

The Seed

Seed Traders Association
of Malawi (STAM)

Volume 1

First Edition 2021

M A G A Z I N E





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The Seed MAGAZINE

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Affordable Inputs Programme (AIP) is a successor of Farm Inputs Subsidy Programme (FISP) that was implemented by the Malawi Government through the Ministry of Agriculture in the

2020/21 farming season.

The importance of this program for the people of Malawi and the nation as whole cannot be overemphasized. Projections are that proper implementation will unleash Malawi's agricultural potential that will result in the attainment of not only food security at household and national levels but it might also reduce poverty and boost the economy.

Seed is one farm input central to the success of AIP and it remains indisputable, that the quality of seeds is an invaluable asset to the realization of bumper yield. Meaning, collaboration of players in seed industry and government towards meeting the objectives of AIP is one significant undertaking that doesn't require over emphasizing.

This is where Seed Trade Association of Malawi (STAM) comes into the picture being the umbrella body of improved certified of seed dealers in the country.

The association and other stakeholders need to provide information to farmers about quality improved certified seeds, let alone strategies that safeguard farmers from unscrupulous seed traders.

Therefore, this publication aims to positively promote awareness on use of improved certified seed by farmers and present to the public at large reliable seed growers, producers, distributors as well as sellers.

Good seed help farmers achieve bumper yield assuring food security at national level and effectively improving the financial wellbeing of the farming communities; the nation alike. And the same enhance the drive towards the Government-supported agriculture commercialization goal.

In this edition we have also zeroed on AIP successes, challenges and the way forward.

Let me take this opportunity to applaud STAM and seed companies for supporting the production of this publication through technical information and the placing of adverts respectively.

Your feedback, be it positive or negative, will help us improve the content of this publication.

Enjoy your reading!

Joseph Mzimba
TMM Group Editor



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FOREWORD



My warm greetings to all readers and seed value chain players. It is with honor and great pleasure that I present to you this edition of Seed Magazine that highlights developments in the seed industry.

This publication will also serve as a vital medium for information dissemination to enable the achievement of key objectives of Seed Trade Association of Malawi (STAM)

With seed being the foundation of life and food security, in 2004, players in the seed industry decided to cooperate through the establishment of STAM to influence and strengthen policies and regulations that guide seed trade.

Today, STAM is proud to be associated with major policy changes that create a conducive environment for seed business in Malawi. STAM works closely with other stakeholders in the Agriculture sector in the implementation of various activities aimed at improving access to seed and raising awareness on the use of improved certified seeds and associated technologies.

We are delighted to work with Ministry of Agriculture in the implementation of key programs such as the Affordable Input Program (AIP). We are committed to delivering high quality certified seeds to the farming community.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of STAM and its Twenty-Five Members, I would like to thank Malawian Farmers for adopting improved agriculture technologies for increased food, income, and nutrition security.

I further extend the Association's gratitude to development partners such as USAID and others for the support to the Malawi seed sector. In Agriculture, research is key and we recognize the efforts by all agricultural research institutions in supporting the industry's great work.

Welcome and I hope you enjoy reading this edition.

Chibondi Dalitso Ngombe

STAM Chairperson

SECRETARIAT REMARKS



Seed Trade Association of Malawi (STAM) is apex body of seed companies in Malawi formed in 2004 primarily to promote use of certified seed and contribute towards policy formulation in agriculture sector.

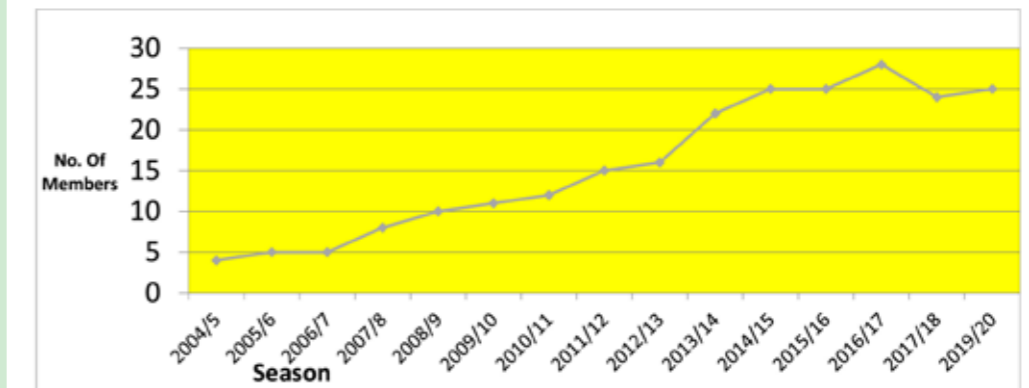
The Association focuses on bringing value to its members and farmers by ensuring that there is a strong seed system in Malawi.

STAM in its activities collaborates with relevant Ministries and departments such as Department of Agricultural Research Services, Farmer organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations.

Awareness creation on polices, regulations and significance of using improved planting materials and associated technologies is the major undertaking of the Association.

Capacity building for its members, registered Agrodealers, farmers and other stakeholders in the seed value chain is another critical function of STAM in addition to contribution to national and regional seed policy development.

STAM membership continues to grow currently at 25 seed companies registered with the association taking technologies from shelves to the field of farmers.



STAM is a proud member of African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) a continental mother body of national seed associations. At 2020, AFSTA general Assembly, STAM was elected Executive Board Member.

Welcome to 2021 first edition!

Supply Chisi

STAM Business Development Officer

Industry stakeholders sensitized on SADC harmonised seed regulations



The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Harmonised Seed Regulatory System articulates rules, standards, procedures and supporting measures necessary to facilitate the movement of seed between countries in the region.

By STAM Secretariat 

In an effort to address the knowledge gap on the what the harmonisation rules entail, the national seed association of the country, Seed Trade Association of Malawi (STAM) with financial support from USAID through Southern Africa Seed Trade Project conducted series of meetings to create awareness among its members, policy makers, custom officers and farmers on SADC Harmonised Seed Regulations (HSR).

“We realised, from an assessment that we carried out among our members, that most seed trade players and other stakeholders are aware of the existence of the regional agreements but lack proper in-depth detail as to what the HSR entails,” says Supply Chisi, the Business Development Officer for the Association.

Government customs officers and customs clearing agents at border posts were targeted to ensure that they understand the system for safe and faster movement of seed at the border.

STAM also brought together on two occasions, our members, policy makers and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) in the agriculture sector for them

to understand the significance of the HSR to the country, particularly to farmers.

Malawian farmers have generally welcomed the domestication of SADC HSR as it will widen their choices on varieties and make seeds relatively cheaper. Seed suppliers are now well informed of the SADC HSR and are ready to use the system once domesticated.

