

## PROJECT PROGRAM: 1969

The Project began its 1969 program on an optimistic note: successful contact had been made with the social network of the farming community in 1968, additional research results were available, finances had been obtained to expand the technical team of the Project, and the banks and fertilizer distributors were ready to expand credit to make fertilizer more readily available. Thus, the Project team and service institutions decided to attempt to extend the use of the improved technology to a total of 10,000 ha operated by about 5,000 farmers.

As in 1968, promotional activities were concentrated in the western three-fourths of the Project area. This region was divided into four zones (Fig. 1.2) and a technical assistance agent was given responsibility for each zone.

### Organizing Groups

If the four technical assistance agents were to provide guidance to 5,000 farmers in using the new maize recommendations, it was clearly necessary that the farmers be organized into groups. Beginning in early 1969, the technical assistance agents began to hold meetings in the villages to promote the formation of groups. These meetings were often organized through farmers who had participated with high-yield plots in 1968. Many of these farmers were already aware of the advantages of working together in groups, particularly because of past problems encountered in arranging for the transportation of small quantities of fertilizer at a reasonable price.

A typical meeting began with an explanation of the Project and presentation of the results obtained by farmers with high-yield plots in 1968, followed by a showing of the locally produced color film: "Would You Like to Increase Your Maize Harvest?". The film was extremely useful in demonstrating how higher yields could be obtained. It lent credibility to the recommendations by its careful documentation of 1968 successes, using local names and places. About halfway through the film, projection was stopped and questions encouraged. During this intermission, a mimeographed map of the region was distributed, that gave recommendations for each community. Thus, each farmer could identify his own land, and, on the back of the sheet, find the specific fertilizer recommendation. The movie was shown 71 times in 59 villages, with a total attendance of 4,570 in 1969.

After the advantages of the new maize technology had been amply discussed at a meeting, and farmers had expressed an interest in using it, the technical assistance agent suggested that the farmers consider forming a group. He stressed that organization would permit: (a) ready access to information about the recommendations and assistance in using them correctly, and (b) easier arrangements for credit and fertilizers.

Two or more meetings and lengthy discussions were sometimes necessary before the farmers were convinced of the advantages of organized action and decided to form a group. Once the group was formed, the members elected a representative and proceeded to discuss operational procedures, acceptance of new members, credit arrangements, etc. The technical assistance agents devoted most of their time to the formation of the groups, and to assisting them in increasing their membership, learning about the Project recommendations, and arranging for credit and fertilizers.



During the cropping season interchanges among farmer groups were organized. A representative of the host group welcomed the visitors and explained how the farmers in his group were trying to improve their crop production. Then the hosts and visitors made a walking tour of high-yield plots in the immediate vicinity.