ICT technologies improve crop-livestock production and smallholder farmer’s incomes in Eastern DR Congo

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Introduction

Mixed crop-livestock (C-L) farming systems dominate Eastern DR Congo and Burundi, where they provide food, income, draught power and employment to smallholder farmers.

However, farmers have limited knowledge on best practices for optimizing the integration of crop and livestock production at farm level.

-The CLiP Project seeks to help these farmers to improve their food security, nutrition, income and resilience through adoption of locally-generated innovations that enhance productivity of integrated C-L (or I-C-L) systems and the functioning of their respective value chains.

-Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are being used to disseminate new knowledge and advice.

Approach & processes in DRC

In February 2017, 150 farmers representing 2 farm types were selected to host C-L R&D demonstrations in Miti and Kamanyola.

75 of these farmers were registered on the Airtel ICT platform in June 2017.

Farmers benefited from knowledge transfer, improved access to vet services and input and output markets for crop and livestock products.

Results

Integrating C-L along solidarity chains (S.C.)

CLiP innovations have improved agricultural productivity at FM level by approx. 60% and the number of farmers benefiting from ICT technologies has increased (progressive total of 2025 s’s from farmers seeking expert advice).

-Through digital technologies, smallholder farmers are connecting to markets and local agri-vet networks. This is promoting adoption of improved C-L technologies. Rabbit solidarity chains are more popular those of pigs, because of their faster turnover-time.

-The most widely disseminated cropping technologies are (i) Mbili system of intercropping maize-based systems such as soybean (ii) Cultivation of bio-fortified maize, bean and Orange-flesh sweet potato

Increasing adoption of ICT services along S.C.

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Moving-up the livestock ladder

-In DRC sites, ICT marketing platforms enabled 37 poor (Type 1) farmers to change status to Medium Wealth (Type 2), when each sold avg. 54 rabbits at buy-back assets in total 22 pigs and 16 goats were purchased.

-Similarly, 18 Type 2 farmers sold each 9 pigs on 24 agro points to buy a cow, advancing them to Type 3 (Wealthy) category.

Acknowledgments

Digital ICT technologies aided access to information, which contributed to increased adoption of improved interventions, productivity and marketing, leading to improved food security, nutrition, income and livestock health.

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