

## A promotion method to develop markets for improved seed and fertilizer to alleviate hunger and poverty of small farmers in Kenya



Buret district

Farm Input Promotions Africa; 29.06.2005

The major constraint to improved crop productivity in most parts of Kenya is soil phosphorus deficiency. Soils are also deficient in N, and becoming increasingly deficient in K and S. **Fertilizers are essential for increasing crop productivity, but beyond the reach of many farmers because they are packaged in large and unaffordable bag sizes. To maximise crop response to fertilizers, it is important that high-yielding, disease-tolerant varieties are used.**

FIPS-Africa, working closely with private sector seed and fertilizer companies, has developed a simple promotion methodology for introducing improved fertilizers and seeds to small farmers. Athi River Mining, has developed a new fertilizer (*Mavuno*) that is packaged in 1 kg bags costing KSh 40 (=US\$0.5). Seed companies supply FIPS-Africa with small 150g packets of their new improved varieties for free distribution to farmers.



Farm Input Promotions Africa; 29.06.2005

Vihiga district

Farmers are given a free packet of seed when they purchase 1 kg of *Mavuno* fertilizer. Farmers are trained in seed spacing and fertilizer placement to get maximum economic returns from the inputs. The promotion package is distributed during farmer field days, and farmer group and village meetings.

Having learnt how to improve their maize production, farmers invariably return to their local stockist to purchase larger quantities of inputs to further increase yields. Through this method thousands of farmers are "learning by doing" and empowered to improve their food security. Because farmers contribute to the cost of the promotion package, they are encouraged to consider farming as a business. As a result of the promotions, commercial demand for *Mavuno* fertilizer and new varieties of maize have increased rapidly.