



DOING
BUSINESS
WITH **maize**

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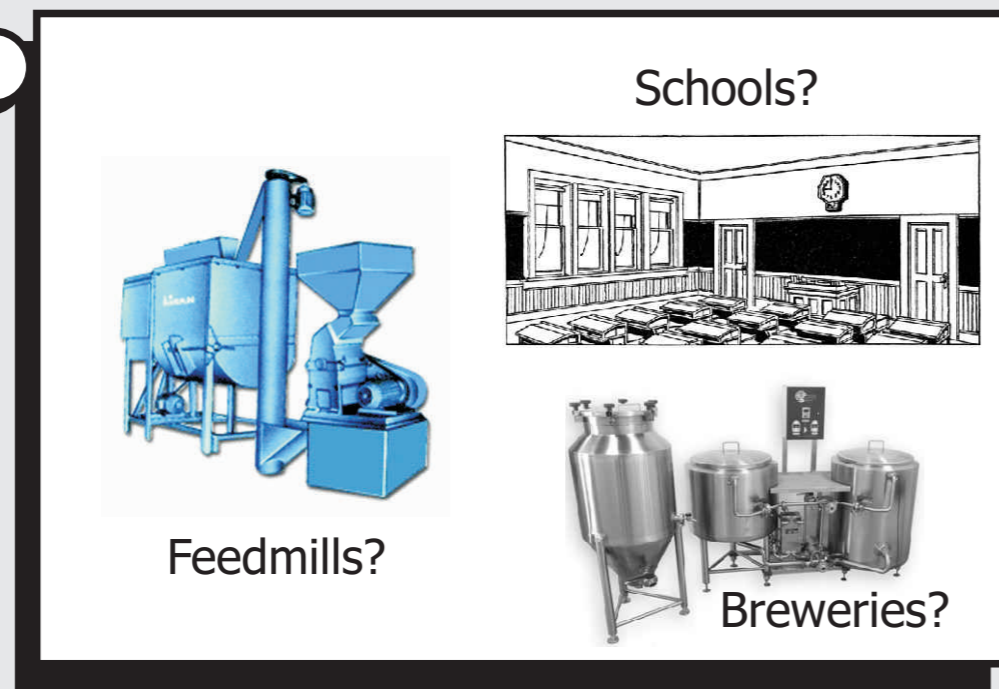
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A PRODUCTION

HANDBOOK
FOR FARMERS





For the best price and assured sale, grow maize only when you know what quantities and qualities your buyer wants.

(Step one in a successful farming business is to know the requirements of your Buyer)

To do good Business in Maize farming, remember to:

1. Start with who you will sell to
2. Know the costs and availability of key inputs
3. Do a Supply Agreement with your Buyer
4. Communicate and maintain good working relationships with your Buyer
5. Prepare your land well for planting.
6. Use high yielding and quality seed obtained from a reliable source
7. Plant your maize well at the correct spacing
8. Apply all types of fertilizers on time and in the right quantities
9. Control weeds
10. Harvest matured maize on time
11. Prepare grains well for storage
12. Avoid losses and reduce damage or contaminations in storage.

AVOID DAMAGE/LOSSES IN STORAGE



Well stacked maize on pallets

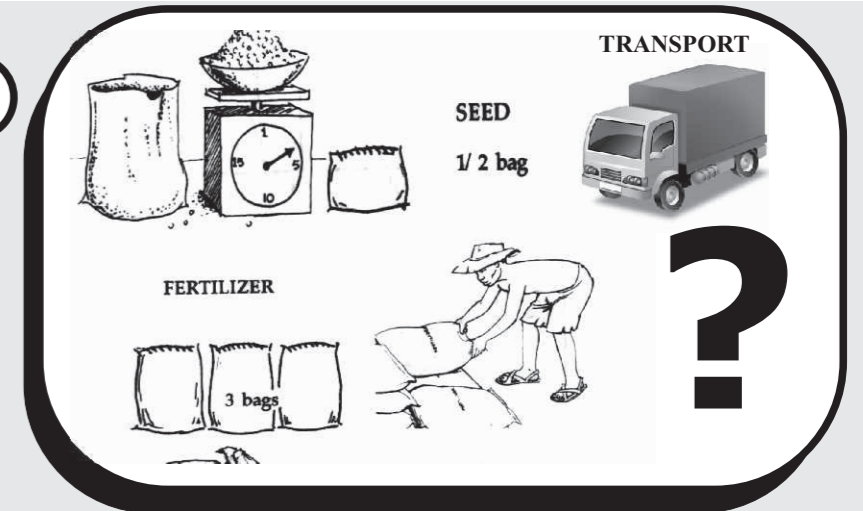
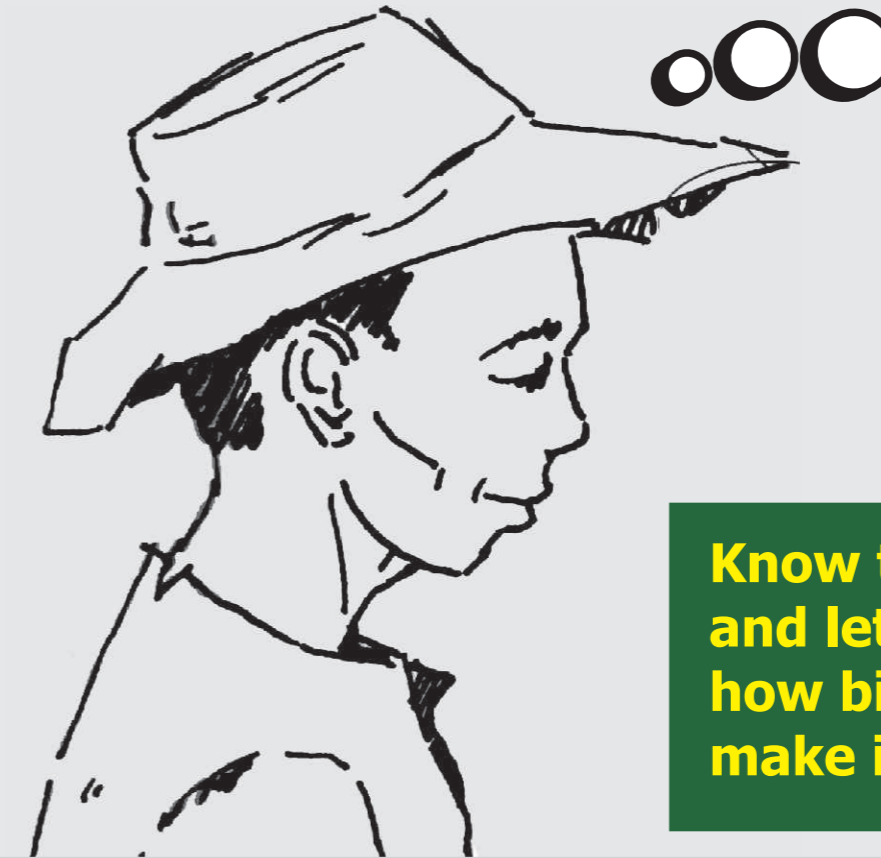
- Check and seal all roofing and wall leaks to prevent water leaks into the warehouse.
- Seal/close all holes to prevent insects, bats and rodent entry
- Stack bags on pallets, not directly on the floor
- Clean up spilled grain immediately
- Do not keep insecticide, cleaning material, clothing or infested grain in your warehouse



A well-kept warehouse surroundings

- Inspect the store regularly for signs of infestation.
- Cover all window openings with a mesh and close them tightly.
- Keep the surroundings of your warehouse clean of weeds

KNOW THE COST



Know the main expense items and let these be your guide to how big your farm must be to make it profitable.

Costs of renting land, plowing, improved seed, fertilizers, weeding, shelling, bagging and transportation are some of the major cost items in commercial maize production that you must know.

DO A SUPPLIERS' CONTRACT WITH YOUR BUYER



Your Buyer is the most important person in the success of your business, ensure that you build trust in your relations.

Work hard to abide by the terms of the Agreement with your Buyer

PREPARE GRAIN WELL FOR STORE FOR EFFECTIVE STORAGE



Tresh with Good Threshers

Before storing:

- Shell your maize with a good sheller and sieve/ winnow to remove all broken grain and chaff.
- Dry grain to moisture levels of 13% or less
- Store in bags without holes and sealed tightly to prevent entry of insects

