



Solving Africa's Weed Problem: Increasing Crop Production & Improving the Lives of Women

A Presentation by:

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Food production problems in Africa are once again front page news. African crop yields average one-third that of the rest of the world's harvest. As food shortages loom, public institutions, developmental groups, and government agencies are assessing technologies and policies that have the potential to significantly increase food production in Africa.

One of the most serious threats to African food production- the problem of weeds competing with crops-is not being addressed in the ongoing assessments. And yet, solving the weed problem in Africa is critical if farmers are to attain optimal yields and gain the full value of additional use of fertilizer, irrigation and improved seeds. Currently, African farmers lose 20-100% of their potential crop production due to uncontrolled weeds. The primary method of weed control by smallholder farmers in Africa is hand weeding with short-handled tools. Weeding is backbreaking work done primarily by women. Because of labor cost and shortage and other demands on farmers time, not enough weeding is being done or is being done too late to prevent serious yield losses. Farmers are reluctant to apply fertilizer because weeds would be further stimulated and even more hand weeding would be required.

In this presentation, Leonard Gianessi makes the case for increased use of herbicides by smallholder farmers as a solution for Africa's weed control problems. Research has shown that, if smallholders used herbicides, hand weeding time could be virtually eliminated. Farmers would have significant time availability to plant additional crops, apply fertilizers, and harvest more crops.

To schedule this 40-minute presentation, contact:

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