

Department of Agricultural Research held field days in two districts of Lesotho

The Department of Agricultural Research (DAR) is mandated to develop appropriate agricultural technologies for improved and sustainable agriculture, transfer relevant scientific knowledge and information to all stakeholders for sustainable development of agriculture. The Agronomy section and the Socio-Economics & Extension Division of the Department of Agricultural Research are collaboratively implementing the Lesotho Adaptation of Small-Scale Agricultural Production project (LASAP) activities with farmers in five districts of Lesotho namely; Botha-Bothe, Leribe, Berea, Mafeteng and Quthing. The research demonstrations on maize, beans, sunflower, sorghum and potatoes were conducted with farmers in different locations in the above-mentioned districts. Two field days were conducted in two districts of Berea and Quthing on the 22 and 24 of June 2021 respectively.



The purpose of the field days was to showcase sorghum, bean, sunflower and potato varieties and maize maturing at different times to the farmers. This would help farmers to make proper choices of varieties that respond to climate change. RAM pump for irrigation was also demonstrated to the farmers and the use of oil press machine for extraction of sunflower oil.

These research demonstrations were based on the priorities of Basotho farmers related to improving crop production against the effects of climate change. Access to diverse valuable crop production techniques and germplasm was highly considered. Climate change effects are further threatening an already challenging crop mega environment in Lesotho, which are



identified as subject to climate change effects, with high vulnerability and low adoption capacity.

The district Agricultural Officers in the two districts congratulated the farmers for being involved in the research demonstrations to witness performance of various crop varieties. The farmers were requested to share information and experience on what they witnessed with their fellow farmers. On the other hand, farmers involved on the demonstrations expressed their satisfaction on the performance of crop varieties demonstrated. They encouraged other farmers to adopt those varieties as it was evident that food insecurity challenges could be solved.



Maize, bean, sorghum, and sunflower varieties as well as sunflower oil extracted using oil press were displayed. Characteristics of these varieties were stated to the farmers so that they make informed decision in selecting appropriate seed.

The principal researcher (Mr Kakole Likotsi) gave an over view of DAR and LASAP implemented activities and led the participants to different research demonstration plots. This is where detailed explanations regarding the research were made. These included varieties



planted, different sowing space for maize, planting time, projected yield and overall crop management practices used. Questions and discussion session between farmers, extension

agents and researchers was provided. A total number of 275 farmers participated in these field days whereby 155 farmers were in Berea and 120 were in Quthing districts respectfully.

