DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

# The Weekly

## Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

## Climate-smart Agriculture

Experts and policy-makers agree that to continue feeding the growing population of the world, agricultural output must increase. The Food and Agriculture Organization predicts that this increase will reach 60% by 2050.

Whether it is at a global, national or local level, scaling up agricultural production to some extent requires the exploitation of more productive lands.

Within the context of climate change, that translates into higher emissions from forest degradation, livestock production and the reduced capacity of forests to suck up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Climate-smart agriculture tries to balance the opposing sides of ensuring food security while reducing the impact of agriculture on climate change.

## What is climate-smart agriculture?

In 2010, the FAO argued that agriculture must reinvent itself to meet the challenges of feeding everyone while remaining resilient to climate change.

At the Hague Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change, it proposed the concept of climate-smart agriculture, whose definition is still in the works, but can be summarised as an agricultural approach that meets sustainable development goals.

In other words, it is agriculture that is no longer simply about increasing productivity, but also incorporates environmental and economic sustainability concerns.

On a micro-scale, it deals with finding a balance between producing more food, in a way that is profitable and resilient to the impacts of climate change -- yet less damaging to the natural system.

There is no universal model or prescription of what climate-smart agriculture should look like. It is influenced by local realities and is thus case-specific in practice.

Climate-smart agriculture will become increasingly important in the Cameroonian context, where agriculture is the mainstay of economic growth and the eradication of poverty.

But exactly what does this imply on the ground? Especially now that the government is pursuing what it terms “second generation agriculture.”

# Activities for Journalists

Records from the past fifty years show that Cameroon has become hotter and dryer over time. This trend is likely to continue and even worsen in the future.

Farm output across the country is already declining as a result of these dramatic changes in climate variables. There are also problems such as soil degradation and other issues resulting from the over-exploitation of lands.

In addition to declining productivity, farmers will also be forced to shift to new crop varieties as conditions become too harsh for indigenous crops. Think about what might have caused the sudden disappearance within a year or two of Colocasia from parts of southwest and northwest Cameroon and parts of Nigeria.

The point is -- to stay in business farmers must adapt to the new realities, if they have not already done so.

Yet adaptation is not always that simple: it costs money and often requires abandoning centuries-old practices and ways of life and moving in a new direction.

While climate-smart agriculture may require radical changes in some parts of the world, in the case of Cameroon, it might just be an opportunity to make small adjustments, even at the most local level.

Some experts argue that Cameroonian farmers already practiced climate smart agriculture even before the term came about.

## What you can do

Climate-smart agriculture is a newsworthy (relevant, timely and even controversial) subject in that it affects your audience – farmers – directly.

With this in mind, the task of the media is to raise awareness about climate-smart agriculture, use local examples to highlight its benefits and explore the controversies surrounding it.

Being a new and evolving subject, the reporting and programming objective might work best if it takes an educational approach. Therefore, ask:

- What is climate smart agriculture? What are its benefits and how can local communities adopt it? Bring a local NGO official or expert to the studio to discuss climate smart farming.
- What elements of climate-smart agriculture are already being used? Let the audience call in and identify what they think climate-smart is.
- What controversies surround climate-smart agriculture? Bring in an expert to discuss opportunities of climate smart agriculture.
- How is climate-smart agriculture delivering results elsewhere in the country or the world?

**Useful links**

Read more about climate-smart agriculture: www.fao.org/climate-smart-agriculture/en/, www.fao.org/climatechange/climatesmart/en/ https://ccafs.cgiar.org/climate-smart-agriculture-0

Examples of and studies on climate-smart agriculture in Cameroon: www.imfn.net/climate-change-adaptation-cameroon's-model-forests, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2012/02/16222367/degraded-pasturelands-climate-smart-livestock-production-systems-northwest-cameroon

Climate-smart agriculture controversy: http://www.i-sis.org.uk/No_to_CSA.php

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