



Updates & News Alert

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Editor's view: Introducing the January, 2019 CA | 5 | Use of Remote Sensing Images for the Identification of No-Till Seeding Plots | 8 | Spider community shift in response to farming practices in a sub-humid agroecosystems of Southern Africa |
| 3 | Strategic alliances: A boost to promotion of Sustainable Agriculture in Africa | 6 | Ethiopia incorporated CA as one of the alternative technology within its extension system | 8 | Food Security Project Supports Model Farmers in Ethiopia |
| 4 | Seminar: Sustainable and Climate-Smart Agriculture: Developing Networks and Synergies between Africa and Europe | 6 | Sudan Conservation Agriculture Conference: Sharing lessons learnt | 9 | How Conservation Agriculture Could Solve Food Insecurity in Arid & Semi-Arid Lands |
| 5 | Moisture preservation turns arid land into thriving farm | 7 | Soil Health: The Next Agricultural Revolution | 9 | 2019 Events & Opportunities |
| | | 7 | A model farmer adopts conservation agriculture in North Africa | | |

Editor's view: Introducing the January-February , 2019 CA Alert

It is another new year 2019 in most African countries, and ACT takes the opportunity to wish Africa a year of prosperity and technology advancement.

Increasing smallholder productivity is the foundational pathway to achievement of the African Unions Agenda 2063 aspirations to improve food security and to generate a surplus that can be sold to increase incomes. As a Network with

the vision of **promoting sustainable agriculture** anchored on the three niche pillars of Conservation Agriculture, Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization and Ecosystem Management, ACT has the core sustainable intensification ingredients in place and is now working on the *systemic, organizational, individual* and *cross-cutting* capacity development facets, illustrated below.

These should enable the multitude of ACT members and friends, and sustainable agriculture stakeholders, to easily identify opportunities, roles and easy-to-plug-in activities from wherever they are as their contribution towards sustainable agriculture in Africa. Furthermore, deliberate efforts are made to focus on developing enabling environments, building performing and capable African

