

Cultivation of soya and other legumes



Agrodok 10

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Foreword

This Agrodok is based on a previous shorter edition, Soya. The text has been extended to include more practical information on growing and processing soya and other legumes into nutritious food products. We have included other legumes so that the information in the book will be useful in more areas.

Soya is a legume with many good qualities, and it can be used to improve farming systems. It can also be processed into products that contribute to the daily diet and to family income. In this new edition we devote extra attention to this crop. There are also many areas however where soya cannot be cultivated, but other legumes do grow well and have many of the same good qualities.

This Agrodok is intended to help farmers and extension workers to make choices that will work well under local conditions.

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1 Introduction

Many farmers face urgent problems of making sure there is enough food for their families for the whole year and earning sufficient income. Population growth and the increasing size of cities and towns mean that the amount of land available to grow food for each family is decreasing. Yields are not always high and the prices of agricultural products are generally declining. The amount of money available to buy food if it cannot be grown, to provide housing, travel and medical costs is also decreasing. The costs of agriculture are rising; artificial fertilizers and other chemicals are becoming more expensive, while farmers are not able to increase the prices of their products. There is a shortage of food both in terms of quantity, but also quality: the amount of nutrients in food that children need to grow and adults to stay strong and healthy is often too low.

By growing legumes farmers can do something about these problems.

Legumes take up nitrogen from the air and pass it on to the soil, thereby improving soil fertility. The yields of crops grown on the same land after the legume crop will increase. In addition legumes are nutritious, and may provide income opportunities. Products made from soya and other legumes can be eaten or sold.

This Agrodok is intended for farmers who want to know more about legumes and for extension workers who want to assist the farmers. The answers to the following questions can be found in this book:

- What are legumes?
- How can I cultivate them?
- What products can be made from soya and other legumes?