

M. Swahele Kingazi , becoming a professional potatoes producer



Swahle Kingazi is a 42 years old farmer of Matadi village, in West-Kilimanjaro. At the head of a 8 children family, he is also considered by the other farmers as one of the best farmers of the area. Chairman of Upendo Matadi group, he came to know Fert in 2011, when Fert started to assess work in West-Kili, for a potatoes project supported by Agricord (particularly the finnish cooperation)

M. Kingazi started to grow potatoes whilst in Lushoto, in 1988, without any technical knowledge. He used to plant the potatoes in an unorganized way, and though the land was fertile, he added farm manure as a fertilizer. He got little yield and considered his production as subsistence farming.

In 1994, he heard that there was some good land in Kilimanjaro region for producing carrots and potatoes. As land was getting scarce in Lushoto because of high population density, he decided to move with his family to settle where he lives now. He now owns a small farm gathering not more than one acre. Growing maize, beans and vegetables for family consumption, he considers potatoes as a necessary cash crop for paying school fees and other family expenses.

He also grows poultry (around 10) and has also six goats. He is growing his potatoes in the forest area, where he rents a plot of 1600m².

Before learning from Fert, he did not manage a good husbandry; he was getting 10 bags as harvest. He benefited then of a trainings and learned from a demo-plot and learned about spacing, weeding, spraying proper pesticides and fungicides at the proper time, sorting the good seeds. His harvest grew up to 16 bags. He considers that the yields will continue to increase as he is still learning from the

trainings.

As a pilot farmer, he also keeps records of his expenditures and benefits from the support of the Field Officer to do his calculations. With the increase of yield, he considers having a benefit of 300,000 TSH on his plot between before and after the training.

He expects to increase also his income through better selling prices through the direct selling to the wholesalers of Zanzibar he is in contact with. The purchase of the inputs he is organizing with the members of his group, in coordination with the other groups, will help him also to reduce his costs and