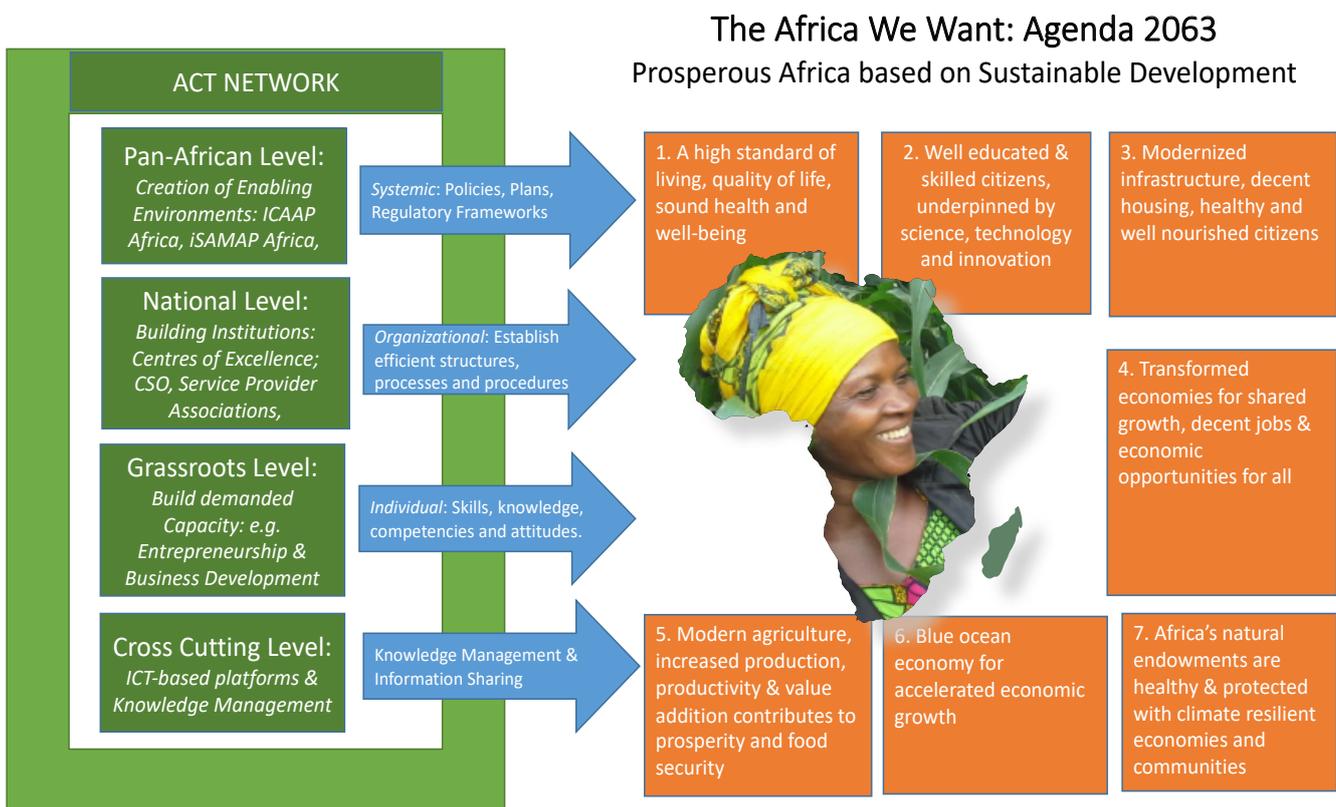


Figure 1: ACT's capacity development structures and systems contributing to the Sustainable Development-based Prosperous Africa of Agenda 2063; offering "plug-in" opportunities for stakeholders to contribute and benefit.

From page 1

institutions, and capacity and competency of individuals to function efficiently and effectively.

At the Grassroots Level, defined by the needs of the farmers, ACT supports entrepreneurial Sustainable Agricultural Mechanisation Service Provision. The African young farmers will only be interested and attracted to farming if the arduousness of labour inherent with farming is alleviated. The sustainable intensification being promoted should enable the youths to see a different future in agriculture: from the struggle to survive it has been, to a business that thrives. Above all, mechanisation, including improved hand tools as illustrated in Figure 2, is necessary for enhanced productivity and competitiveness in farming. Farmers do also need other services including agricultural information, production inputs and markets.

Individual capacity development will have to respond to identified and demanded client needs. However, they could, for example, include crosscutting aspects such as entrepreneurship, business development, attitudes, societal values and culture.

At the National Level, ACT is supporting the building of resilient, performing and capable African institutions whose core mandates are aligned provision of agricultural development services. This is considered to be a critical path to supporting adoption of the paradigm shifting Conservation Agriculture transformation for attainment of critical masses of adopters of sustainable agriculture. ACT works with National Agricultural Universities and Research

Institutions framed and visioning to become hubs of excellence in training, education, research and outreach within their own core mandates and core functions. These institutions are defined as 'Sustainable Agriculture Centres of Excellence (SA-CoEs). Other institutions aligned to the SA-CoEs acting as national hubs are Conservation Agriculture promoting non-governmental organisations, (NGOs), Universities, Private Sector Companies, mechanization service providers, Farmers and their Organizations.

National Agricultural Institutions plug-in opportunities are continuously being innovated and include: the seven SA-CoEs, however expected to grow to 25 by 2025; CA Curriculum Guide for tertiary agricultural training institutions; and CA Quality Assurance Framework to support stakeholders evaluate on a voluntary basis the effectiveness/efficiency/sustainability of their programmes, practices or curricula.

At the Pan-African Level, the Network is with the creation of "enabling environments" that include policies and plans, economic, regulatory and accountability frameworks within which institutions and individuals operate; networking and partnerships; and coordination. ACT strongly believes that putting in place African focused technical guiding and mentoring frameworks will provide strategic, operational and technology advisory support while incentivising adoption and sharing risks in adaptation and adoption of SA in Africa. Partnerships emphasize and combine particular strengths in an effort to overcome the weaknesses or deficiencies of each organization if it were acting alone.

Initial efforts have been made with ACT developing think tanks (ICAAP Africa <https://icaap.act-africa.org/> and iSAMAP-Africa) to advise the Network and agricultural actors on Conservation Agriculture and Sustainable Agricultural Mechanisation respectively.

Crosscutting the 3 Levels, ACT uses knowledge management and information communication technologies (ICT)-based platforms to target and share knowledge and information. ACT's websites, newsletters, social media and discussion forums provide plug-in opportunities for stakeholders. As an example, the current owners of tractors and processing machinery (service providers) are being sensitised to see business opportunities in sustainable agriculture services provision as they are linked and supported to access financing, machinery, technologies and clients of their services (farmers) using mobile phones and e-platforms.

