

The Role of Conservation Agriculture for Development in Africa. (A06-friedrich042402-Oral)

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Abstract:

Pressure on agriculture to produce more food is increasing by a rising world population. Especially for the African continent, agriculture is not just about food supply, but also a critical factor in economic development and poverty alleviation. But agriculture is also contributing to the degradation of natural resources in Africa. Contrary to conventional farming, Conservation Agriculture has proven agricultural production options, which combine production with sustainability. Conservation Agriculture can be characterized superficially by three main principles. 1) Permanent maintenance of soil cover of live or dead vegetal material on the soil surface, no burning of residues. 2) Permanent no-tillage and direct seeding or planting of crops. 3) Planning of crop rotations over several seasons to minimise pests or diseases and to use synergy between different crop types and rooting characteristics. These three principles allow to experience the full benefits of Conservation Agriculture. While the introduction of Conservation Agriculture in Africa faces particular challenges, it is considered one of the most promising approaches to overcome the problems of African agriculture.

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