Malawi in general is almost ready for the domestication of SADC harmonised regulations having the 2018 Seed Policy recognising the SADC regulations and that the Seed Bill which is at a very advanced stage is already aligned to SADC seed trade agreements.

Capacity building at all levels is required to ensure smooth utilization of SADC seed system. It is envisaged that the system once domesticated, will increase investments in the seed sector, improve access to high quality seed, create job opportunities to the youths and reduce cost of doing seed business in the SADC region.



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Global Seeds new groundnut varieties turn into farmers' choice

By Our Reporter



The number of local farmers in Malawi who are embracing improved groundnuts seed introduced by an indigenous seed company, Global Seeds, is steadily rising after it has been proved that the new varieties are resistant to rosette, a disease that attacks the crop, affecting its yield

This was evident at the eight (8) hectare Mlare site in Mitundu Lilongwe, where Global Seeds organised a field visit on March 17, 2021 to allow farmers appreciate the performance of one of the new varieties called CG11.

A Mchinji District-based female farmer, Dalitso Mombera, who formed part of the field-visiting team was impressed with the healthy-looking crop, saying it was promising a good and profitable harvest.

"When a farmer like me sees such improved performance of crops in the field you know that it will be a year of more benefits," she said.

Mombera further said it was quite pleasing that apart from providing improved seed varieties, Global Seeds is also imparting practical knowledge to farmers on how to tend to the crop.

She attested that she planted a Global Seeds groundnuts variety known as CG 9 and was happy that the seed manufacturer provided the best extension assistance which resulted in her taking good care of her field.

"I ended up having a better crop yield and as a farmer, what more can I ask for," Mombera said, sounding pleased.

Apart from farmers drawn from Mchinji, Kasungu, Dowa, Salima and Lilongwe, the event also attracted



Global Seeds officials, farmers and other stakeholders inspecting a groundnuts field

partners in farming such as banks among other stakeholders.

“When a farmer like me sees such improved performance of crops in the field you know that it will be a year of more benefits”

In his remarks, Managing Director for Global Seeds, Shane Phiri, emphasized on need to have modern and improved agricultural inputs if smallholder farmers are to be empowered economically.

Phiri said there are a lot of factors that are affecting crop production such as diseases, climate change among others, and farmers need new tools in order to combat these problems.

"As a company, we'll always strive to provide farmers with varieties that will resist these factors so that, at the end of the day, farmers should benefit from their toiling," he said.

Phiri announced that the seed manufacturer is now promoting a new elite rosette resistant variety called CG11 that has a high productivity and a tested improved field yield.

"This rosette resistant variety is an integrated solution to combat Afratoxin to make Malawi groundnuts more marketable both locally and internationally," he said.

The Managing Director explained that groundnuts being a viable cash crop, such high yielding variety will help increase earnings the country gets from its agricultural produce.

"Groundnuts is one key crop as we diversify from tobacco and there's a very good market out there for farmers to exploit," Phiri said.

Meanwhile, Global Seeds Sales and Marketing officer, Micheal Grey Chibwe has disclosed that the uptake of the new variety has been positive to the extent that works to increase the volumes of the seed are already in progress.

"We have multiplied the seed and come next season, it will be largely available," Chibwe said, explaining further that their field engagement was to allow farmers appreciate how the CG11 is performing and it was an undertaking worthwhile gauging by the farmers' response at the event.

Global Seeds has since partnered with a market research firm, Prosper Markets, to ensure that farmers have access to reliable markets for their harvest.

Marketing Manager for Prosper Markets, Mercy Butao said the partnership of the two entities is aimed at addressing one of a crucial needs in farmers' realm, which is readily availability of a reliable market for produce.

She observed that farmers have lacked reliable markets to sell their products for long, so Prosper Markets came in to work with other players, first, to link farmers to improved input suppliers like Global Seeds for improved produce, after that, link farmers to off takers such as Afrinut, ETG, Cori so they can sell their commodities to reliable markets.

"In short, we are making a linkage between three players from production to the market," Butao said.



Bayer secures farmers best chance for high crop yield

One of the leading crop science companies operating in Malawi Bayer says quality and innovative products as well as best on-field support the company offers to local farmers ensure best chance for high crop yield.

By Chiku Jere 

Expressing these sentiments is Bayer Malawi Limited's Country Head Chikondi Dalitso Ng'ombe in her written response to a questionnaire from *The Messenger Media* (TMM), official publishers of *The Seed*.

"Our first step is to ensure that we produce quality and innovative products that provide the best chance for high crop yields and support many activities to demonstrate and showcase how best that can be attained in practice using various partners and research institutions," she says.

In Malawi, seed producer Bayer focuses on Crop Science providing the Dekalb premium maize seed hybrid varieties as a major product and other crop protection chemicals.

Ng'ombe says her company's activities are guided by a purpose - 'Science for a Better Life'- which inspires their vision - 'Health for All, Hunger for None'.

Among the Dekalb brand seed varieties the company produce are DKC90-89, DKC80-33, DK777 and DKC80-53, while crop protection chemicals include weed control - Auxo, Harness, Round-up, insecticides - Decis Forte, Belt for Fall Army worm, Velum, Confidor for tobacco, and fungicides like Folicur, as well as post-harvest control K-obiol.

According to Ng'ombe, the company has lined up several other new products whose launch is in the pipeline. As one of the major players in the seed industry and



Ng'ombe

agriculture sector as whole, Bayer Malawi Limited team is said to be constantly looking for ways on how they can play their part in the government-led concerted efforts towards developing the country's agri-business industry.

"We work with different stakeholders to achieve this. We focus on developing long term partnerships with

farmers, agro-dealers, distributors, relevant government ministries, NGOs and research institutions to ensure we are creating sustainable opportunities for all players in the industry," she explains.

Besides, Ng'ombe says Bayer's involvement in the Affordable Input Program (AIP) is one of the company's contribution towards the nation's improved agricultural productivity.

The Country Head applauded the 2020/21 AIP as a success, citing the new technologies introduced which supported a higher number of beneficiaries as well as helped increase access to quality seed for many farmers.

“Our first step is to ensure that we produce quality and innovative products that provide the best chance for high crop yields and support many activities to demonstrate and showcase how best that can be attained in practice using various partners and research institutions

"It is pleasing to note that this year the process of preparing for AIP has started much earlier which indicates the pressure we were under last year will be lessened as there is more time to plan for execution," says her, envisaging much more improved implementation of the initiative during 2021/22 season and seasons to come.

Overall, Ng'ombe describes the reformed farm input program as one of the effective tools that can set the country on a right path leading to sustainable growth of the economy through agri-business.

She says Bayer has a well-coordinated market distribution strategy involving a variety of distributors and agro-dealers that ensures that their products are fully represented across all districts of the country, effectively making the farm inputs readily accessible to farmers, even in remotest areas.