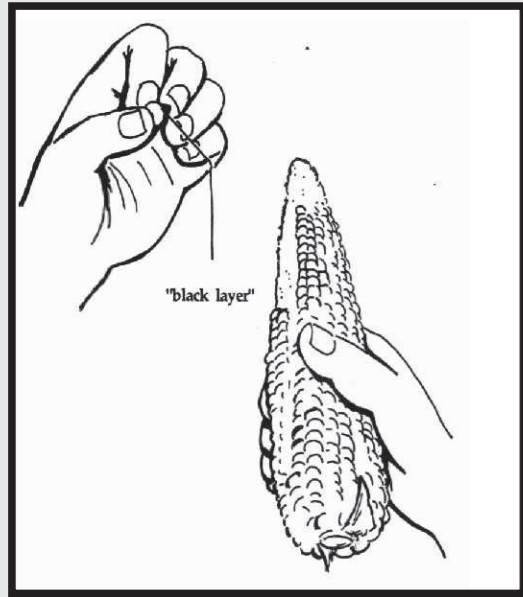


These animals destroy stored maize

Maize store better when stored as grain.



HARVEST MATURED MAIZE ON TIME



Maize is matured and ready for harvest when a black layer appear at the tip of the grains. Remove a grain from a cob taken from your farm and break the tip to check for this layer to see if you must harvest.



When maize is harvested late, stalks fall over and insects get into the grains. This reduces the quality and price of your grain.

Do not leave your harvest directly on the ground. Put them on a tarpaulin spread on raised ground or any such clean and dry surface at all times

MAINTAIN GOOD WORK RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR BUYER



Keeping your Buyer informed of your plans, stage of growth of your crop and dates for key actions such as harvesting and condition of your crop.



Farmers at a meeting with a Buyer

Communicate regularly with your buyer

PREPARE YOUR LAND WELL



Ensure that only trained and qualified tractor operators do the plowing of your land

Slash or plow to prepare your land. A well prepared land makes planting, and other management practices easy. Do not burn slashings, instead mix them into the soil. They make the soil richer in nutrients

CONTROL WEEDS



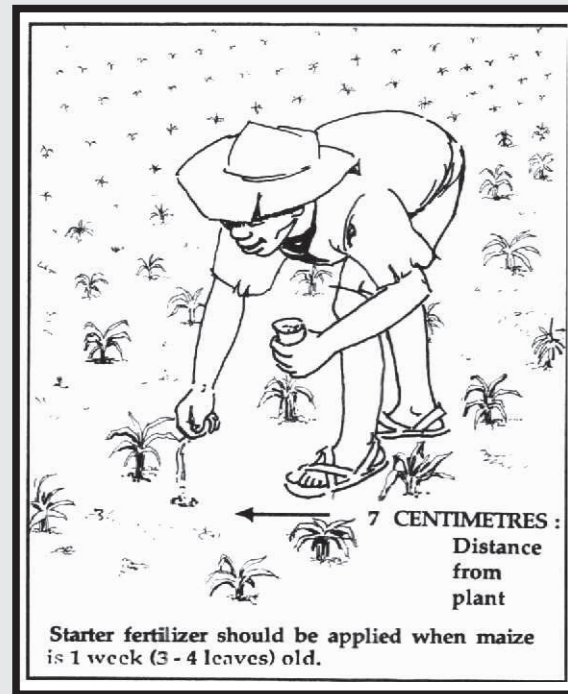
Manually or apply a recommended weedicide

Make sure your farm is not weedy, especially during the first 30 days after planting.

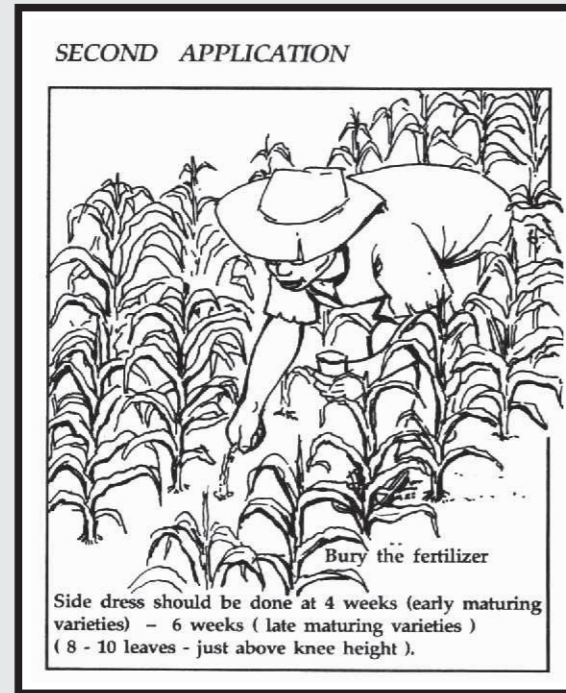


Apply all weedicides carefully and according to the instructions on the label. Wear the appropriate protective clothing for all agrochemical applications

APPLY YOUR CHEMICAL FERTILIZERS WELL.



