

Package 121

Type: Radio spots

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**Radio spots on maize, groundnuts, soybean, and rice production \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Notes to broadcasters**

Maize, groundnuts, soybean, and rice are major crops, and following recommended production and post-harvest practices can greatly improve crop quality and yield, thereby increasing farmer income and profits.

In these radio spots, listeners will learn about a variety of farming and post-harvest activities for these crops, including:

* Managing weeds in maize and soybean
* Managing pests in maize
* Managing disease problems in maize
* Top-dressing maize and rice
* Monitoring maize and rice
* Green Field Day activities in maize, groundnut, and soybean
* Drying groundnuts after harvest
* Managing aflatoxin
* Harvesting soybean
* Planning post-harvest activities in maize and rice
* Marketing
* Controlling bushfires

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

Please note that the spots are listed in the order that the respective farming activities happen in the agricultural season. These spots are based on information from Ghana but they can be adapted and broadcast in any area where these staple crops are grown.

**Spot #1: Managing weeds in maize and soybean**

**FARMER 1:** (SOUND OF BIRDS) Are you hand-weeding again, (name of farmer)?

**FARMER 2:** (LAUGHS) This is the time of year when weeds grow the fastest.

**FARMER 1:** But your maize and soybean look fine. Why pay so much attention to weeds?

**FARMER 2:** Two reasons. First, weeds compete with crops for soil nutrients, moisture, and sunlight. Second, weeds harbour pests and disease organisms.

**FARMER 1:** Ok. But handweeding?

**FARMER 2:** I also use a hoe, I plough weeds under at the beginning of the season, and I apply herbicides before and after the main crops emerge.

**FARMER 1:** But herbicides are so expensive!

**FARMER 2:** We buy them in bulk from our farmers’ co-op, so they’re cheaper.

 And if you rotate crops and carefully use mixed cropping, there are fewer weeds to manage.

**NARRATOR:** When you have few weeds, your crops can thrive. There are many ways to manage weeds: hoeing, hand-picking, using herbicides. It’s best to use a variety of methods.

**Spot #2: Managing pests in maize**

**NARRATOR:** Many pests can decrease maize yields. And your income!

Here are four simple and affordable ways to prevent pest problems on your maize farm.

First, plough soon after harvest, and remove and destroy crop residues.

Second, treat seeds with insecticides before planting to control pests.

Third, mix a pinch of ground hot chili with two kilograms of wood ash and apply it to the funnel when maize is knee high.

Fourth and finally, mix tobacco with *Alata samina* or black soap and spray when there are signs of pest infestation, as well as spraying with neem oil.

If you follow these four practices, pests can’t feast on your crop. Your yields will be bigger and your wallet fatter!

**Spot #3: Managing disease problems in maize**

**NARRATOR:** Maize plants are infected by many diseases, which reduce crop quality and yields.

Here are four simple and affordable ways to prevent disease problems on your maize farm.

First, manage weeds. Weeds compete with crops and are a haven for disease organisms.

Second, use varieties that are tolerant of diseases.

Third, treat your seeds with registered fungicides before planting.

Fourth, handpick and burn disease-infected plants to limit the spread of disease.

If you follow these four practices, diseases can’t feast on your crop. Your yields will be bigger and your wallet fatter!

**Spot #4: Top-dressing maize and rice**

**NARRATOR:** What is top-dressing and why should maize and rice farmers do it?

Top-dressing in maize and rice is a second application of fertilizer after the early season basal application. Top-dressing ensures that plants receive nutrients when they need them most.

For maize, top-dress by dibbling a hole five centimetres away from the plant, measuring fertilizer with a dollop cup or bottle top, adding the fertilizer to the hole, and burying it.

In rice, dibble a five-centimetre hole in the centre of a square formed by four rice plants, add fertilizer to the hole, and bury it. This fertilizer serves all four plants in the square.

When should you top-dress maize and rice? For both crops, top-dress six weeks after planting or four weeks after the basal application.

Top-dressing provides nutrients for your maize and rice plants when they need it most. This ensures that your crops stay vigorous and healthy, helping them yield well and better tolerate pests, diseases, and bad weather.

**Spot #5: Monitoring maize and rice**

**NARRATOR:** Maize and rice farmers should monitor their farms throughout the crop cycle.

 Why should farmers monitor?

 Here are six benefits of monitoring your farm.

 One, ensuring that crop plants are healthy.

 Two, making sure that pests and diseases are not destroying the crop.

 Three, ensuring that water is managed on your field.

 Four, managing weeds.

 Five, checking that crops are maturing uniformly.

 And six, ensuring that the fertilizer you applied is working as intended.

 Farmers should monitor their fields at all stages of maize and rice growth, starting a week after planting to ensure that seedlings have emerged.

**Spot #6:** **Green Field Day activities in maize, groundnut, and soybean**

**NARRATOR:** As part of the 4R Solutions Project, all farmers are invited to Green Field Day activities for maize, groundnut, and soybean!

The 4R project is all about improving yields by using the right source of nutrients for your crops, applied at the right rate, at the right time, and in the right place.

Green Field Days will happen in East Gonja, Nanimba North and South, and Kpandai. They will feature 4R demonstrations, trainings, and many other exciting events.

As well as showing the benefits of 4R, Green Field Day will demonstrate best management practices for land selection, land preparation, timely planting, using the right seed and right varieties from the right source, recommended planting density, pest and disease control, weed management, and timely and effective harvesting.

