

# Package 118

Type: Radio spots

2021

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**Radio spots on maize**

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**Notes to broadcasters**

Maize is a major crop in some parts of Nigeria, with an estimated 6.85 million hectares planted to maize in 2019, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

In these radio spots, you will learn more about a variety of farming activities related to maize, including:

* Site selection
* Field measurement
* Benefits of weeding
* Recognizing genuine fertilizers
* Climate-smart maize farming, part 1
* Climate-smart maize farming, part 2
* Cultural pest management
* The importance of drying

The spots vary in length from about 45-60 seconds and could be played multiple times during programs on maize production and post-harvest activities. They could also be played at other times when farmers are listening, especially during important times in the seasonal maize calendar.

**Spot #1: Choosing a site to grow maize**

**NARRATOR:** Farmers! For the best maize yield, choose the best site. Here are three qualities of a good site to grow maize.

First, the land should be relatively flat.

Second, the soil should absorb and hold a lot of water without becoming water-logged. Loamy soils are best for this.

Third, the soil should have lots of organic matter. Black or dark brown soils are rich in organic matter.

If your soil has these three characteristics—it’s relatively flat, holds lots of water without becoming water-logged, and is rich in organic matter—you are on right path to a good maize yield!

**Spot #2: Field measurement**

**FARMER 1:** What in the world are you doing with that measuring tape—and rope, pegs … all that stuff?

**FARMER 2:** Measuring my field.

**FARMER 1:** But why?You know you have three acres!

**FARMER 2:** Yes, but measuring my field very accurately will save me money.

**FARMER 1:** NowI’m even more still confused. How can using a tape measure save you money?

**FARMER 2:** It’s simple.If I know the exact size of my field, I can calculate exactly how much fertilizer and other inputs to buy. So I always have enough and don’t waste anything.

And you know what else?

**FARMER 1:** Tell me.

**FARMER 2:** When I measure my field, I can calculate a very good estimate of my maize yield. That tells me whether maize will give me a profit or loss this year. If it’s a loss, I can grow something more profitable. So measuring my field saves me money.

**Spot #3:** **Benefits of weeding**

**NARRATOR:** Why should farmers weed their maize crop?

Here are four very good reasons why:

First, weeding allows the maize to use the fertilizer the farmer applies, instead of the weeds using it.

Second, weeds can harbour pests and disease-causing organisms.

Third, weeds reduce crop yields by stealing nutrients, water, sunlight, and space.

Fourth, after you weed, the decomposing weeds add nutrients to the soil.

So do your early weeding two or three weeks after planting. And weed a second time five to six weeks after planting.

You’ll be happy you did!

**Spot #4: Recognizing genuine fertilizers**

**NARRATOR:** Farmers! Be careful! There are fake fertilizers on the market!

Here are two simple ways to recognize a genuine fertilizer.

First, genuine fertilizers are always recommended by agricultural authorities such as the Ministry of Agriculture and ADPs. So consult with local extension agents in your LGAs before purchasing.

Second, genuine fertilizers are certified and stamped by SON, the Standards Organisation of Nigeria, and FEPSAN, the Fertilizer Producers and Suppliers Association of Nigeria.

If a fertilizer isn’t recommended by agricultural authorities, and certified and stamped by SON and FEPSAN, DON’T BUY IT!

**Spot #5: Climate-smart maize farming, part 1**

**FARMER 1:** (DESPAIRING)Where is the rain? Oh, this climate change is going to ruin me.

**FARMER 2:** Don’t despair, brother. There are things you can do. Be climate-smart!

**FARMER 1:** But where do I start? Can you tell me just three things I can do?

**FARMER 2:** Easy!

First, never burn your farmland. Instead, keep crop residues on the field. They keep moisture in the soil and decompose over time to make your soil more fertile.

Second, use simple mechanization equipment. When it’s time to plant, use a jab planter and animal traction. Heavy machines can compact your soil. And heavy machines only loosen your topsoil anyway.

And finally, as much as possible, use manure as fertilizer, and always bury fertilizers in the soil.

You’re right, brother, climate change is hard. But we can do a lot by being climate-smart!

**Spot #6: Climate-smart maize farming, part 2**

**NARRATOR:** It’s not an easy time to be a farmer. The weather is getting more unpredictable, the rains are erratic, the growing season is shorter, and droughts, pests, and diseases are on the rise. But here’s a few things a climate-smart farmer can do to cope.

First, pay a lot of attention to the cropping calendar and listen carefully to all the local weather forecasts you can, including daily, weekly, and seasonal forecasts.

Second, plant only drought-tolerant maize varieties that mature no later than 100 days after planting and are suitable for your area.

Finally, plant nitrogen-rich cowpea or other legume crops when your maize is forming cobs. That way, the cowpeas don’t compete with the maize and they leave nitrogen in the soil for the next maize crop.

There are many ways to successfully cope with the changing climate. These are only a few of them.

**Spot #7: Cultural control of pests**

**NARRATOR:** Many pests like to feed on maize, including aphids, stem borers and other insects, rats, and birds.

Pesticides are one way to manage pests. But what about cultural management practices? Do they work?

Here are four inexpensive, easy-to-use cultural practices that may help you.

First, to manage pests and diseases, ask extension agents about varieties with resistance to particular pests and diseases.

Second, when leaves show signs of pest or disease damage, for example, changing colour, remove the plants from the farm and destroy them by burning or burying.

Third, scare away grasshoppers and birds with noise-makers and scarecrows.

Fourth, you can use neem extract to manage insects.

Rats are attracted to certain types of food, including grains and harvested fruits and nuts, as well as garbage. Make sure the farm is clean and there is nowhere for rats to hide.

Remember that cultural practices like these are more effective with mild outbreaks. So monitor your farm closely to identify problems early.

**Spot #8: The importance of drying**

**NARRATOR:** Why is it so important to dry your maize carefully before storage? Here are three very good reasons.

First, too much moisture results in mould infestations, and mould creates rot, contamination, and crop spoilage.

Second, moulds produce aflatoxins, which can cause cancer and even death.

Third, high moisture increases infestations of insect pests such as weevils.

So, to maintain high-quality maize, free of damage from mould, aflatoxins, and insect pests, dry your maize to 12-13% moisture content before storage.

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