

Seed Access Index Gives Farmers In Kenya Hope For Bigger Yields

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Smallholder farmers in Kenya can now access a wider variety of modern, more productive food crop varieties with efforts of a non-profit seeking access index.

Seed Access Index (TASAI) is the initiative launched to monitor the state of the continent's seed sector and highlight problems that prevent seeds reaching farmers.

The initiative is a partnership between Cornell University in the United States and Market Matters, an independent, not-for-profit, international development organization that develops and implements capacity- and network-building programs that foster economic development work with small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs).

Kenya is featured among other African countries to benefit from assessment of the index. Other African countries featured included Uganda, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

The East African country which is also targeted to increase its food production by initiating projects is dominated by smallholder farmers.

In the past, Kenya's seed sectors have been dominated by monopolies but with the index fully operational, the situation is expected to be different.

Kenyan farmers have not been getting access to food crop seeds, and when they do, they often get varieties that are several years old and which can't yield much when planted.

Initiators of the programme have this problem in mind and are therefore working to identify the problems that may be causing this weak flow of appropriate technologies reaching farmers.

In its four-nation pilot study, the index has found "uneven, though in many places promising, progress".

For the key crop, maize, the index showed that over the past three years, Kenya had released 35 varieties and Zimbabwe 28, while Uganda had released just 12.

<http://www.backpgs.com/seed-access-index-gives-farmers-in-kenya-hope-for-bigger-yields/>