FARMERS’ NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS ON NEW IMPROVED PLANT VARIETIES

Highlights from the WFO consultation and technical workshop
OVERVIEW – Consultation with the farmers

Survey

WFO has developed a farmers’ consultation to explore and collect farmers’ needs, constraints, and expectations around New Improved Plant Varieties, to make sure to promote a farmer driven approach to innovation in this field.

The consultation ran from February to April 2021
- 50 respondents
- 5 Continents
- 30 Countries around the World
- 54% under 40 years old
- 35% female farmers

Technical workshop

WFO, together with the International Seed Federation (ISF), with the technical expertise of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plant (UPOV), held an online workshop bringing together farmers, representatives and experts, to address New Improved Plant Varieties from different angles:

- Farmers' vision, needs and expectations;
- What new improved plant varieties can offer to farmers;
- What to do to make sure that plant breeders are developing new improved plant varieties suited to farmers’ needs;
- How to make New Improved Plant Varieties available and accessible to farmers of all sizes, everywhere.
The consultation – Do Farmers use New Improved Plant Varieties?

The 71% of respondents said that they use new improved plant varieties.

Circle graph showing the percentage of farmers using new improved plant varieties:
- Yes: 71%
- No: 29%

Circular graph showing the number of new improved plant varieties used every year:
- From 1 to 5: 68%
- From 5 to 15: 14%
- From 5 to 25: 14%
THE CONSULTATION – If Respondents use New Improved Plant Varieties?

HOW DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO NEW IMPROVED PLANT VARIETIES? (Top 3)

- Commercial seed merchants
- Seed distributors
- Other farmers
THE CONSULTATION – If Respondents use New Improved Plant Varieties?

Importance of New Improved Plant Varieties for the success of your farm
Rank 1 (no important) to 5 (very important)

Some «reasons why» from respondents replies:

“Personally, I find that these improvements are not always necessary. Sometimes a technology will improve one criterion, but decrease another”.

VS

“Without new varieties, I would no longer progress in production while my costs are still increasing”
THE CONSULTATION – Comparative results
USE vs NOT USE of New Improved Plant Varieties

IF RESPONDENTS DON’T USE NEW IMPROVED PLANT VARIETIES
WHY?

- Not available
- Regulatory framework constraints
- Satisfied with existing varieties (Locally adapted breeds, organic seeds, native plants)
- Lack of resources

IF RESPONDENTS USE NEW IMPROVED PLANT VARIETIES
WHY?

- Better yields
- Improve income
- Pest and diseases resistance
- Drought tolerance
- Reduce cost of inputs
- Higher value products
- Access to new markets
- Export potential
- New products
- Other
THE CONSULTATION – Comparative results
USE vs NOT USE of New Improved Plant Varieties

Need for more information

**IF DON'T USE NEW IMPROVED PLANT VARIETIES**

- **14%** Yes
- **86%** No

From whom?
(top 3)
1. Farmers' Organisations
2. Government
3. Extension services

**IF USE NEW IMPROVED PLANT VARIETIES**

- **12%** Yes
- **88%** No

From whom?
(top 3)
1. Farmers' Organisations
2. Field plots
3. Retailers

Need training/technical assistance

**IF DON'T USE NEW IMPROVED PLANT VARIETIES**

- **36%** Yes
- **64%** No

From whom
(top 3)
1. Farmers' Organisations/cooperatives
2. Extension services
3. Education institutions

**IF USE NEW IMPROVED PLANT VARIETIES**

- **29%** Yes
- **71%** No

From whom
(top 3)
1. Farmers' Organisations/cooperatives
2. Extension services
3. Seed companies
THE CONSULTATION – New Improved Plant Varieties & Climate Change

Consider New Improved Plant Varieties important to respond to climate change
Rank 1 (no important) to 5 (very important)

82% said that New Improved Plant Varieties are very important to respond to climate change!

Some reasons why:
- “I believe they can influence the way we deal with diseases and adaptation to climate change”
- “Both in mitigation and adaptation, this will be crucial for the future”
- “With drought and rapid temperature extremes, I think we’re going to have to have plants that can adapt to these realities.”
THE CONSULTATION – New Improved Plant Varieties & Sustainable Food Systems

Consider New Improved Plant Varieties important for the sustainability of food systems
Rank 1 (no important) to 5 (very important)

82% said that New Improved Plant Varieties are very important for the sustainability of food systems!

57%

Some «reasons why»:
- “As long as they will help reduce pest and improve production”
- “To get closer to consumer demand, notably by reducing our use of inputs”
- “Genetic improvements in vegetable products have stabilized production. Increasing yields, qualities, nutrient levels for human consumption within them”
TECHNICAL WORKSHOP – 28 April 2021
The FARMERS’ Perspective

REASONS AROUND THE USE NEW IMPROVED PLANT VARIETIES

- Farmers look at new improved plant varieties with an innovation lens to ensure better yields, economic stability of the farms over shocks but also make farming easier and less labour intensive;

- New improved plant varieties are key to tackle the challenges of climate change: by resistance to droughts to pest and disease better management;

- New Improved varieties are key to build trust around the farming activity with financial partners, ensuring yields and performance of plants.

KEY EXPECTATIONS AND NEEDS AROUND THE USE OF NEW IMPROVED PLANT VARIETIES

- Access to seeds (availability and affordability);

- Access to training, information and knowledge on New Improved plant varieties;

- Enabling regulatory; innovation and scientific framework to access new improved plant varieties;

- Organized Agriculture: Farmers Organisations’ as key actors to ensure that farmers of all sizes and everywhere have access to the best available innovation;

- Consumers’ education in order to build trust around new varieties thanks, among others, to traceability systems;

- Partnership with stakeholders in the value chain to ensure farmers’ expectations and needs are met building a cooperation framework that benefits all the actors involved.