



Data collection from crops by measuring parameters



Data Processing analyzing parameters



Data presentation to plenary members of FFBS

Step 4: Field days

During the period of running the FFBS, field days are organized where the rest of the farming community is invited to share what the group has learned. One or two field days can be conducted per season. During these field days, members of the FFBS act as facilitators.

Step 5: Graduation

This activity marks the end of the season-long FFBS. The farmers, facilitators, and the coordinating office usually organize it. During this time, farmers are awarded certificates.

Step 6: Farmer runs FFBS

FFBS farmer graduates now have the knowledge and confidence to run their own FFBS.

Step 7: Follow-up by facilitators

The facilitator occasionally follows up on the schools that have graduated, preferably on a monthly basis. The core facilitators also provide support for ongoing farmer-run FFBS.



Compiled by: Otieno M., Musila R.N

Editors: Nyabundi K.W., Maina F.W., Mukundi K.T., Maina P., Wanyama H.N. and Ekadeli J.

Formatting: Kedemi R.M. and Kibunyi N

For further information, contact:

The Director General, KALRO
P.O Box 5781 I-00200, Nairobi
info@kalro.org
Directorgeneral@kalro.org

KALRO Call Center: 0800721741

Design and Layout: Odipo S.N

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FARMER FIELD AND BUSINESS SCHOOLS APPROACH IN CROPS VALUE CHAIN



Introduction

Farmer field and business schools (FFBS) is a participatory extension approach whereby farmers are given the opportunity to choose production methods through a discovery-based approach.

Establishment

These schools are established through a participatory process of community mobilization to identify a group of farmers with similar interests in the value chain. They can also be formed from an existing cotton farmer group.

Membership

The recommended membership of FFBS is 25-30 members. This is because during the implementation process, every member is allowed to participate.

Classical steps in FFBS

Step 1: Conduct ground working activities

This stage marks the mobilization phase of the FFBS methodology, which includes:

- Identifying group facilitators to undergo training
- Selecting community groups to implement the Cotton FFBS.

Step 2: Training of facilitators

The facilitators identified during the FFBS groundwork undergo training on the following:

- Crop production, protection, and marketing aspects
- Effective delivery of these topics using non-formal education methods
- Participatory technology development (PTD) on the respective crop value chain.
- Non-formal education methods, with an emphasis on what, when, and how to use non-formal education in FFBS.



Step 3: Establishment and running of the FFBS

The FFBS is established through a process of identifying and listing the major challenges, ranked using a pairwise ranking procedure as shown below

List of production problems

- Low yielding varieties (LYV)
- High incidences of pests (HIP)
- Low soil fertility (LSF)

Pairwise ranking procedure

Each of the problems is listed in a table along the first row and column, as shown below. The listed problems are given acronyms for ease of fitting them into the table. Within the table, two problems are compared at a time, and the higher ranking is recorded.

| | LYV | HIP | LSF | Scores | Rank |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|------|
| LYV | | LYV | LSF | 1 | 2 |
| HIP | | | LSF | 0 | 3 |
| LSF | | | | 2 | 1 |

The problems within the table are counted, and scores are given, which result in the ranking of the problems from the greatest to the lowest. In this example, low soil fertility (LSF) is ranked first, and hence a Participatory Technology Development (PTD) is developed in this area.

Setting Participatory Development Designs to Address Low Soil Fertility

Participatory technology development is a process of engaging the FFBS to design a learning process around the problem ranked first by identifying opportunities referred to as treatments that can be used in this area to mitigate the problem.

Suggested Treatments

- Treatment 1: Apply organic manure only (OM).
- Treatment 2: Organic manure + recommended planting fertilizer and topdressing (OM+FERT).
- Treatment 3: Planting fertilizer and topdressing without manure (FERT).
- Treatment 4: Control group - neither manure nor fertilizer applied (ZERO).

These treatments are designed in blocks to be placed on the ground as illustrated below:

| Treatment 1 OM | Treatment 2 OM+FERT | Treatment 3 FERT | Treatment 4 Zero |
|----------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
|----------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|

AESA process

AGRO ECOSYSTEMS ANALYSIS

Agro ecosystem analysis (AESA) is used to measure the performance of treatments as follows: