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AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
FOR DEVELOPMENT



UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE



2nd Edition of the Agricultural Research and Extension Symposium 2025

Venue: Zimbabwe Agricultural Show Grounds

Date: 28-30 May 2025

The 2nd Edition of the Agricultural Research and Extension Symposium 2025 was held in Harare (the Zimbabwe Agricultural Society Exhibition Conference Halls) from the 28th – 30th of May 2025 under the theme: Transformative Agricultural Technologies Accelerating the Attainment of Vision 2030. Under the Ministry of Lands Agriculture Fisheries Water and Rural Development, the Agricultural Research, Innovation and Specialist Services Directorate in collaboration Agricultural research Council (ARC) and Zimbabwe Agricultural Society invited researchers, academia and Extension and the private sector to participate in the 2nd edition of the Agriculture research and Extension Symposium which had various thematic areas that included: crops breeding/agronomy/seed systems/soil fertility management/ analytical services; plant health and IPM; livestock nutrition/ animal breeding/ fisheries and aquaculture resources; animal health and diagnostics; agroecology/botany/germplasm conservation; GIS and remote sensing/climate modelling; farming systems/ extension methodologies/ feedback mechanisms; research, extension and education policy environment; and irrigation technologies/ soil and water conservation and farm mechanisation. The symposium highlighted the potential of innovations like AI-driven apps, solar-powered micro-irrigation, and conservation agriculture to unlock sustainable agricultural practices.



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Figure 1: Gatien Falconnier making this presentation during the 2nd day of the symposium

One of the RAIZ Project Senior Scientist (Gatien Falconnier) presented on agroecology thematic area: Can farmers in sub-Saharan Africa boost crop yields and improve food availability without using more mineral fertilizer? Gatien delved into the various options that can increase soil fertility that are/can be used by smallholder farmers across Western, Eastern and Southern Africa and consequently increase yield per hectare. He also emphasised the importance of combination of application of organic and mineral fertiliser to boost production and how organic manure on its own might not produce the desired yields without mineral fertiliser. The presentation was well received by the audience and key comments or questions were asked during this interaction and these include:

- These research findings really demystify some of the issues pushed by the climate enthusiasts on reducing the application of mineral fertilisers at the expense of crop yields especially for smallholder farmers who are already in poverty. It is such researches that we want to have



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more audiences and convey this key message on mineral fertiliser application and increasing crop yields. There is really need for this research to engage more with the government and make it understand these facts and find ways for subsidizing fertilisers for farmers.

- With your current position on continued usage of mineral fertilisers from smallholder farmers – where does it lead position organic farming?
- Considering the high prices for inputs in Africa and moreso, for fertilisers and if farmers cannot increase their yield without fertilisers – how do we push for this agenda of increasing crop yield while the majority of smallholder farmers cannot afford fertilisers?

The Agricultural Research and Innovation Services (ARISS) Directorate showcased the latest technologies and innovations in agricultural research, demonstrating their commitment to driving agricultural innovation and development in Zimbabwe.

Key Takeaways:*

- ✓ Developing elite germplasm and improving crop and livestock production technologies
- ✓ Breeding programs addressing pests and diseases, reducing the need for GMOs
- ✓ Conservation agriculture practices, such as contour ridging, being implemented
- ✓ Symposium provides a platform for stakeholders to share knowledge and ideas
- ✓ Zimbabwe aims to achieve food security, nutrition, and health sufficiency by 2030

Figure 2: From left (Dr. Kutuywayo, Chief Director ARISS & Dr. Magorokosho CEO ARC) giving their remarks on the last days of the symposium.