The first application of chemical fertilizer is done 1-2 weeks, (or when the plant has 3-4 leaves), after germination.



The second application (top dressing) of chemical fertilizer is done at 4 weeks old for the early, (90-105 days) maturing varieties or at 6 weeks old for the late maturing, (115 - 120 days) varieties.

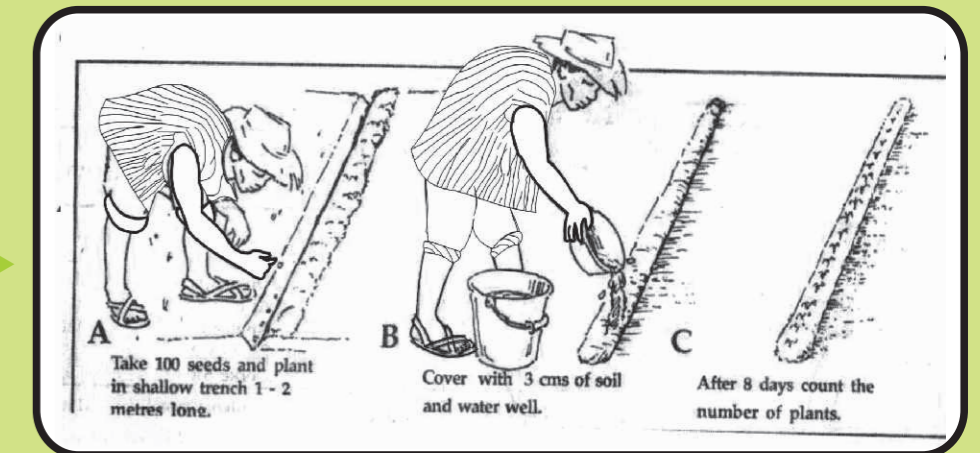
Remember to cover all applied fertilizers with soil immediately after application

USE HIGH YIELDING AND QUALITY SEED

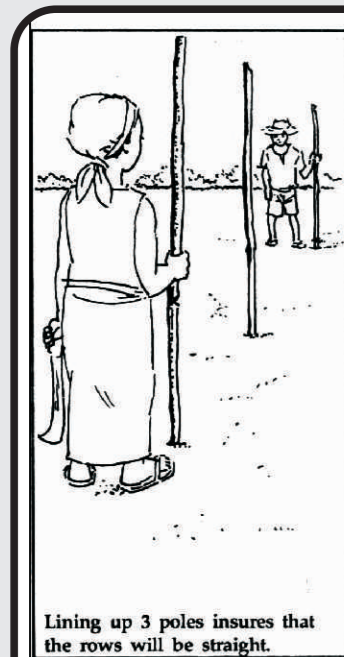


Purchase seed from Registered Seed Growers and the offices of the Ministry of Agriculture nearest to you. A good seed pack has a label with the date of packing/expiry and germination percentage indicated

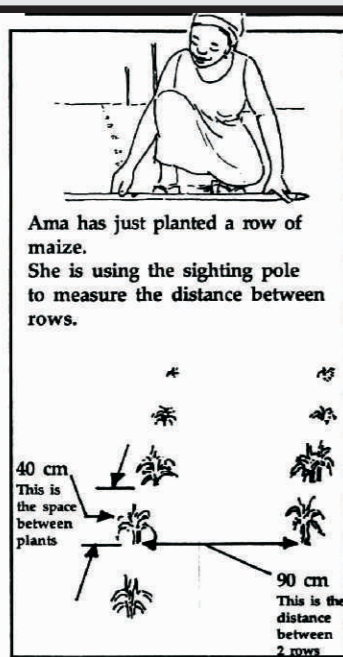
Conduct a germination test to confirm quality and to determine number of seed to plant per hole. For a test on 100 seeds, plant 1 seed per hole when 85 and above germinate after 1 week, 2 seeds per hole when 70-85 seeds germinate, and reject seed stock that has less than 70 out of 100 germinating after 1 week



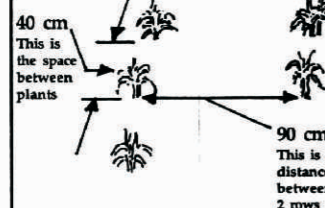
PLANT YOUR MAIZE WELL



Lining up 3 poles insures that the rows will be straight.



