

INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT TO THE MAIZE TRUST

LIMPAST MAIZE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

MARCH 2006 to AUGUST 2006

By CPR Cronjé

Identification of the Project and the Project Leader

The LIMPAST maize production enhancement project has been in operation for four years. The aim of the project is to enhance the ability of food security and subsistence level emergent farmers to attain levels of sustained production and eventually small-scale commercialization. The project is a collaborative effort between the Limpopo Department of Agriculture, The ARC-Grain Crops Institute, NLADEV and LIMPAST. The CEO of LIMPAST takes overall responsibility for the project and is tasked to ensure progress, diligent management and sound financial control. The contact details for the LIMPAST CEO are as follows: PO Box 11778, Erasmuskloof 0048 : Tel & Fax 012-9988846 : Cell : 0828086103 and e-mail : erommel@iafrica.com.

Actions that have been taken regarding the project

The reporting period included the last of the harvesting of the previous growing season, collating the data gathered from these trails and report-back to the various study groups. There has been two training courses for extension officers during this period and we are currently planning for the new season's activities. There has been some movement in the LIMPAST personnel, with the Department of Agriculture (LDA) seconded Program Manager's contract with LIMPAST expiring. This individual has been replaced by a development officer shared between Progress Milling, Sasol, Pannar and LIMPAST. The cost to LIMPAST is similar to the cost incurred by the LDA officer during his tenure at LIMPAST.

Progress that have been made with the Project

Very satisfactory progress has been made during the past season, mainly due to the excellent rainfall experienced over most of the province. The results have shown that the new open pollinated varieties are out-performing the local farm varieties in virtually all the locations. Reports from Progress Milling also indicate that yields and quality of grain collected from smallholder farmers have improved significantly during the past two years. This can be attributed indirectly to the effects of the LIMPAST study groups in the same areas.

Results that have been achieved

There has been an increase in study group members planting their own fields during the past season. This is due to several related factors, of which the most significant would have been the significant rain that fell over most of Limpopo during the past year. Most of the extension officers performed well and most trails and extension efforts were successful. The results obtained from the trails indicate that the hybrid (CRN 3549) used as control in all the areas outperformed the open pollinators. The cost of hybrid seed limits the usefulness of hybrids in the current LIMPAST program. The best performing open pollinator in all areas was SAM 1037 followed closely by ZIM 521. The best consistency of performance over all the climate and soil conditions existing in our trail areas were CRN 3549 followed by ZIM 521.

Obatampa- a high protein variety that showed early promise has since fallen substantially in ranking, mainly due to poorer drought tolerance than the local varieties. The local farmer varieties did worst in all areas except at Laastehoop where it came second to last. In view of the good performance of the hybrids we need to re-assess the economic impact to the smallholder farmers if a recommendation to this effect is made.

Table 1. The performance (rank) of seven maize varieties at four localities* for two seasons – 2004/05 and 2005/06

Variety	Nokaneng		Tafelkop		Laastehoop		Zava		Mean rank
	04/05	05/06	04/05	05/06	04/05	05/06	04/05	05/06	
ZM 1611	5	5	1	2	2	2	5	1	2.9
ZM 521	3	2	3	5	4	4	7	5	4.1
ZM 421	3	3	4	6	5	7	1	4	4.1
SAM 1037	4	6	7	3	3	3	4	7	4.6
Obatampa	5	4	5	4	6	6	6	3	4.9
Local	-	7	-	7	-	5	-	6	6.2
CRN 3549	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1.5

* The four localities are very diverse in terms of agro-ecologic conditions and production potential. The three additional trial sites established in the 2004/05 season were not re-established in 2005/06 (Ga-Rampuru) or failed (Giyani mother plot and Leeuwkraal).

Table 2.*Prolificacy of seven varieties across seven localities in the LIMPAST project (2005/2006 summer growing season)

Variety	Sofaya	Tafelkop	Laastehoop	Mothiba	Mashashane	Zebediela	Zava	Nokaneng	Marapyane	Troya	Mean
ZM 1611	1.67	1.82	1.95	1.78	1.11	1.09	1.06	1.65	0.77	1.67	1.46
ZM 521	1.33	1.22	1.74	1.74	0.89	1.03	1	1.41	1.04	1.52	1.29
ZM 421	1.18	1.27	1.32	1.45	1.16	1.13	1.04	1.38	0.93	1.58	1.24
SAM 1037	1.49	1.36	1.33	1.44	1.09	0.98	1.02	1.16	1.07	1.36	1.23
Obatampa	1.20	1.22	1.31	1.90	1.31	0.86	0.98	1.29	0.94	1.72	1.27
Local	1.57	1.07	1.32	1.21	0.99	1.26	0.95	1.30	1.13	1.48	1.23
CRN 3549	1.39	1.37	1.82	1.65	1.24	1.18	0.99	1.59	1.08	1.74	1.40

*Prolificacy or multi-cobbing is the ability of the plant to produce more than one cob/plant. Figures indicate the number of cobs for a specific number of plants e.g. if 100 plants are counted and the number of cobs counted on the same number of plants are 150 the prolificacy count for that variety at a specific trial is $150 \div 100 = 1.5$

Problems encountered with the project

It remains a concern that farmers (study group members) are generally reluctant to plant if conditions are not near to perfect. We are making an additional effort to educate farmers along the lines of very low yields can be tolerated provided that input costs are recovered. It is for this reason that most of the current research in the LIMPAST project is aimed at minimizing production cost.