Bayer Malawi Limited Head asserts that the seed producer's main focus is on farmers, ensuring that the company consistently finds innovative solutions to problems that farmers are facing.

"We put the farmer at the centre of our operations, so our seed and products offer solutions that ensure maximum crop yield," she reiterates.

In terms of stiff competition on the local Agri-market, Ng'ombe says that's what encourages Bayer's innovations that win over farmers.

"We promise to keep working on improving while bringing our products and services closer to the farmer at an affordable price," she declares.

Bayer Malawi Limited is part of a German drugs and crop chemicals global company Bayer, which recently took over the United States seed firm, Monsanto, leading to a change of operating name locally.



Demeter hails Govt. for increasing AIP beneficiaries

Demeter Seed Agriculture has applauded government for introducing Affordable Inputs Programme (AIP) and increasing number of farming families accessing the affordable farm inputs saying the move will help increase food production both at household and national level, as well as rake in income for farmers through sale of surplus.

By Joseph Mizimbe 

Speaking in an exclusive interview, company's National Sales Manager Benson Banda hailed the revised affordable farm inputs system, describing it as a viable path towards achieving food security for the country.

Banda went ahead and pronounced the 2020/21 AIP as a success in its first year of implementation, explaining that as a stakeholder were able to easily access top Ministry of Agriculture officials for quick problem resolution.

"It was really pleasing to note that this time around, unlike with the coupon system, officials were at hand to promptly rectify challenges such as the supposed network glitches," he said.

Banda however quickly explained that what was thought to be network problem had to do with the internet server's inability to accommodate information simultaneously punched into the system by various suppliers, which resulted in long queues at selling points.

The other challenge was that farmers and agro-dealers were not conversant with smart phone usage



Demeter GM Prashant Khatri Banda: National Sales Manager

as evidenced through punching of data into other suppliers' accounts, but the good part of it was that they were able to reconcile, the Sales Manager said.

“It was really pleasing to note that this time around, unlike with the coupon system, officials were at hand to promptly rectify challenges such as the supposed network glitches”



Banda(R) taking the seeds to farmers



A proud farmer showcasing health plant



A smile on farmer's face at his field tells it all

On preparations for next growing season, Demeter Seed Agriculture has increased production and is stocking all its agro-dealer shops across the country, ready to go.

The National Sales Manager assured farmers that the company will never compromise when it comes to providing them high quality seeds that can survive drought; climate change alike.

"As we have always done, we are well set to provide farmers the best of our services during the 2021-22 agricultural season. We are stocking seeds in all our outlets throughout the country in preparation for AIP as well as commercial buyers, targeting both small-scale and commercial farmers."

"We strive to distribute our certified quality seeds even in hard-to-reach areas as a way of helping farmers cut travelling expenses. We are the only company in Malawi with the largest network of agro-dealers; from Nsanje to Chitipa, Mchinji to Nkhata-bay," Banda said, adding that they also serve farmers from neighbouring countries such as Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania.

He encouraged all farmers who will be beneficiaries of government's AIP to go for Demeter seed brands, because that is the only way they will be assured of maximum crop yield.

Banda touted the uniqueness of Demeter seeds in its affordability and easy accessibility on the market.

"Producing seeds is costly, but we always try to maintain our market prices on the lower side because we always consider farmers," he said.

Among hybrid maize varieties, the seed company produces and dispatches across the country is MH26 (Mphangala), whose attributes include high yielding, drought tolerant, poundable, sweet when roasted and early maturity.

Others maize varieties include Open Pollinated Varieties (OPV) namely ZM523 (*Nchotsankhawa*) - drought tolerant, early maturing and does well in lakeshore areas - and ZM309 (*Kachansanga*), which matures in 90 days after planting.

The company gives farmers opportunity to choose between hybrid maize whose seeds can't be re-planted and OPV whose seeds can be recycled or replanted more than once.

Maize aside, Demeter Seed Agriculture also produces various types of legumes that include high yielding Chuma beans, Tikolore Soy beans, both mature within 115 days and give yield estimate of 2.5 and 2 tons respectively.

The company has since replaced CG7 type of groundnut with CG9.

Banda's advice to farmers is: *"buy Demeter seeds from eligible agro-dealers in a bid to avoid being duped with counterfeit seeds"*.

Established in 2004, Demeter is among other agro-seed producing entities that supports 80 percent of Malawi's agricultural population which effectively contribute 30 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Steadily growing local seed producing entity, Ruster Seeds, says the 2020/21 Affordable Input Programme (AIP) has allowed the company to improve its operations in many aspects, among them its reachability to most rural farmers.

By Our Reporter 



Ruster Seeds MD Thengo

The company's Managing Director Funny Thengo disclosed this when she was responding to a questionnaire from *The Seed* magazine.

She said in as much as the program is there to help farmers access farm inputs, AIP is also boosting business in the agriculture sector as sales for upcoming agri-business entities like hers have picked.

"The Government should be commended for this insight and the increase in beneficiaries of program has had a real positive impact on our sales," Thengo said.

However, her quick advice was for government to perfect the implementation of the AIP by fixing the challenges such as network glitches and missing of names of some beneficiaries that almost marred the program last season.

"In spite of these anomalies, which the ministry of agriculture officials quickly resolved, the 2020/21 AIP was the best thing that happened to farmers," said the Managing Director, adding that her company managed to reach-out many beneficiaries.

Ruster Seeds attributes business growth to AIP



Ruster Seeds has a farm where seeds are grown

Thengo praised the cooperation her company got from Agriculture officials, from the office of the minister to Extension Planning Areas (EPAs) on the ground, saying it helped matters a lot and many challenges were resolved on time.

This time around and owing to what was learnt during 2020/21 AIP implementation, she said her company is geared for the next season, ready to provide the best quality certified seeds to the would-be 2021/22 beneficiaries, as well as farmers at large.

Ruster Seeds' main products are OPV maize seeds



Ruster Seeds are found at agro- dealer shops

which include: ZM 523, ZM 309, ZM 623; legume-NUA 45 (beans) and groundnuts (CG 7 and CG 9). ZM series, all of which mature early with moderate yields above food security benchmark.

According to Thengo, Ruster Seeds, which trades as Ruster General Suppliers has a network of agro-dealers in hard-to-reach places and the company prioritizes dispatching seed to those areas before rainy season when the roads are passable.

She said her company which multiplies certified seeds and supplies agriculture produce is flexible to

the effect that it works with other seed growers to satisfy the demand.


The company's main goal, Thengo said, is to make sure that farmers get the best seeds they need to achieve improved yield.