It is ACT's belief that the diverse sustainable agriculture development stakeholders and ACT members in Africa are able to identify opportunities at any of the three levels, to easily connect and contribute or benefit from the network support services. The Sustainable Development, which forms the basis for a Prosperous Africa, in Agenda 2063 of the Africa We Want, has 7 key thrusts illustrated in Figure 1.

ACT continues to build new and stronger partnerships, uncover new and more efficient frontiers for serving farmers and other on-the-ground stakeholders while contributing to global and regional alliances to unlock policy and investments support for the spread of Sustainable Agriculture across Africa. Besides, ACT acknowledges the various sources, authors, reporters, organizations and practitioners whose articles appear in this January-February, 2019 issue, their geo-diversity is a clear testimony of the enthusiasm and interest from various organizations, countries, researchers and scientists in Africa towards Conservation Agriculture.

We encourage you to share your CA views and articles capturing the status and extent of adaptation and adoption of CA in any Country in Africa or beyond for sharing with others. Please submit articles, links or views to kim@act-africa.org. Use the [#conservationagriculture](#), [#africamechanize](#) to share links on articles, journals, news on CA and tag us on twitter [@ACTillage](#).



Mrs. Pauline Mogambi, CA farmer in Nakuru Kenya in her 1 ha CA farm of Maize intercropped with Desmodium. Five years of capacity development on jab-planter-based CA empowered her to double yields, diversify to dairy and install biogas.

Strategic alliances: A boost to promotion of Sustainable Agriculture in Africa

As engraved in its 2013-2022 Strategic Plan, which identifies Capacity Building and Partnership as one of the six thematic areas, and in its quest to bring together stakeholders who are dedicated to a prosperous Africa based on sustainable development, the African Conservation Tillage Network (ACT) is making new strides to strategically strengthen its partnership with international organizations. Notably, in the month of February 2019, ACT entered into new partnership arrangements and frameworks as follows:

1. ACT-FAO Memorandum of Understanding

On Thursday, 7th February, 2019 1100 - 1200Hrs, at **FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy**, Gabon Espace Room, African Conservation Tillage Network (ACT) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** to synergize on the scaling up of Sustainable Agricultural Mechanisation and Conservation Agriculture in Africa which has the potential to transform the lives and livelihoods of millions of smallholder farmers.

The MoU will encourage greater access for small-scale farmers to sustainable farm mechanization, such as two-wheeled tractors and other labour-saving machines. The partnership also seeks to link the use of farming machinery to Conservation Agriculture, which is a farming system that promotes minimum soil disturbance and the planting of complementary plant species to enhance biodiversity and natural biological processes.

The aspirations of this agreement is in tandem with the Johannesburg 2018 Second African Congress on Conservation Agriculture (2ACCA) 12th (g) statement of action which implied that

“Recognising that Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (SAM) as an important enabler in accelerating widespread practicing of CA and attainment of the Malabo Declarations’ Vision 25 x 25 and the Agenda 2063, urge ACT to advance appropriate African focused mechanisms and thrives that will largely deliver suitable SAM and support the propagation of self-sustaining development of the agricultural mechanization in Africa.” In addition, it also forms a compliance response to the Lusaka Declaration of the first Africa congress on Conservation Agriculture, which in its 10th resolve urged *“ACT, in collaboration with FAO & Regional Economic Communities are called upon to support knowledge management by stakeholders, including the CA task forces.”*

Indeed, “This agreement is an important part of ACT and FAO’s work towards the adoption of sustainable agricultural mechanization across Africa which has the potential to transform the lives and livelihoods of millions of smallholder farmers. Massive adoption of Sustainable Agriculture, anchored in commercial, environmental and socio-economic

sustainability, will significantly contribute to the attainment of the African Union’s Vision 25x25 of the Malabo Declaration and Agenda 2063 - The Africa We Want,” said Saidi Mkomwa, Executive Secretary of the African Conservation Tillage Network (ACT) at signing.

