in 3 can precede a refining and compacting pass like in 4.



Special narrow wheelbase tractor for working between orchard trees. Special custom-made tractors like this one can be more expensive than a higher power and bigger size tractor.

