

Why a Field Demonstration?

The first part of helping farmers is to make them aware of new possibilities. Field demonstrations are an effective way to raise farmer awareness about new options. In turn, farmers may then seek more information about a technology if they wish to try it.

What is a Field Demonstration?

A field demonstration is usually established by researchers and/or extension workers— preferably in collaboration with farmers—to validate and demonstrate new technologies.

Establishing and conducting a Field Demonstration

Establishing needs and opportunities:

Step 1 is to make sure true farmers needs are being addressed. Thus a “Needs and Opportunity Assessment” is undertaken to identify problems, their root causes and thus to identify farmer acceptable options for overcoming the problems. Often new practices may need to be validated under local conditions and thus are demonstrated to farmers in researcher led field demonstrations to raise farmer awareness about “new” technologies. Based on the demonstrations and subsequent interaction with farmers, some farmers may then choose to learn more about the technology in order to trial it.

Establishing the field demonstration:

Characteristics of good field demonstrations sites include: Fields should have good easy access

Good visibility: Fields should be visible from the road and have a sign indicating what is being done and who can be contacted for further information;

Fields should be established to clearly demonstrate the differences between the new practice and existing farmer practice. Having the demonstration in a corner or along side another field works well for comparison purposes.

Plots should be large enough to be believable e.g., minimum 10 m x 10 m. Fields should be representative of fields in the area.

Implemented with willing collaborators: collaborator should always contribute something to establishing the site (to demonstrate commitment to the activity).

Have a sign posted showing: What’s being tested Who to contact

Discussed with the participating farmers for their reactions before being implemented.

Fields should be visited during the season by researchers and or the extension workers to note