“One of the ways in which we can achieve sustainable agricultural production in Africa is through the adoption of Conservation Agriculture and more appropriate mechanization,” said FAO Assistant Director-General Bukar Tijani who heads FAO’s Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department. “This partnership for Africa will be a platform to bring together stakeholders from the private sector, farmers’ groups, civil society, agriculture ministries and beyond to collaborate to achieve our vision of a Zero Hunger world,” he added. Read more:

Press Release: <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1179418/icode/>

Signing ceremony photos: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/faonews/sets/72157706594495904>



Saidi Mkomwa, Executive Secretary (left), ACT, & Bukar Tijani, FAO Assistant Director-General (right), AG during the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

2. ACT- Italian Agricultural Research Institute (CREA) Memorandum of Understanding.

On Thursday 7th February 2019 at 18:00 hours, in CREA head office, Via Po 14 – Roma, Italy, Africa Conservation Tillage Network (ACT) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Consiglio per la ricerca in agricoltura e l'analisi dell'economia agraria (CREA,) Italian Agricultural Research Institute, on agricultural research and cooperation. This partnership agreement is intended to tap the two parties' long-term experiences and enhance technical backstopping on Sustainable Agriculture and Conservation Agriculture around ACT's Sustainable Agriculture – Centres of Excellence (SA-CoEs).

This agreement was established at the backdrop of ACT's strongly commitment and believe in the growth of partnerships



that support scaling up adaptation and adoption of Conservation Agriculture, sustainable agricultural mechanization and ecosystem management. Its partnership strategy provides the basis of collaborating with various agricultural based organizations or institutions in

different regions explicitly to support the promoting of Sustainable Agriculture (SA) in Africa. Effective networking between ACT and its partners continues to allow lesson learning that leads to impact, is beneficial and sustainable

Seminar: Sustainable and Climate-Smart Agriculture – Developing Networks and Synergies between Africa and Europe



On 8th February, 2019, 0930 – 1100hrs in FAO Headquarter, Austria Room, Rome, African Conservation Tillage Network (ACT) and the European Conservation Agriculture Federation (ECAAF) joined FAO in discussing the need to develop networks and synergies between Africa and Europe to increase the productivity of our cropping systems in times of climate change. The seminar was focused on the need to boost sustainable crop production in Africa and how to support climate change adaptation and mitigation. The discussions and presentations were centred on smallholder farming systems in rural Africa and medium-scale commercial farmers in Europe. Highlights on the emerging partnerships and capacity building, strengthening linkages with knowledge hubs and connections to service industries, and the role that agricultural equipment and innovation can play were discussed.

The record of the event webcast is available at: <http://www.fao.org/webcast/home/en/item/4939/icode/>.

During the seminar, the main presenters were:



Eng. Saidi Mkomwa, Executive Secretary, the African Conservation Tillage Network (ACT).

ACT is a Pan-African not-for-profit organization that focuses on strengthening the adoption and scaling up of Conservation Agriculture (CA),

improving climate change resilience in Africa, enhancing capacity building and partnerships, and strengthening entrepreneurship and business development for Sustainable Agriculture (SA).



Prof. Gottlieb Basch, President, European Conservation Agriculture Federation (ECAAF)

ECAAF is a non-profit making international association that aims to improve farmers, agrarian technicians and society's access to information on techniques that conserve agrarian soil and its biodiversity, in the context of sustainable

agriculture, and to encourage research and development on CA and the biodiversity of agrarian soil, and carry out activities to promote CA.

During the seminar, it was clear that, although the contexts of Africa and Europe are different, much can be learned between the two regions, in particular on sharing innovations and solutions along the entire value chain. This also includes combining mechanization and business development with agricultural principles in line with Conservation Agriculture to ensure its sustainability.

Moisture preservation turns arid land into thriving farm

In the middle of the arid Laikipia County, about 30 kilometres from the Maralal-Rumuruti highway, is a plantation flourishing with maize. Next to the maize are healthy evenly distributed young sorghum plants running into hundreds of acres of land (Figure 4). This is OI Maisor farm, previously a ranch with thousands of livestock and marauding wildlife.

There are no signs of irrigation at the extensive green farm and the owner, Martin Evans, has no immediate plans to invest in irrigation but is optimistic of continued improved crop production in the dry, barren land. Mr. Evans' farm was an abandoned arid patch until last year when his son Mathew came back home from the University of Queensland in Australia, where he was studying agronomy. Mr. Mathew brought back with him skills applied in Australia, which he has successfully used to change the barren land to productivity. The key word in the Australia based farming technology is moisture preservation.

