

## **APPSA-LESOTHO HOLDS A FIELD DAY ON VARIOUS CROPS IN MOHALE'S HOEK DISTRICT**



A Field Day is an educational event held on-farm or on research station. It is organized and hosted by the scientists, oftentimes in collaboration with agricultural extension agents. The event usually includes demonstrations of specific management practices and highlight research methods, varietal performance, and results. The speeches and other activities focus on a central theme strung out over the course of the day to promote or call attention to new practices or crop varieties and exciting developments in agriculture.

APPSA-Lesotho is a regional project being implemented by the Department of Agricultural Research in partnership with the National University of Lesotho (NUL); Lesotho Agricultural College (LAC) held a field day which showcased trials on four commodities being beans, sorghum, peach trees and potatoes on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022.

Lesotho is establishing a Regional Center of Leadership (RCoL) in horticulture farming system. This is a world bank funded initiative for agricultural research in Southern Africa as Agriculture Productivity Programme for Southern Africa (APPSA). Component one of APPSA stipulates that generated agricultural technologies should be disseminated to the end users, who in the context of

APPSA are farmers. Field day is one of the approaches used to disseminate and or promote technologies generated.



Sorghum demonstration under sub-project “Strengthening the sorghum seed delivery systems in Lesotho and Angola” is led by Dr Mpho Liphoto. Sorghum landraces were collected country wide, and selection of good traits is being conducted. The intention is to study the features of sorghum landraces and tolerance to drought or wet conditions, resistance to pests and diseases among others.

Demonstration on beans under sub-project “Performance of bean genotype under multi environments in Lesotho and Angola” is led by Dr Puleng Letuma. Thirty-six bean varieties accessed from CIAT were demonstrated. The purpose was to study performance of those varieties under varying environmental conditions hence address climate change challenges on bean production. The farmers would then be able to select and adopt the best performing varieties with a hope that they would be able to complement the already available bean varieties in Lesotho.

Another bean demonstration under sub-project “Screening bean and cowpea varieties and advanced breeding lines for productivity in low soil fertility and drought prone areas in Angola and Lesotho” is led by Dr. Botle Mapeshoane. Twenty (20) bean varieties that are known and used country wide were collected from farmers and planted. Performance of these bean varieties would

be determined in soils with low fertility regarding phosphorus and nitrogen. Drought resistance would also be determined hence the study of their root system. This sub-project is on-going, and the results would be availed to the farming community after three planting seasons.

Peach tree nursery was also visited by the participants on this field day. This is under sub-project “Collection, characterization and conservation of Cassava, Peach trees and indigenous leafy vegetables germplasm in Angola and Lesotho” led by Mrs Matsikoane Sefotho. Different peach stones had been collected country wide and nurseries established in stations of the Department of Agricultural Research (DAR) representing Lowlands, foothills, and mountains. The nurseries would be established on-farm level as well and conservation of those various fruit trees made in the form of orchards.



Field day participants were also directed to potato demonstration led by Mr Refuoehape Chabalala in Silioe research station. Panamera potatoes were demonstrated and are high yielding, have good quality and resist pests and diseases. They were divided in to three (3) blocks from which yield would be determined based on two parameters namely, planting rate against time of earthing-up. This study is on its first season and the findings would be disseminated to the farmers after the third season.

This field day was graced by the presence of the Director of Field Services (DFS), Director Department of Research, Director Planning and Policy Analysis, District Administrator, District Agricultural office (i.a), Village chief, NGOs such as RSDA and SMARDT, officers from different departments of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, extension officers and farmers.