

Radio Usage

A radio program about the Project was initiated in March 1969 over a local radio station that transmits to all the Project area. The program was aired Sunday mornings from 7:30 - 8:00—one of the most convenient hours for farmers, according to data collected by the evaluation team. Individuals and groups were advised of the program via a printed flyer, which included the topics, the radio station, the hour, and the date. Farmers were encouraged to tell their neighbors of the program.

The radio program content included recommendations and news notes about happenings of the moment. For example, farmers were notified that fertilizers had arrived at some location, that farmers who had their land prepared should mix their fertilizers to be ready for planting, that they should mix simple super phosphate and ammonium sulphate in certain proportions and take certain precautions to preserve it. Basically, the program attempted to provide specific technical information about matters of current interest to the farmers. In addition, popular local music was included.

Supervision of the High-yield Plots

In all villages with one or more organized groups, a demonstration was held at planting time to instruct the farmers in the new fertilization and planting techniques. As in 1968, the technical assistance agent first showed the farmers how to distribute the fertilizer and place the seed. Then all farmers attending were invited to participate in the planting.

During the 60 days or so following the emergence of the maize, the technical assistance agents accompanied the members of the organized groups on field inspections of their high-yield plots. The technicians called attention to any deficiencies in the way the fertilizer had been applied, distance between hills of maize, weed control, etc., explaining how such factors could reduce yields. It was emphasized that greater care in employing the new technology would enable the farmers to realize higher yields and net income.

Interchanges Among Farmer Groups

During the summer of 1969, after most of the maize had received the last cultivation, the technical assistance agents began to talk with several outstanding groups of farmers about organizing a tour of their high-yield plots and inviting farmers from other parts of the area to attend. In general, the idea was received with enthusiasm, and 11 of the groups proceeded to organize such events.

The members of the group hosting the tour decided when it should be held, how it should be organized, and which groups should be invited to attend. The technical assistance agent provided information about possible groups to invite, and assisted in delivering invitations to the groups.

The local farmers received the visitors at a convenient location for beginning the tour. The representative of the host group welcomed the visitors and explained what the farmers in his group were doing to increase their maize production. Hosts and visitors then made a walking tour of several high-yield plots in the immediate vicinity. The owner of each plot gave a short explanation of the practices used in his planting. The other farmers were encouraged to ask questions, offer suggestions, and tell about their own maize production practices. As opportunities arose, the technical assistance agent would point out examples of the correct or deficient use of the several components of the improved maize technology. Refreshments were usually served by the hosts at the close of the tour.

These events, referred to locally as interchanges among farmer groups, provided opportunities for farmers from different parts of the Project area to exchange experiences and ideas about a wide range of subjects. While the tour was in progress, the conversation was usually centered on questions related to the production of maize, beans, and other crops. During meals and afterward, the farmers frequently broke up into small groups and discussed a variety of farming and non-farming activities. A total of 570 farmers from 35 villages participated in these interchanges in 1969.

Result Demonstrations

The success of the demonstrations held just prior to harvest in 1968 prompted planning in early 1969 to hold six regional demonstrations in the fall of 1969. Convenient locations were selected for the demonstrations, and several agronomic trials plus a high-yield plot were installed at each site.

As in 1968, the local farmers organized the field days. Project technicians explained the experiments and the importance of the findings. The owner of the high-yield plot described the practices that he used and gave a benefit-cost analysis of the operation. Approximately 1,200 farmers attended the six regional demonstrations.



Beginning in 1969, technical assistance agents have encouraged farmers to organize into groups. This has facilitated the flow of information on technology to the farmers and has enabled them to arrange for credit and fertilizers more easily.