Mr. Mathew describes the technology as zero tillage and stubble mulching, combined with GPS technology. The



One of the owners of OI Maisor farm, in Laikipia, inspect the maize farm.
Photo: Waikwa Maina/NMG

technology is suitable for low rainfall environments. Laikipia receives about 500 millimeters rainfall per year, compared to Australia's 400 millimeters. "It's Conservation Agriculture, the aim of the system is to save soil moisture because we have low rainfall. We want to store all the rain that we get in the soil. Which means you don't have to disturb the soil because the more you disturb it the more you lose the moisture," said Mr. Mathew.

With the technology, one does not have to plough the soil every season, and the initial digging at 30 to 40 centimetre depth is enough for eternity. He says the land should be flattened after it is ploughed for the first and only time. "After you plough and flatten, you apply crop cover or heavy mulching so that the rainwater doesn't run as floods, causing soil erosion, but slowly sinks in the soil," said Mr. Mathew. [Read More](#)

Use of Remote Sensing Images for the Identification of No-Till Seeding Plots

Agriculture and Climate Change (CC) are intimately related. Conservation Agriculture (CA) can contribute to the global challenge of mitigating the effects of CC. CA is one of the most studied and developed Agricultural Sciences in the world today. According to FAO, it is practiced in almost 180 million hectares. At present, Spain leads Europe, with almost 2 million hectares, the area allocated to CA is gradually increasing,

but there is a need for a trigger that will make its practice rise to the level of leading countries such as Argentina, Brazil or the United States. However, a significant increase in the area managed under CA principles is expected over the next few years. Up to now, the increase has been constant but modest since there was not much institutional support. For this reason, large-scale monitoring and control systems will be necessary

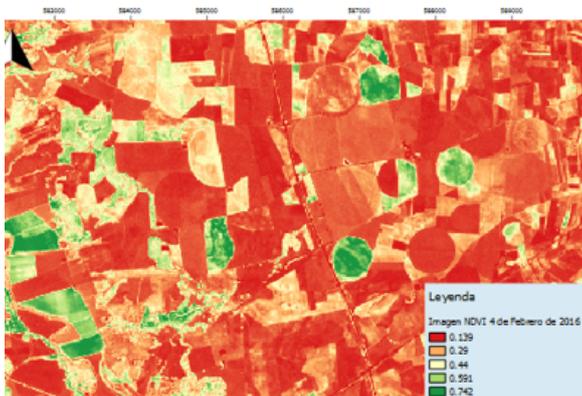
to enable administrations to supervise, quickly and efficiently, those plots that have acquired a series of commitments related to CA.

The Association of Conservation Agriculture in Albacete (ASALBAC), integrated within the AEAC.SV, together with the Remote Sensing and GIS section of the Regional Development Institute of the University

of Castilla-La Mancha has been trying to find a way, for some time, to integrate the use of Remote Sensing and CA. This interest led one of the members of ASALBAC to develop a methodology for the classification of plots in No-till seeding by using time series of remote sensing images. The use of time series of satellite images opens the door to the development of a tool for the identification, follow-up and control of plots managed under No-till seeding systems. Based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that it is possible to use a methodology, which allows for the study of large areas and the classification of those plots in no till seeding in order to monitor and inform planning (Figure 5).

The original article in Spanish was written by Luis Carlos Brox Moreno, Agronomist and Secretary of ASALBAC, and has been translated to English by Agrisat Iberia, S.L. (www.agrisat.es). ACT gratefully acknowledges their contribution.

Get the full article at: [Read More](#)



NDVI images in Remote Sensing used for identification of no-till seeding plots.

Ethiopia incorporates CA as one of the alternative technologies within its extension system

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for millions of smallholder farmers and the major driver of the economy in Ethiopia. However, the sector's performance is highly influenced by land degradation, depletion of soil fertility, and recurrent droughts due to climate variability amongst other factors. To address these challenges and to sustainably feed the growing population, Ethiopia has integrated Conservation Agriculture (CA) within its agricultural extension system.

The Soil Fertility Improvement Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, in collaboration with different stakeholders in the country, have held

several consultations and discussions with key government decision makers within the Ministry, Researchers, the Academia, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Private Sector engaged in CA to effect this progress. It established a multi-stakeholder platform to work on CA mainstreaming within the agricultural extension system in the last two years. Key deliverables were development of a national CA implementation strategy and policy brief after a series of five workshops, several face-to-face meetings and virtual discussions over the past one and half-years. Furthermore, two experience-sharing visits were organized to higher officials to visit CA practicing farmers in

different parts of Ethiopia. Finally, two sensitization workshops for key decision makers were conducted to persuade the inclusion process. As a result, the MoA has incorporated CA and officially launched it as part of the extension package in a mainstreaming workshop conducted on 29 December 2018 at Adama. The Regional States agreed to implement CA in selected areas by building the capacity of extension workers starting January 2019. To translate and actualize the political commitment and willingness into action, it is high time to build the capacity of experts, extension workers and model farmers on CA and support them in contextualizing the technology. [Learn More](#)

Sudan Conservation Agriculture Conference: Sharing lessons learnt



February 22, 2019. Landell Mills organized a three-day Conservation Agriculture Conference in Khartoum to share lessons learnt from the EU-funded *Sudan Food Security Programme – Rural Smallholders Component (SFSP–RSC)*, and map out the next steps to take Conservation Agriculture forward in Sudan. The event attracted over 90 participants, many of whom were directly involved in the Programme including NGOs, smallholder farmers, state and federal government staff, private companies, financial institutions and

insurance companies. The presence of a wide variety of organizations reflected the successful partnerships established under the programme, which contributed to achieving its objectives.

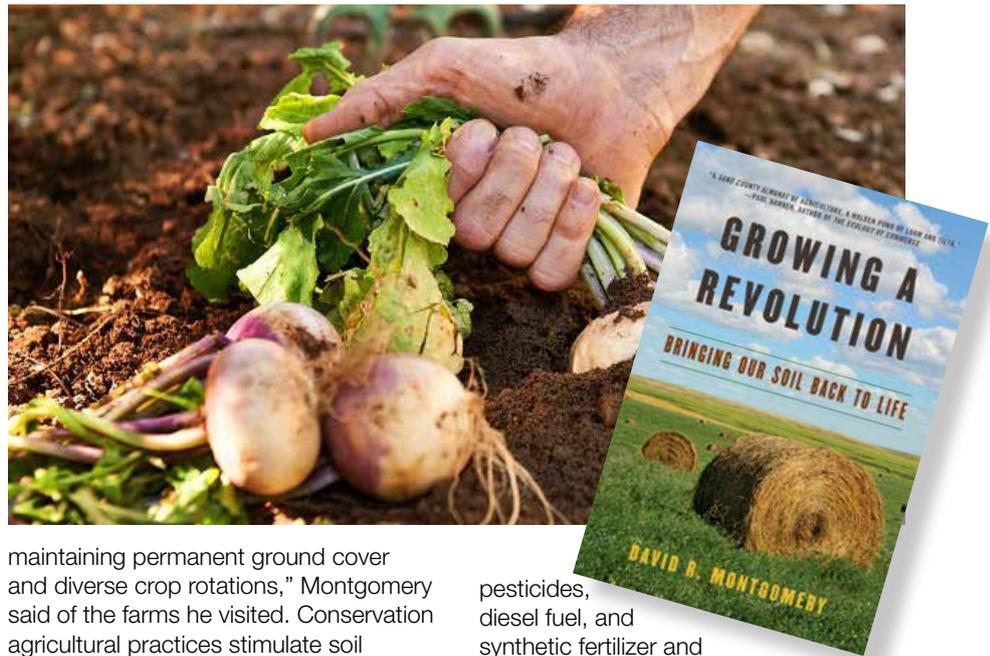
The first day of the conference focused on sharing the achievements of the programme and opened with a speech from His Excellency Ambassador Jean Michel Dumond, Head of Delegation of the European Union to Sudan. The following two days were made up of technical workshops and focused on

four themes: *research and technology development; extension, technology transfer and farmers' associations; private sector engagement; and the role of financial institutions*. For each theme, the participants agreed on a set of key recommendations in order to continue the practice and development of Conservation Agriculture among smallholder farmers in Sudan. Landell Mills will produce conference proceedings that will share the recommendations. [Read More](#)

Soil Health: The Next Agricultural Revolution

By adopting three practices—no-till farming, cover crops and diverse crop rotations—farmers worldwide can help preserve the world's soils, feed a growing global population, mitigate climate change and protect the environment. This was the key message of a presentation by David Montgomery, professor of geology at the University of Washington, at the [Iowa Organic Conference](#) in November. Montgomery, author of several books including his most recent, [Growing a Revolution](#), began his talk by describing how the earth's soils are being degraded by agriculture and the catastrophic impacts that result.

In the research for his book, [Growing a Revolution](#), Montgomery traveled around the world visiting farms that are building soil and soil organic matter. The practices these farms had in common were no plowing or no-till, keeping the ground covered year round using cover crops, and growing diverse crop rotations to reduce weeds and insects. Together he calls the three practices “conservation agriculture.” “There was minimal or no disturbance to the soil,



maintaining permanent ground cover and diverse crop rotations,” Montgomery said of the farms he visited. Conservation agricultural practices stimulate soil microbial activity, the “soil food web” as Montgomery describes it, to build fertile soils, which in turn produce healthy plants. He visited Duane Beck, a conventional farmer in South Dakota, who has adopted all three practices. As a result, Beck has reduced the use of

pesticides, diesel fuel, and synthetic fertilizer and increased crop yields.

Kofi Boa, a farmer in Ghana, who operates the No-Till Center, was able to stop soil erosion while tripling yields of corn and cowpea and reducing herbicide use. [Read More](#)

A model farmer adopts conservation agriculture in North Africa

Adnen Abdrabbou's land in the El Krib region of northern Tunisia is semi-arid. The area sees some rain during the year, which makes it better than other parts of Tunisia. But finding enough water for irrigation has always posed a challenge. The area's predominant farming systems are cereals and livestock.

In 1999, Abdrabbou parted ways with traditional farming systems. Conventional – and intensive – tillage caused soil erosion; and ammonium nitrate and phosphorus fertilizers were too expensive. He began practicing conservation agriculture instead – the essential elements of which are minimum tillage, permanent soil cover, and diverse crop rotation. He opened up his farm for onsite conservation agriculture trials to ICARDA and three national agricultural institutes – [l'Institut National de Recherche Agronomique de Tunis](#), [l'Institut National Des Grandes Cultures](#), and [l'Ecole Supérieure d'Agriculture du Kef](#).



Direct seeder sowing cereal. Photo: Salah Ben Youssef / INRAT

Today, all 140 hectares of his land are under conservation agriculture. He grows five or six crops for diverse crop rotation: his cereal crops are barley, wheat, and triticale; his legumes faba bean, alfalfa, and vetch. Growing forage

is not only beneficial for crop rotation; it can also be used to feed small ruminants during the summer and winter periods when farmers are faced with a forage deficit. [Read More](#)

Spider community shift in response to farming practices in a sub-humid agroecosystems of Southern Africa

A [new study](#) explores how conservation agriculture in southern Africa supports spider populations and diversity in fields, which could help mitigate pest damage and potentially lead to higher yields for farmers. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), herbivorous insects such as aphids, caterpillars and weevils destroy about [one fifth of the world's total crop production](#) each year. Spiders can help keep voracious pests in-check, but conventional farming practices (e.g. tilling, crop residue removal and monoculture) can harm or drastically reduce these beneficial bio-control agents.

There are more than 45,000 identified spider species around the world. From glaciers to tropical rainforests, they inhabit every terrestrial ecosystem



on earth. Some can even live in tidal zones, and at least one species inhabits fresh water. While we tend to associate spiders with webs, only [about 50 percent](#) of the species catch their prey this way; the rest hunt on plants, on the ground or below it, using a variety

of tactics such as stalking, stabbing, crushing – even [seduction](#).

For more information, read [Spider community shift in response to farming practices in a sub-humid agroecosystem in southern Africa](#).

Food Security Project Supports Model Farmers in Ethiopia

Ethiopia's agriculture is complex, involving substantial variation in crops grown across the country's regions and ecologies. In addition, although there has been significant growth in the cultivation of cereal crops over the last decade, by international standards, yields are low, and overall production is highly susceptible to weather



shocks, such as droughts. As such, food security has become a serious challenge for much of the population.

By promoting 'Conservation Agriculture' (CA)-based practices, the Sustainable Intensification of Maize-Legume Cropping Systems for Food Security in Eastern and Southern Africa (SIMLESA) project has been working in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania to improve crop productivity and household food security. The techniques promoted by the project, such as crop residue retention, intercropping of maize and legumes, and production of substantial feed crops, are

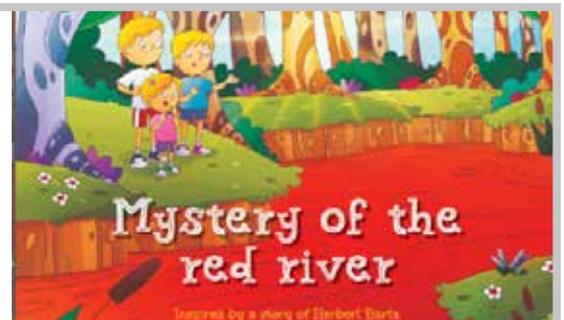
helping smallholder farmers to reduce their agricultural risks and increase yields.