"We have even taken it upon ourselves to start offering free extension services through Whatsapp to farmers' groups, group SMS channel, crop demonstration and field days, just to ensure that the farmers we deal with are assisted," she said.

“ *The Government should be commended for this insight and the increase in beneficiaries of program has had a real positive impact on our sales*

Ruster Seeds which has been in the seed multiplication business for over seven years is located at Chimpikizo Village, Sub-Traditional Authority (STA) Chanthunya in Balaka District and has a shop at Kangankundi along M1 Road between Senzani and Chingeni.

The company is expanding each year and owns a farm.



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Seed Co ups efforts to serve farmers in hard to reach areas



Regional seed giant, Seed Co, is upping its game towards reaching out to farmers in hard-to-reach areas in its quest of ensuring that more farming communities have access to improved seed and new agricultural technologies that help boost crop yield.

By Chiku Jere 

The move was disclosed by the company's Commercial Director Gift Kawamba in his response to a questionnaire from Seed Trade Association (STAM) magazine - *The Seed*.

Kawamba told TMM that 'The African Seed Company' as Seed Co is fondly known has rolled out a strategic plan that targets farmers in rural, especially hard to reach areas.

"In nutshell what we have done is increased numbers of outlets by adding more agro-dealers that stock, sell and distribute our seed products. We have also engaged state companies with a wider reach like ADMARC to stock our seed in their warehouses," he said.

Seed Co is also looking at a bigger picture of contributing towards the growth of economically effective agri-business in the country.

"Over the years, we have steadily increased hybrid seed multiplication with the objective to increase hybrid adoption by the local farmers, which, in turn, will improve yield, generate more income for farmers, and effectively, improving their economic status," Kawamba narrated.

The Commercial Director further said the seed manufacturer's market coverage is countrywide with operating offices in Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu to ensure that they are close to farmers.

He explained that the company is working with seed distributors in all 205 EPAs of Malawi, and the idea is to ensure that farmers do not travel long distances to access Seed Co seeds.

"We also have teams of agronomy experts located in all of the districts, assigned to all the EPAs in Malawi to provide agronomic support to farmers regarding modern methods of farming," disclosed Kawamba.

Taking part in Affordable Input Programme (AIP)



also serve as company's contribution towards improved crop production and achievement of food sustainability for the nation.

Kawamba described the 2020/21 AIP in which Seed Co played a major role as a success, owing to the fact that it had increased number of beneficiaries from 900,000 to 4 million.

Further, the Commercial Director hailed the use of phone application in redeeming seed as a great idea which addressed the issue of fake coupons.

However, he said the challenges of low bandwidth of the app which resulted into clogging of the system and the problem of redeeming seed once the ID card has first been redeemed of fertilizer need to be solved so that the 2021/22 AIP goes smoothly.



Kawamba: We intend to reach every local farmer with our products



Seed Co's main products on the market include maize, soya, beans and various vegetables. And the company says this season it has introduced new maize hybrids as well as rice and sorghum products that are available this growing season.

Kawamba touts Seed Co hybrids as a must-choose gift for farmers owing to their good germination, tailor made for all climatic conditions of the country, tolerant to many diseases and the resultant bumper yields.

"That's all that a farmer needs in seeds and that's what Seed Co provides in its many seed products," said the Commercial Director, who, in turn, described stiff competition on seed market as 'part of the game' which helps competitors to fine tune strategies and improve their products, something

Over the years, we have steadily increased hybrid seed multiplication with the objective to increase hybrid adoption by the local farmers, which, in turn, will improve yield, generate more income for farmers, and effectively, improving their economic status.

which has resulted into farmers benefitting more through getting the best services from agri-input manufacturers.

Meanwhile, the seed giant says it intends to become a one stop shop for farmers' needs in the long run, but its mid-term strategy is to increase its product/service offering by being the solution to every need that farmers have.

Seed Co was established in Malawi in 2000, but the company was formed in 1940 by farmers who had formed a corporative in Zimbabwe.

ZIMAYAMBA NDI MBEU YOYENERA

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"Choose improved varieties" - Premium Seeds urges farmers

One of the country's prominent seed producers and marketers Premium Seeds Company (PSC) has advised farmers to go for improved seed varieties and adhere to recommended agricultural practices in order to yield more.

By **Brown Mdalla** 

PSC Managing Director Frank Samidu was speaking to *The Seed Magazine* where he stressed that this is the only way farmer can harvest more because these new varieties are customized to stand the weather as well as adapt to the type of particular soil.

"It is very painful for a farmer to toil throughout the season only to realize a handful harvest just because one made a wrong decision on the type of seed," he said.

Samidu was quite to say that his firm is not trying to impose products on farmers, saying his advice is sincere, and comes in good faith, knowing what farmers go through working in their respective fields.

"Our company has a policy of producing demand driven products. We do not impose our products on the farmers, but we strive to produce seeds that have improved characteristics, so that the farmer achieves improved yield," explained the PSC boss.

Premium Seeds Company debuted in the 2020/21 Affordable Input Program (AIP) and according to



Samidu: His company produces demand-driven products

Samidu, it was an amazing experience which gained them important lessons to the effect that the company intends to also participate in the

similar activity next season.

PSC produces maize seed varieties such as MH26 and MH31as well as legume seeds - groundnuts, beans and pigeon peas.

MH 26 maize is drought tolerant, medium maturing, high yielding (8-10) tons per hectore. The variety is resistant to gray leaf spot, maize streak virus and lodging; tolerant to maize leaf blight and has flint grain which is poundable. And MH31 is also drought tolerant, medium maturing (100-110) days, high yielding (8-10)tons per hectore. It is disease resistant to gray leaf spot, maize streak virus and lodging; tolerant to maize leaf blight and produces flint grain which is poundable as well.

“ *It is very painful for a farmer to toil throughout the season only to realize a handful harvest just because one made a wrong decision on the type of seed*

For groundnuts, the company produces varieties such as NU A45, CG7, Chitala and Msinjilo.

CG7 is red and large. It is a bunchy type, medium maturity variety, drought tolerant and has high oil content with yield potential of 25 tons per hectore.


Chitala is also a bunchy type, tan-coloured medium nuts that matures early. It has a 2 tons per hectore yield potential. As for Nsinjilo, it possess a drought tolerant attribute, tasty and matures early. It is resistant to Rosette disease and has a 2 tons per hectore potential.

As for beans, PSC produces varieties such as, sugar beans, Kholophete, Chitedze BN1 and Nyambitira, while for peas they have ICEAPO1514.

Kholophete is a high yielding creamy variety of beans with brown stripes, good for confectionery and matures within 115 days, Chitedze BN1is early maturing (65-70 days), disease resistant and has the yield potential of 2.5 ton per hectore.


