System and Profitability of Community-Based Maize Seed Production in Nepal

-A Case Study of Chitwan District-

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In Nepal maize is one of the most potential cereal crop. Both governmental and non-governmental organizations are strengthening the community-based maize seed production for supply of quality seed. The aim of this study is to analyze the system and profitability of community-based maize seed production where high quality improved seeds are produced at local level generating premium income in Nepal. A total of 72 maize seed producing farmers affiliated to four different groups were interviewed using the structured questionnaire in Chitwan district of Nepal during January to February, 2008.

The system of community-based maize seed production first established in 1995 in the study area. In the community-based seed production farmers produce seeds in participation with the technical assistance of extension workers and researchers. The assistances include training, filed inspection, foundation seed, seed testing as well as marketing support. In the study area two open-pollinated maize varieties, *Rampur Composite* and *Arun -2* were popular with an average yield of 3.03 t ha^{-1}. It was observed that farmers have less years of experience and small size of land (1.24ha) for maize seed production. The profitability analysis showed the higher benefit: cost ratio in seed production (1.9) than grain production (1.03). Similarly, a very high gross margin of NRs. 22,127.80 was observed in seed production compared to NRs. 438 in grain production with the ratio of 47.33% and 2.66%, respectively, indicating higher profitability of seed production enterprise compared to maize grain.

Seed production as a new enterprise creates employment opportunities and farmers' livelihood could be improved. Therefore, a need of further extension of community-based seed production and supply in maize producing areas has been suggested for assured availability of fresh maize seeds to improve maize productivity and livelihood improvement in Nepal.