



FARMER IMPACTS

SUSTAINING ARABLE LAND



“Some farmers don’t believe you can stay on a particular piece of land for a long time. I will invite them to come and see; I will walk them across my land to see it with their own eyes.”

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ALEX MENSAH

Crops: maize, plantain, cassava, cocoyam, cabbage and okra

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The soil from conservation agriculture (CA) farmers is constantly being restored through healthy decomposition of surface mulch that results in developing essential micro-organisms.

Alex Mensah owns a highly productive conservation agricultural farm in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Alex chose to use no-till practices to build and sustain his nutrient-rich soils in the harsh weather conditions of his region. “The climate has changed, and there is less rainfall with more heat from the sun. Exposing the soil to direct sunlight causes reduction in the water retention capacity of the soil. By not tilling and leaving mulch on the topsoil, every drop of water is conserved.”

To increase the productivity on his land, Alex employs multiple CA strategies, including the use of complementary cover crops. “No-till is good for poor soil because cover crops such as mucuna can be planted under the system to help serve as soil cover to keep the soil moist and conserve water as well as fixing nitrogen in the soil.”

Through CA, a living soil system is created that remains healthy and resilient over time. Alex has been productively farming his land for more than a decade. CA farmers effectively farm on the same land year-over-year, whereas slash and burn farmers land becomes unproductive after an average of two years.*

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Through carefully nurturing his land over time, Alex has continued to expand his crop diversity. Alex shares, “I have maize, plantain, cassava, cocoyam, cabbage, okra and many more growing on my field. I cultivate different crops to have the insurance of always having a crop to depend on. If one crop is not successful, I can depend on the other crop for my livelihood.” Through the income from his diverse and marketable crops, Alex is sending his five children to private schools and has opened a profitable agrochemical store that serves the farmers in his region.

*Based on HGBF | CNTA Data, 2016

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