According to Samidu, PSC is the fastest growing Malawian small medium enterprise that produces and distributes legume and cereal seeds to smallholder farmers across the country through agro-dealers to complement government's efforts of ensuring that the country is food secured.

The seed manufacturer was established in September 2011 and is in Blantyre - Chilimba Industrial Area.




Premium Seeds

MWAIWATHU ALIMU




MAIZE

- MH26
- MH31



BEANS:

- KHOLOPHETHE
- CHITEDZE BN 1
- MNYAMBITIRA

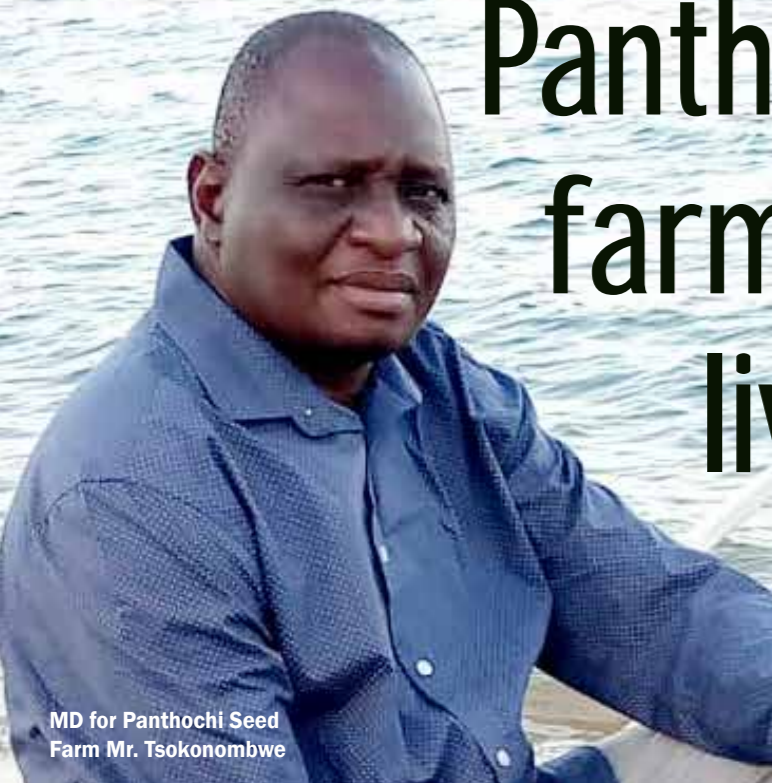


PEGEON PEAS:

- ICEAPO1514

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(0) 888 644 017/ (0) 884 746 987
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Panthochi Farm for farmers' improved living standards



MD for Panthochi Seed Farm Mr. Tsokonombwe

By Joseph Mizimbe



Mangochi-Monkey Bay-based local seed producer Panthochi Seed Farm says apart from contributing towards Malawi's attainment of food secure status, the entity's other main goal is to help improve local farmers' living standards by ensuring productivity in crop fields.

"We want to achieve this through provision of high standard certified maize and legumes seeds with increased efficiency," the local seed company's Managing Director Wellington Tsokonombwe disclosed this to *The Seed Magazine*.

To achieve this, Tsokonombwe said Panthochi is working closely with Ministry of Agriculture's Seed Services Unit (SSU) and other partners in the seed industry in order to meet recommended standards set by Malawi Government.

According to the Managing Director, through its Internal Seed Quality Control Unit, Panthochi has a strong system that ensure all processes regarding seed production are adhered to.

"We make sure that we follow to the recommended measures in term of agronomic practices, certification, treatment; marketing of products to farmers and establishment of transportation system," he said. Tsokonombwe said Panthochi Seed Farm believes

in seed promotion to enable famers get correct information.

"In addition to engaging agricultural extension workers based in the areas where farmers live, our para-seed inspectors trained by SSU also conduct regular field inspections, mounting demonstrations and train farmers in order to equip them with necessary skills to improve their crop yield," the MD narrated.

This approach also provides an opportunity to farmers to make right choice on the type of seed to grow, he said.

The seed producer said his company has benefitted a lot, in terms of capturing market, from Malawi Improved Seed System and Technology Project (MISSTP) which initiated seed demonstration activities to 100 sites in the Southern and Central regions where Panthochi products were showcased and farmers had an opportunity to recommend varieties, in the process, creating market demand for the products.

"This project helped our company enhance its relationship with farming communities. Farmers are now our advocates, no wonder Panthochi, a small seed company as it is, is popular and has been supplying seed to Government since farm input programmes started," boasted the Managing Director.



Panthochi seed being packed



Nurturing seed field



Field of green maize meant for seed

He then disclosed plans to open up role model shop at its warehouse premises located in Monkey Bay and have all its products available throughout the year to enable farmers access quality seed even during summer season.

Some of the products that Panthochi Seed Farm has on the market include: OPV Maize- ZM 523, ZM 623 and ZM 309; and legumes-Groundnuts CG7, Tikolore Soya Beans, Cow Peas (IT82-16) and Beans NUA 45.

In 2017/2018, the Department of Agricultural Research Services (DARS) in the Ministry of Agriculture through MISSTP approved Panthochi Seed Farm as one of the seed companies to be producing MH34 and the company promises to bring to the market the product soon for promotion and marketing.

Turning to the Affordable Input Programme (AIP), Tsokonombwe described the 2020/21 exercise as 'largely a success' noting to the fact that ordinary farmers in the rural areas managed to access farm inputs evidenced by the projected bumper yield this year.

"We want to achieve this through provision of high standard certified maize and legumes seeds with increased efficiency"

He said government only just need to sort out network challenges and applauded Government for starting the 2021/2022 AIP preparations in good time, saying this will address issues of late distribution of input.

"On our part, we are ready for the season and our preparations have included increasing our production to meet market demand and procured a new truck to support transportation of seed to the rural areas. We have also enhanced staff capacity and equipped them to properly manage the 2021/22 AIP activities," he said, adding that his company has increased the number of agro-dealers who will be selling Panthochi seed.

Panthochi Seed Farm was established in 2009 and it is registered with Malawi Government through DARS.



OPV MAIZE SEED

- ZM 523
- ZM 623
- ZM 309

LEGUME

- Groundnuts - CG7
- Soya Beans - TIKOLORE
- Cow Peas - IT82-16
- Beans - NUA 45

PANTHOCHI SEED FARM
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Pyxus pledges quality services to farmers



Ron Ngwira: Pyxus Agriculture Limited Malawi's Managing Director



John Gait: Commercial Manager

Pyxus Agriculture Limited, Malawi (PAL), has made a commitment to continue providing quality agricultural services as a way of ensuring that small-holder farmers in Malawi realize maximized benefits from their farming activities.

