



Improved Soybean Varieties Increase Farmer Income by 53%

What should policy makers do?

Policy makers should enact and/or enforce policies that enhance i) awareness ii) access to improved soybean varieties and practices.

Why?

The study shows that adoption is influenced by access to information, participation in seed markets and membership of farmer organizations.

Adoption could increase if farmers are given access to information on improved seed varieties, and agronomic practices through training or other forms of advisory services and participation in seed markets.

What is the issue?

In spite of the availability of improved soybean varieties and agronomic practices, adoption is low among Malawian farmers. In the last 19 years over 15 improved varieties have been released.

However, farmers continue to plant traditional varieties which leads to low productivity.

For instance, farmers in Malawi on average harvest 0.98 t/ha which is below the African average of

1.24 t/ha and global average of 2.68 t/ha (2017 FAO).

Why is it important?

A study carried out by IITA research scientists shows that adoption of improved soybean seed varieties and agronomic practices can result in 61% yield gain and 53% income gain.

Furthermore, soybean is an important crop in Malawi's agriculture because it is used as an inter-crop with maize. Soybean improves soil fertility through fixing nitrogen in the soil, this in turn boosts maize productivity and gives farmers extra income when they sell the soybean harvest.



Soybean farmers who adopted improved varieties earn 53% more than their counterparts. Photo: IITA

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