So save the date and plan to visit the Green Field Day in your area on \_ at \_\_ [ADD THE DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION OF THE GREEN FIELD DAY IN YOUR AREA].

 You’ll be glad you did!

**Spot #7: Drying groundnuts after harvest**

**NARRATOR:** Groundnut farmers!Good drying practices can save your groundnuts, and bad practices can destroy them.Without good drying, your groundnuts may be low in quality, contaminated with aflatoxin, and infested with pests.

To avoid that, here are four things to remember.

 First, dry groundnuts immediately after harvesting. Drying reduces the moisture content so you can bag the grains after threshing.

 Second, strip the pods, then sun-dry for six to seven days. Well-dried pods look somewhat wrinkled and are slightly hard when bitten. Always cover pods when it threatens to rain.

 Third, dry groundnuts on a tarpaulin or several sacks stitched together. If that isn’t possible, use a concrete floor or a mixture of dung and water to create a smooth, uniform surface. Never dry your groundnuts on bare ground to avoid contamination and low selling prices.

Remember that groundnuts with too much moisture invite contamination with aflatoxins and infestation with pests.

Well-dried groundnuts are high quality, fetch premium prices, and last for a long time in storage.

**Spot #8: Managing aflatoxin**

**NARRATOR:** Aflatoxins are highly toxic and dangerous substances produced by a fungus. They are often found in crops such as maize and groundnuts.

Aflatoxins can suppress the immune system and cause liver disease in humans and domestic animals. They can also stunt children’s growth and development.

 Here are six actions you can take in the field to prevent aflatoxin from contaminating your maize and groundnuts.

First, avoid continuously growing susceptible crops like maize or groundnut on the same piece of land. Rotate to other crops!

Second, plant only certified seed that is treated with appropriate seed dressings.

Third, choose suitable land for planting maize and groundnut.

Fourth, combine organic and mineral fertilizers when applying fertilizer.

Fifth, use recommended spacing and weed early.

And finally, ensure proper harvesting and careful handling of produce. Don’t let aflatoxins spoil your farm and your life!

**Spot #9: Harvesting soybean**

**NARRATOR:** Soybean farmers! When you use the best soybean harvesting methods, you can avoid damaging crops and increase your marketable yields and income.

Remember these four tips for the best possible soybean harvests.

First, harvest with a sharp cutlass, hoe, or sickle. Do not hand-pull soybeans. Cut plants at the soil level and heap them at various points on the field. Place them on tarpaulins or sacks stitched together.

Second, harvest soybeans when leaves start to dry, yellow, and fall off plants, and pods dry up and turn from green to yellow and then grey or brown.

 Third, make a note of the maturity period of the variety you grow. Then, start preparations for harvesting as the maturity date nears.

If you time your planting date well, you can harvest in dry conditions at the end of the rainy season. This will give you high quality grains.

**Spot #10: Planning post-harvest activities in maize and rice**

**NARRATOR:** Your rice and maize is almost mature, so it’s time to prepare for post-harvest activities! Here are six key things to keep in mind.

First, labour. How many workers will you need to help bag rice and maize? For how many days? What is the cost per day per worker? Make a budget.

 Second, sacks and machinery. How many sacks do you need? What machinery do you need? Do you need to rent or buy machinery? Include the costs in your budget.

 Third, finances. Have you applied for credit to pay hired workers? For purchased or rented equipment? Research your options, including payback periods and interest rates.

 Fourth, consider using triple bagging to ensure your maize stays safe from pests and diseases.

 Fifth, the storage facility. Does your storage have shelves that keep your maize and rice off the ground? Do you need chemicals or biologicals to protect against pests and disease? Add any purchases to your budget.

 Sixth and last, your market. What are the current prices? Are there better markets and prices somewhere else? What is the cost of transportation? Can you work with a farmers’ group to transport and market your produce?

 Remember: If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

**Spot #11: Marketing**

**NARRATOR:** Farmers, you work hard! And after all that hard work, you should make good money. But without smart marketing, that won’t happen.

Here are five tips to better market your produce and increase your profits.

First, know your target customers. Are they urban dwellers, rural families, young people, restaurants, mothers? You will earn more money when you identify a specific group of customers.

Second, package your produce well! Good packaging keeps your produce from spoiling and attracts customers.

Third, transport your goods well. If your produce travels 20 kilometres down a bumpy road on unreliable transport, you will lose a lot.

Fourth, link up with off-takers, aggregators, and buyers. This is how to expand your markets and help guarantee a good profit.

Finally, add value to your produce to multiply your profits. You can process it on the farm or collaborate with existing processors.

Don’t waste all your hard field work, farmers. Get smart about marketing your produce.

**Spot #12: Controlling bushfires**

**NARRATOR:** Bush fires are one of a farmer’s worst enemies. But there are ways to successfully manage bushfires. Remember these seven tips on preventing bushfires.

First, regularly weed or mow grassy areas and rake up leaves.

Second, regularly prune bushes and trees.

Third, keep your garden beds moist by adding mulch or non-inflammable ground covers like pebbles.

Fourth, regularly clear leaves from gutters, roofs, and downpipes, and around the base of trees.

Fifth, avoid smoking near dry leaves, oil and gas, or other flammable substances.

Sixth, create a fire belt around your farm.

Seventh and finally, work with your community to create and enforce by-laws on managing bushfires.

Don’t give bush fires a chance to ruin your farm and your life!

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