By **Brown Mdalla** 

PAL is a subsidiary of UK-based Pyxus Agriculture Holding Ltd, a multinational entity operating under Pyxus International Inc Group, responsible for Value-Added Agriculture Product Division (VAAP) and was incorporated in Malawi on December 18, 2018 and subsequently started its active operation in the country April 1, 2019.

Responding to a questionnaire from *The Seed* magazine, company's Commercial Manager John Gait begun by describing Pyxus as an innovative agricultural company that delivers value-added products and services to businesses and consumers locally and internationally.

"Our core business is developing alternative crops for farmers, to give them a viable choice that will result in good yield and effectively improved income," he says.

For instance, Gait explains, the company identifies non-tobacco crops that farmers can grow in a sustainable,

fully traceable and responsible manner using expertise and extension services Pyxus offers.

"We also offer continuous training and support throughout the crop production cycle and imparts as well as promotes best farming practices aimed at improving agricultural knowledge among farmers in the country."

The company has an Agriculture Seed House responsible for large scale commercial production of various seeds at its 13 farms and one cooperative site in the country that are manned by extension staff and management with capabilities to support sustainable agricultural production and seed multiplication.

Among others, the establishment, through its Agriculture Smallholder Production section provides extension services, access to credit and inputs delivery to registered smallholder farmers.

"We also offer continuous training and support throughout the crop production cycle and imparts as well as promotes best farming practices aimed at improving agricultural knowledge among farmers in the country," the Commercial Manager explains.

In addition, the company collects accurate data for internal and external stakeholders, ensuring



Pyxus Agriculture groundnuts buying operations



Pyxus Agriculture farm



Land preparation at Pyxus farm

traceability of agricultural products from seed to market while being committed to sustainable production, emphasizing on environmental and farmer safety, as well as elimination of child labour.

Pyxus's main products include groundnuts, dry bean certified seed and edible groundnuts which are shelled at the state of the art processing facility at its Lilongwe – Kanengo offices. Plans are underway to also introduce certified soya and maize seeds.

Gait discloses that in near future, the company intends to invest in growing groundnuts at a large scale and start manufacturing superior groundnut products for the domestic, regional and international markets.

"We also contract farmers to produce groundnuts, where we provide an input package including seed and market for the crop. We believe this will result in improved generation of household income, culminating to bettered livelihoods for farmers as



Pivot irrigation system at Pyxus farm

well as enhanced economy for the country at large," he expounds.

The company also supply tree seedlings and it also provide energy products such as sustainable traceable fire wood, and they have just been granted a sustainable charcoal production license.

Meanwhile, Gait says the company is competing well on the saturated local market, because their products are of high quality that attract farmers and stand above the competition year after year.

Quton aims to revolutionize cotton production through quality seeds - Bollgard II

Malawi's only cotton seed producer, Quton Limited, says it will continue supporting modern cotton cultivation practices through provision of extension services and high quality seeds to local farmers so the country achieves improved cotton production.

By Joseph Mizimbe



Quton Limited's General Manager John Ackim Lungu made the promise when he spoke in an interview to *The Seed Magazine* crew.

Lungu explains that the company has put in place strategies that allow farmers to access improved cotton genetics and technologies.

"We are committed to bridge the existing gap in terms of technologies available for cotton production, which is one of the most important cash crops in the country," he says

According to Lungu, cotton directly effects 300,000 families and the revival of the crop as an income generator and a forex earner will have a huge boost to the agrarian community and the nation respectively.

The company says it has in place modalities to assist the farming community realize their potential of

becoming a bigger scale highly robust enterprise that produces and supply high quality cotton.

For the past two years, Quton has been attempting to provide relevant extension to farmers who grow cotton in the country by recruiting and training energetic individuals on cotton agronomy around BGII Bollgard cotton seed who in turn, visit allotted Extension Planning Areas (EPAs) to continuously engage farmers throughout the crop season.

"This extension programme has been in effect for two successive years with over 20 field extension officers on the ground and it includes several other important stakeholders in the industry with farmer at the center," he says.

So far, the General Manager says the programme has proven to be a success and it will continue.



Lungu: growers should embrace new cotton farming technology

Quton Limited's main product is Bollgard (BG) II Hybrid Cotton Seeds, which is incorporated with the BG2 technology, a revolutionary solution to the low productivity and Lepidopteran pests of cotton crop.

"We see 'quality of seed' as the key differentiation for us. We set and abide by highest quality standards in terms of packaging, purity, performance and results. And we are dedicated to reach out to the farmers with every agronomy related support required and be there with them to share their success"

The variety produces two *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) proteins Cry1 Ac & Cry2 Ab which together manage the key Lepidopteran pest of cotton known as African Bollworm but also provide substantial control of Pink Bollworm and Tobacco Caterpillar.

Lungu touts BGII technology as a highly profitable variety determined by its unique attribute of being a high yield crop on the output and reduced cost on the inputs.

Meanwhile, the company says it is testing new hybrids in its research programme to improve on variety characteristics beneficial to farmers.

Quton distributes seed brands through Cotton Council, Ginners and directly to the farmers as well.

"While this model of distribution continues, we have

also started working with agro-dealers to improve our outreach and cover remaining demand. All we want is to provide farmers with the choice to invest in better seed technology," he elaborates.

Lungu further says being the only organized cotton seed company in Malawi it brings a lot of responsibility both in actions and results.

"We see 'quality of seed' as the key differentiation for us. We set and abide by highest quality standards in terms of packaging, purity, performance and results. And we are dedicated to reach out to the farmers with every agronomy related support required and be there with them to share their success," the General Manager says.

Besides cotton, Quton also produces a variety of vegetable seeds that are tailor-made to local growing conditions and their pledge is to evolve in terms of improving the existing seed technologies and bringing in the new ones.

"We intend to diversify our business by looking into crop seeds that make business sense. We have already introduced ourselves to the vegetable business and would like to increase the presence of our products and our messages. We want farmers in Malawi to see and feel us growing close to them in terms of support and products," he says.



Lungu says Quton also wants to exert its uniqueness through planned establishment of a robust mechanisms of extension messaging and complaint handling to ensure that they deliver on objectives of taking the cotton industry in the right direction.

Currently, the company says it is working with the Department of Agriculture Research Services (DARS) so that the genetics of the seeds they produce should conform to Malawi environment.

Quton Ltd is headquartered in Lilongwe with MAHYCO as a majority shareholder.

We value supplying high quality seed to farmers - FURAHA Seed



Emerging local seed producer, Furaha Seed says it has been in this seed business for over 17 years and this has assisted the company realise the value of growing and supplying high quality seed to local farmers.

By Joseph Mizimbe



Located in Salima District, the local seed company, grows and supplies Open Pollinated Varieties (OPV) namely: ZM 623 and ZM 523 which were introduced by Malawi Government. The parent stock is produced by Chitedze Research Station in Lilongwe.

