

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 IC-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 R4D 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

Farmer type	Crop and livestock technologies disseminated
Poor	Rabbit + improved varieties of forage legumes, bio-fortified varieties of maize, field beans and orange-flesh sweet potato + Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) training
Medium wealth	Pigs + improved varieties of forage legumes, bio-fortified varieties of maize, field beans and orange-flesh sweet potato + ISFM training

Staff from Ministry of Agriculture, IITA and ILRI registered as partners to provide technical advice.

Airtel provided ordinary cellphones on loan to farmers, which farmers paid-off at the end of cropping season.

Services offered included (i) toll-free calling and sms for technical advice on production and marketing (ii) access to Airtel microcredit (iii) electronic cash transfers.

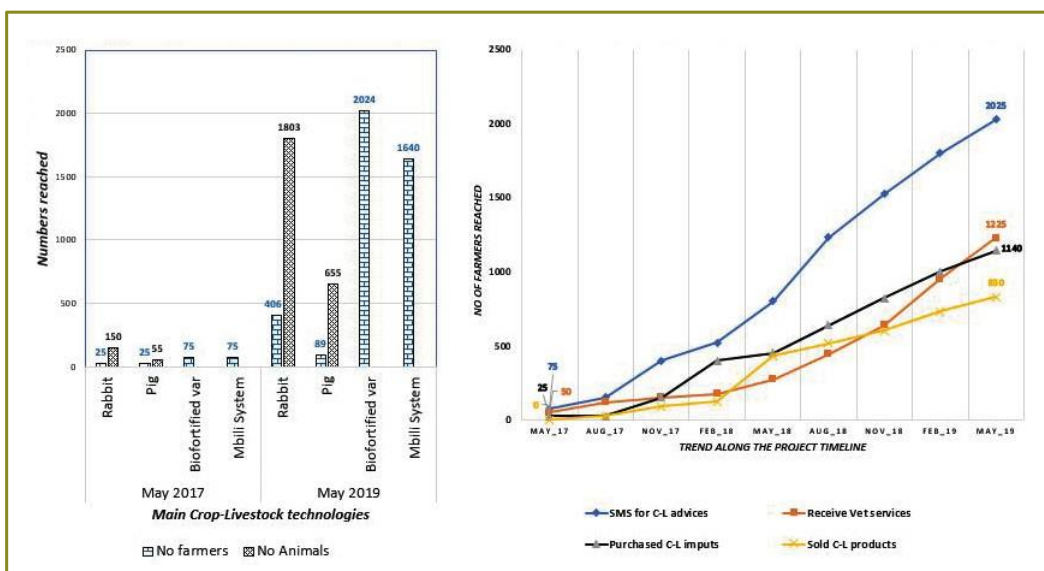


Results

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

Increasing adoption of ICT services along S.C.

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 ave. 54 rabbits to buy pig or goat. In total 12 piglets and 16 goats were purchased. Similarly, 18 Type 2 farmers sold each 9 pigs or 24 piglets to buy a cow, advancing them to Type 3 (Wealthy) category.

Take-home message

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

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