Ama has just planted a row of maize. She is using the sighting pole to measure the distance between rows.

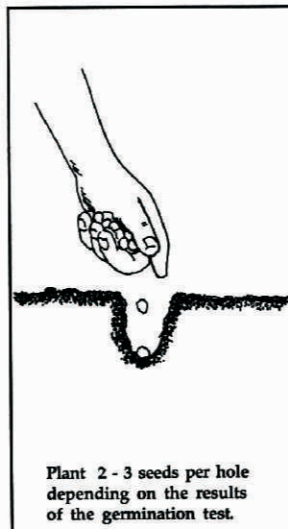


Plant your maize in rows

A farm that has the recommended number of plants per acre, planted in rows and well-spaced makes weeding, fertilizer application and other farming activities easy. Plants also get enough sunshine and air and so yield is high.



Use your cutlass to make holes 5-7 cm deep.



Plant 2 - 3 seeds per hole depending on the results of the germination test.



Cover the hole and step on the soil with your full weight.

You may use sighting poles or mechanized planters to plant. Plant at the recommended spacing between plants. (in general, 40cm between plants and 90cm between rows for most maize varieties is good enough).

APPLY RECOMMENDED TYPES OF FERTILIZERS

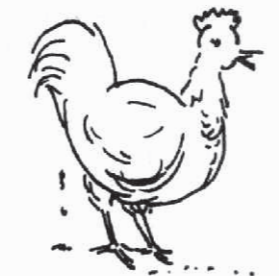
COW DUNG

8 tons/ ha



CHICKEN MANURE

4 tons/ ha



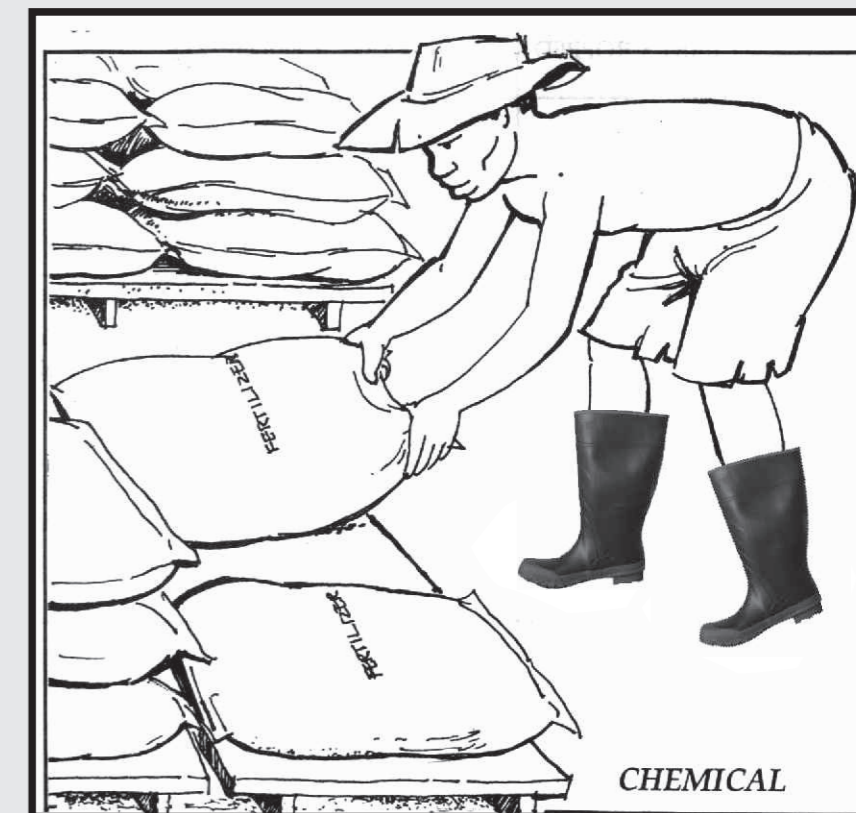
COMPOST

5 tons/ ha



You can fertilize maize with cow dung, chicken manure, composts or chemical fertilisers. You will need about 8 trailer loads of organic matter for an acre.

If you use cow-dung, chicken manure and other organic fertilizers, mix them into the soil and wait for at least 1 week before planting your maize.



CHEMICAL