“OPV ZM 623 and ZM 523 are medium maturing and do well in Salima and surrounding districts, they are high yielding producing on average 120 bags of 50 kgs per hectare and can be recycled unlike other varieties,” explains Lucy Kanyowile, FURAHA Seed Managing Director in an interview with *The Seed Magazine*.



Kanyowile: We have created employment for many at our farm

She reveals that the company also produces CG9 type of groundnut which is very high yielding and grows well in central region areas as well as Tikolore Soybean, one of the best yielding soybean varieties and it does well in central region and other areas.

"As a way of assisting farmers to achieve high yeild, the company has demonstration plots where the farming communities learn crop management," the seed grower says.

The company boasts of own farm which provides employment to permanent and casual labourers, soft loans to outgrowers and substantial income from sale of their crops, source of revenue to the Government through taxes and act as component of food security.

Like any other business entities, FURAHA Seed faces numerous challenges including stiff competition from other seed producers, dependance on rain which affects production volumes and pest that attack and damage crops.

The company supplies seed using selling points and outlets to areas that are not reached by other suppliers in Salima and other districts thus creating jobs and income to local agro-dealers.

“ As a way of assisting farmers to achieve high yeild, the company has demonstration plots where the farming communities learn crop management.

Owned by the Kanyowile family, the company was initially established as a farm in 1997 with the aim of growing tobacco and maize and only ventured into seed production in 2003 under Association of Smallholder Seed Action Group (ASSIGAG), growing seed for among others Funwe Farm, ICRISAT and Farmers World.

However, in 2010 a decision was made to establish a seed company which was registered in 2012 to offer improved and high quality seed for the betterment of farming community in Salima.



OPV MAIZE SEED ZM 623
 •Grows in all three regions
 •High yielding
 •Medium maturing

GROUNDNUTS CG 9
 •Grows in all three regions
 •High yielding

FURAHA SEED
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 TEL: 01 262 194
 MOBILE PHONE NUMBERS:
 0999 211 103 / 999 647 799 / 994 558 209



Peacock's drought tolerant maize seed varieties ease climate change impact on local farming

In a bid to avert the effects of climate change during crop production, Malawian owned award-winning and fast growing local seed company, Peacock Seed, has stressed the need for farmers to embrace 'drought tolerant maize' (DTM) seed varieties.

By **Brown Mdalla** 

Peacock's General Manager Charles Kaunda told this publication that the use of new seed technologies has ensured availability of maize grain even during the drought spell, leading to income stability among small scale farmers and effectively driving the country's agriculture-based economy.

"As a company we realize that farming is a business, so we sale different seed varieties that can benefit farmers, we have Peacock10 (M'bulakwacha), CAP 9001 (Matumba Matumba) and MH30 (Msulamoyo), all these varieties are drought tolerant and when properly managed in farms, farmers can realize more yields.

"Peacock MH30 matures within 110-120 days. The variety has a slender cob suitable for green consumption and boasts of a yield potential of up to 10 tons per hectare, CAP9001 matures within 110-120 days and has a yield potential of up to 14 tons per hectare. Peacock 10 maize variety is sweet when

roasted, matures between 110-120 days and has a yield potential of up to 240 bags of 50kgs per hectare," the General Manager narrated.

Kaunda noted that it's now time for farmers to realize their potential in farming by growing certified seeds that cannot let them down only from peacock Seeds.

"Note that at Peacock Seeds, our primary target are smallholder farmers because our fundamentals aim is at aiding local farmers to prosper through farming that's why we align our activities complementary to Agricultural Wide Sector Approach (ASWAP), a government initiative that promotes subsidy," he explained.

Kaunda further disclosed that his company's purpose is to promote the adoption and use of DTMs to rescue farmers from poverty and the

nation from hunger.

"As a way of making sure that farmers are aware of our seeds, we always organize demonstration plots and field days, mainly targeting at showing productivity and performance of these products locally so that they can make decisions based on what they have seen," he said.

The General Manager then declared that it is pleasing to note that the effectiveness of their seed technologies has attracted commercial and large scale farmers, let alone, non-governmental and private organizations dealing in agricultural value chains that are now showing growing interest in Peacock agricultural products across the country.

"This also entails the growth of our brand and we are doing everything possible to ensure that we spread our products countrywide in order meet the increasing demand on the seed market," Kaunda said.

On his part, company's Corporate and Marketing Manager Chris Loka says they have since created a consumer awareness platform through brochures, fliers, leaflets and banners.

“

Note that at Peacock Seeds, our primary target are smallholder farmers because our fundamentals aim is at aiding local farmers to prosper through farming that's why we align our activities complementary to Agricultural Wide Sector Approach (ASWAP), a government initiative that promotes subsidy.

"And our department can attest to increased demand for Peacock seeds and in part, we can attribute the spike to the embrace of winter farming by most farmers," he said.

According to Loka, Peacock Seed sales have jumped from zero to 54 percent over five years of operation.

The entity which in conjunction with the maize commodity team at National Research Institute won the 2015 Best Producer of Improved Seed Varieties is owned by a renowned agriculturist Dr. Felix Jumbe.

CERTIFIED HYBRID MAIZE SEED

"Making famers get what they deserve"



OUR VARIETIES



MH30 (Msulamoyo)

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- High yield potential (11mt/ha) 220*50kg bags per hecter



PCK-10 (M'bulakwacha)

- High Yield potential (12 mt /ha) 240*50kg bags per hecter
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If not Peacock, what else?

Seed Tech imparts good farming practice for improved yield

Local seed entity, Seed Tech says adherence to modern farming practice and adoption of improved seed varieties by farmers is the only way that guarantees bumper yield.

By Chiku Jere

Seed Tech's Chairman Eric Phiri made the declaration during an exclusive interview with The Seed Magazine, an in-house publication for Seed Trade Association of Malawi (STAM).

Phiri says as a way of assisting local farmers harness new farming technics, Seed-Tech runs clinics through prepared demonstration fields where a team of expert from the company drill farmers in good farming technologies.

"As a company that is very passionate about farming we always feel satisfied when we see local farmers reap from their hard field work. It is really pleasing to see a rural farmer achieve economic success through small pieces of land inherited from family," he says.

The Chair notes that Seed Tech shares the pride and glory of a farmer whose yield from the same plot that his/her family has been cultivating for years increases manifold because of following modern farming practices.

"This acts like a scoreboard for our efforts in trying to improve crop production in the country that we believe is a vehicle towards economic growth of farming communities and the nation at large," Phiri says.



