

HOW TO CONDUCT A DEMONSTRATION PLOT?

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

Demonstration gives a concrete and visual example of the effectiveness of innovative technical practices in order to help farmers to implement them.

Demonstration is based as much as possible on results from experimentation and trials:



Experimentation in station

This controlled environment provides a very strict experimental protocol. This provides solid technical results that can be measured on the farm.



On-farm trials

These are tests conducted on the farmers' farms according to a simple protocol to verify the (technical, economic ...) effectiveness of a new practice.

The farmers involved become aware of the risks inherent to the trials (lack of results, losses, etc.).



Dissemination through demonstrations

The practices resulting from the experiments and trials are shared through demonstration plots or livestock farming.

The farmer leading the demonstration is supported by the advisor and usually receives material assistance (inputs etc.) to ensure technical success and to convince his/her peers.

STEPS FOR CARRYING OUT A DEMONSTRATION



1

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS

Clearly identifying with the farmers, the issues to be addressed by the demonstration. This demonstration may have been defined in the FO's action plan.

e.g.: which seed provides the best yield, which biopesticide is the most effective for this particular pest? Or the least expensive etc.

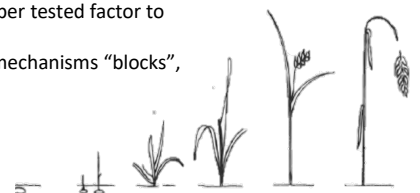
2

CHOOSING THE BEST TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS

A demonstration plot / farm is generally based on technical solutions that have already been tested during experimental activities (in station) and on-farm trials. Advisors must be familiar with the technical itineraries provided for the demonstration.

In station, 3 or 4 rehearsals are often carried out per tested factor to validate the effectiveness of the practice. There are different types of total randomization mechanisms "blocks", Latin square, Fisher's mechanism, etc.

On-farm trials are simpler, and therefore less stringent, and can confirm the results of trials in farming contexts.



3

SETTING UP AND MONITORING THE DEMONSTRATION

At the start:

- Identifying with FO a farmer willing to conduct the demonstration.
- Identifying a plot. Access to the plot must be easy, visible (visibility board) and should reflect the conditions of other farmers
- Defining the possible contribution of inputs or materials. The contribution generally corresponds to the innovation brought (new seed, new equipment etc.)
- Defining the FO's responsibility (field, inputs, maintenance, sharing of the harvest, etc.)
- Defining who will record the data and what information will be recorded

During the season:

- The owner-farmer is responsible for the installation and maintenance of the plot
- The advisor accompanies the technical success of the demonstration
- The advisor organizes meetings with farmers at different farming stages in order to observe the results and monitor implementation

4

ASSESSING THE RESULTS TO IMPROVE IMPLEMENTATION

- After the end of the season or livestock production cycle, farmers meet to assess the demonstration and compare it with former practices.
- Technical and economic records help to verify that it is a cost-effective practice.
- The advisor facilitates discussions and tries to encourage the implementation of good practices among other farmers





Burkina Faso – Farmer field school



FUNDAMENTALS TO REMEMBER

- A demonstration meets farmers' specific needs
- It is above all a collaborative and stimulating project for all members
- Demonstration is a tool for convincing farmers about the effectiveness of a new agricultural technique
- It is easier to demonstrate (or change) a single criterion (e.g., fertilization, seed, etc.) to convince people of the effectiveness of a practice.
- Experimentation is a way of learning "while doing", without being scared to fail or to "lose",
- The advisor plays an important role in facilitating, training and advising farmers during the different stages of the demonstration
- It is important not to forget the dissemination process of the results, first, within FO... but also to all neighboring farmers (over the hedge)



WORDS OF PROFESSIONALS

"The management of the farmer field school is an essential aspect which must be well prepared upstream, together with the FOs' members, especially regarding the role of the advisor and the FOs' members in the monitoring of the farmer field school, the financing of the expenses but also the use of harvests resulting from the farmer field school"

"Apart from the factor(s) being studied, all plots for the same trial should be set up and managed in the same way."

"Beyond the technical aspects, it is also important to look at the costs involved in implementing a new practice (working time, cost of inputs, etc.)"



Madagascar – Trial at the Ceffel center



Madagascar – On-farm trial



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Example of tools:

- Terms of reference (ToR)
- Demonstration's Report

Webinar: "A successful demonstration at the service of farmers": vidéo + PWP