In Boricha district, south of Hawassa in Ethiopia, smallholder farmer Ermiyas Bonge used to struggle to produce reliable yields due to climate variability (Figure 7). However, since implementing the CA-based practices 7 years ago, he has been able to boost production and enhance his climate resilience. "I used to experience crop failure year after year because of drought," Ermiyas says, "but, since adopting the SIMLESA technologies, I do not till my land, I retain the crop residues and I grow two or more crops together. The combination of these factors has increased water infiltration into the soil. Therefore, soil-water holding capacity and soil fertility has improved. Now, production is sustainable and we don't have crop failures," he explains. [Read More](#)

Mystery of the red river

Read this interesting story on **Conservation Agriculture**, piece of the history of the No-Tillage System titled "Mystery of the red river":

<https://tinyurl.com/y5hfw2tp>



How Conservation Agriculture Could Solve Food Insecurity in Arid & Semi-Arid Lands

Over three quarters of Kenya's land is classified as arid or semi-arid (ASALs) with 20% of this having high to middle potential for agriculture. The sector relies heavily on rainfall which often than not is not consistent. Current food production levels cannot meet demand due to among other factors, conversion of prime agricultural land to other uses and the changing size and patterns of our population. There is a need to find ways of utilizing these lands that are considered unproductive due to insufficient rainfall. One possible way is through Conservation Agriculture (CA), which has the ability to increase food

production in such areas considered unsuitable for farming such as Kitui, Makueni, Tharaka Nithi, Baringo, Isiolo and Marsabit. In addition, current agricultural practices such as the use of chemical fertilizers are not sustainable and in future we might need to reclaim the once productive lands that will be rendered useless. As the debate on food security gains momentum locally and globally we must consider that our goal should be to produce enough food and leave our land and environment in good condition to produce food for future generations. [Read More](#)



2019 Events and Opportunities



Global Symposium on soil Erosion

The **Global Symposium on Soil Erosion (GSER19)**, 'Stop soil erosion, Save our future' will be held from 15-17 May 2019, at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Headquarters in Rome, Italy. This science-policy meeting is co-organized by the UN FAO and its Global Soil Partnership (GSP), the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS), together with the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the Joint FAO/IAEA Programme of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture. The objective of GSER 19 is to establish a common platform to present and discuss the latest information on the status of interventions and innovations in the field of soil erosion and related land management.

The Symposium will be divided in three parts (i.e. (1) Soil erosion data, (2) Policies on soil erosion and (3) the economics of soil erosion). Call for abstracts is now open (deadline 10th March 2019).

Registration is also open (<https://event-services.fao.org/events/global-symposium-on-soil-erosion/registration-228bb5e854f14a6183800dc23071e3c.aspx?fqp=true>).

For more information, please visit our website: <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/soil-erosion-symposium/en/>.

Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) Annual Conference

SACAU is organizing a conference as a prelude to its Annual General Meeting (AGM) that will be held from 27th to 28th of May 2019 in Maputo, Mozambique. The theme of this

year's Conference is "Taking stock of Southern Africa's Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) agenda: What are the prospects for the future?" The conference seeks to achieve the following key objectives:

- To provide an opportunity for farmer leaders in southern Africa to better understand the CSA concept, policy environment and public and private sector investments required to promote adoption of CSA practices and technology on a wide scale;
- To improve farmer leaders' understanding of the agriculture and climate change nexus and introduce them to farm-level interventions that can be implemented to reduce GHG emissions.
- To explore the relevance of land tenure and property rights in promoting the adoption of environmentally sustainable agriculture programmes.

For more information, please contact: [Executive Secretary](#) | [African Conservation Tillage Network](#)

KARLO - Kabete, Waiyaki Way | P.O. Box 10375-00100, Nairobi, Kenya | Tel: +254 20 8076064; +254 774 895 077

Email: info@act-africa.org | Web: www.act-africa.org



ACT acknowledges the partnership and financial support provided by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) towards Promotion of Conservation Agriculture in Africa