Phiri: We'll always provide high quality seeds to farmers

Among seed varieties that are on Seed Tech portfolio are MH 26 hybrid maize seed, MH 40, a vitamin A hybrid maize seed and ZM 523 OPV maize seed. The seed manufacturer also produces CG 7 improved groundnuts seed.

The Chairman says his company has no immediate plans to release any new varieties as the current ones cover a broad spectrum of characteristics and meet a wide range of climate and regional specs.

As a company that is very passionate about farming we always feel satisfied when we see local farmers reap from their hard field work. It is really pleasing to see a rural farmer achieve economic success through small pieces of land inherited from family

"Our focus is always to maintain seed quality so that we provide to our customers products that will benefit them at the end of the season," he says.

The company mainly targets markets that are located in hard to reach areas which the big companies ignore, something, Phiri says, is among the factors that have helped them remain in business.

The Chairman acknowledges the existence of stiff competition on the seed market but says remaining relevant through maintenance of quality seed supply is key to survival.

Phiri says farmers will remain loyal only to products that produce good results.

"In spite tempting overtures by other seed brands, at the end of the day a farmer will still trust a word from his peers about a product," he says.

Meanwhile, the company says is doing everything possible to consolidate its position on the market as well as grow its customer base by, among other things, not compromising on the quality of seed it supplies.

According to Phiri, Seed Tech was established in 2005 to help fill the supply gap of improved hybrid seeds to the small holder farmers in the country.

The company which has its main office in Blantyre was initially registered as a partnership, then it was incorporated in 2010 with Mr. Eric Phiri and Mr. Alfred Masangano as shareholders.



SEED-TECH

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DZIWANI IZI

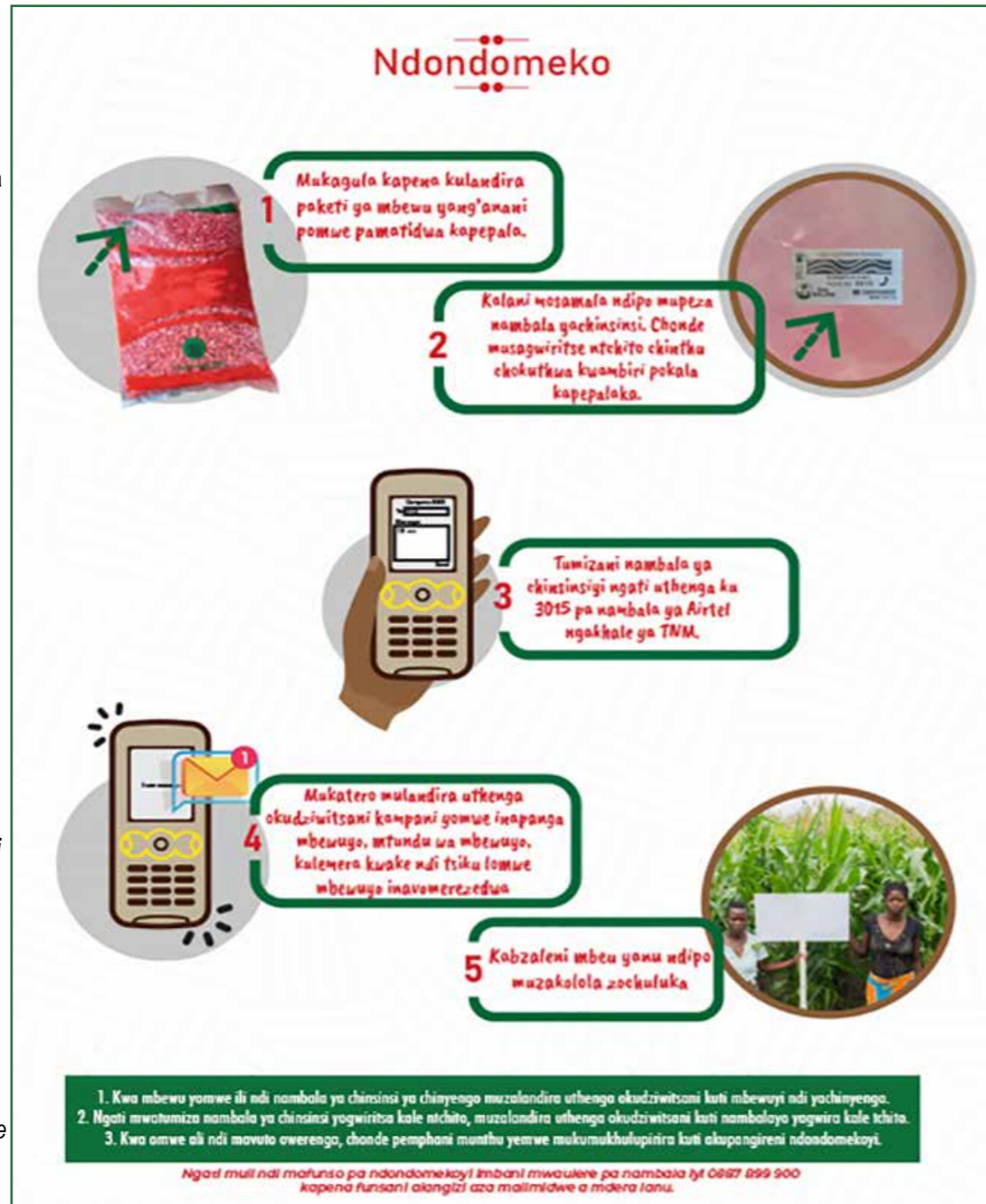
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Pakadali pano ndondomekoyi ndi yongoyesera komanso pa mbewu ya Chimanga ndi Nyemba zokha. Choncho pa mbewu zina zonse tsimikizani ngati mbewu yomwe mukufuna kubzalayo ndi yeniyeni komanso pogwiritsa ntchito njira zomwe mwakhala mukutsatira m'mbuyomu.

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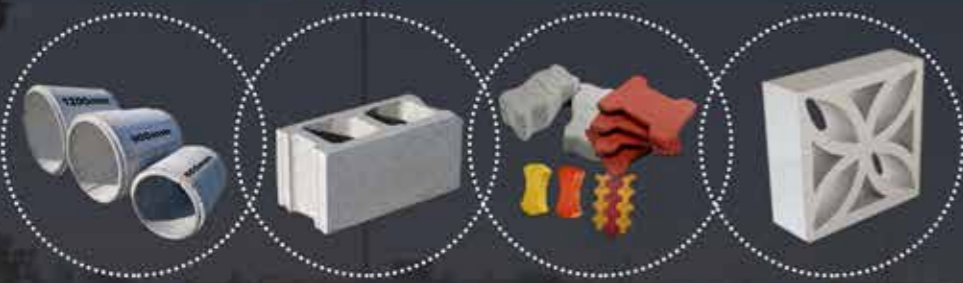
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