Milestones that have not yet been achieved and reasons

The program is on track

Assessment of adequacy of funding to complete the execution of the project

Due to the change in funding mechanism by the Trust, for well-understood and accepted reasons, LIMPAST is running on a tight budget again. In the past the interest earned on the Maize trust donation paid for most of the recurrent administrative costs. We are in a very similar situation compared to the previous year. A full summary report is shown on page 6 of this report. For clarity the expense fields are explained in Table 3.

Table 3: Expense items explanation

ITEM NO	EXPENSE ITEM	EXPLANATION
1	Petty Cash	Petty cash is kept for minor recurrent expenses, including some farmer's days where cash transactions are required. Consolidated monthly
2	Office rental	We share-rent an office with Ninham Shand. The rental includes the use of their receptionist/bookkeeper
3	Bank Charges	
4	Operational Cost	This includes traveling, telephones, S&T and other operational expenses. The recent dramatic increase in fuel prices is causing a small but constant budget overrun on this item.
5	Service Providers	This includes the ARC and others. The major expenses shown here are the annual payments to the ARC (April 2004 and May 2005)
6	NLADEV	This is the first full season where NLADEV is included. The major expense incurred is the approx R80 000 increase of the ARC account.
7	Directors	This is the cost of travel, meetings and sometimes accommodation for LIMPAST directors. We have reduced the number of meetings to control costs.
8	Training	This is the costs for venues, accommodation, meals and sometimes transport for extension officers and program managers. We have scheduled some courses earlier this year, and are therefore slightly overspent during the first six months.
9	Salary CEO	
10	Salary Program Manager	This is a top up for LIMPAST expenses, mainly travel, not covered by the PM's government allowance.

Limpopo Province Agricultural Strategic Team



Item	March		April		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		
	Monthly Budget	Actual 2006	Actual 2005	Actual 2006	Actual 2005	Actual 2006	Actual 2005	Actual 2006	Actual 2005	Actual 2006	Actual 2005	Actual 2006	Actual 2005
Petty Cash (1)	R 2,000.00	R 2,000.00	R 0.00	R 1,127.77	R 0.00	R 1,000.00	R 3,500.00	0	R 1,000.00	R 1,000.00	R 1,000.00	R 2,000.00	R 0.00
Office Rental (2)	R 2,500.00	R 2,191.80	R 2,520.54	R 2,176.60	R 2,302.80	R 2,227.00	R 2,342.70	0	R 2,040.00	R 4,214.00	R 2,087.00	R 4,385.00	R 2,092.00
Bank Charges (3)	R 250.00	R 274.92	R 231.60	R 215.46	R 445.86	R 269.58	R 366.60	R 148.46	R 127.16	R 113.52	R 338.81	R 539.09	R 270.00
Operational Cost (4)	R 8,000.00	R 3,013.00	R 10,420.00	R 7,333.00	R 13,344.45	R 9,647.00	R 7,830.40	R 15,541.60	R 7,120.00	R 8,339.50	R 8,010.00	R 170.09	R 8,112.70
Service Providers (5)	R 15,000.00	R 24,000.00	R 1,824.00	R 3,000.00	R 3,380.10	0	R 198,844.00	0	R 2,251.50	R 198,974.00	R 0.00	R 19,372.00	R 0.00
NLADEV (6)	R 3,000.00	R 5,052.50	R 3,412.50	R 2067.50	R 2,920.00	R 2,217.50	R 1,576.00	R 3,380.00	R 6,353.00	0	R 4,896.00	R 10,370.00	R 0.00
Directors (7)	R 4,400.00	0	R 4,616.00	R 600.00	R 0.00	R 1,340.00	R 1,640.00	R 3,160.00	R 1,140.00	R 3,900.00	R 2,008.00	R 2,747.50	R 0.00
Training (8)	R 5,000.00	R 4,000.00	R 0.00	R 3,000.00	R 10,000.00	0	R 0.00		R 3,500.00	0	R 11,560.00	0	R 24,840.00
Salary CEO (9)	R 26,000.00	R 27,000.00	R 25,685.80	R 27,000.00	R 25,577.35	R 27,000.00	R 25,876.76	R 27,000.00	R 25,924.04	R 27,000.00	R 26,523.40	R 27,000.00	R 25,837.00
Salary PM (10)	R 2,500.00	R 3,912.45	R 2,500.00	R 4,096.05	R 2,973.03	0	R 2,824.62	0	R 3,032.70	0	R 2,130.00	0	R 2,238.00
TOTALS	R 68,650.00	R 71,444.67	R 51,210.44	R 50,616.38	R 60,943.59	R 43,701.08	R 244,801.08	R 49,230.06	R 52,488.40	R 243,541.02	R 58,553.21	R 78,163.59	R 63,389.70

ITEM	Budget 6 Mo	2006 6 Mo	2005 6Mo
1	12,000.00	7,127.77	5,500.00
2	15,000.00	15,194.40	13,385.04
3	1,500.00	1,560.13	1,780.03
4	48,000.00	63,246.10	54,837.55
5	90,000.00	236,344.00	206,299.60
6	18,000.00	15,465.00	19,157.50
7	26,400.00	9,000.00	9,404.00
8	30,000.00	18,750.00	49,900.00
9	156,000.00	189,120.00	155,424.35
10	15,000.00	8,008.50	15,698.35
TOT	411,900.00	563,815.90	531,386.42