

MONTHLY FARM UPDATES (April 2021)
Step by Step Organic Farm.
WEEDING PHASE

Month	February	March	April	May	June	July
Farm clearing						
Planting						
Weeding						
Pest control						
Weeding						
Preps for harvest						

STEP BY STEP ORGANIC FARM awaits for its complete certificate as an organic plot, it has taken two years to set all the necessary condition for its certification. April 2021 marked the last step among many we went through

Our certifier “*TOAM*” paid a gallantry visit on April 17 to 23 for final inspection, it was an intensive week but tireless for the good remark we got. “Excellent” was the most used remark we got in most plots we visited. Finally, we got a nice report which proved that we are eligible to receive the certificate (license) which can last for 3 years.

At our plot we are in a high weeding time, rain are at peak, and the weeding work demands much more than expected as weeds grows faster. The work has just commenced at our 29 acres done this year.

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This reports aims at giving the complete overview of the current status of farm.

Our farm have bird eye chill which is the sole annual crop and seasonal being corn, millet, beans, sesame and sunflower.

- **To begin with bird eye chill.**

The progress of bird eye chill is still promising as the rains continues, the two important works of weeding and harvesting have been done well. We finished weeding last weekend and started joining hand with our day labor in harvesting. The challenges have been in post-harvest management. Lack of sun power which is our sole drying mechanism of chill have retarded our effort to offload the chill to the market on time. We have borrowed solar dryer from our neighbor SAT but the size doesn't much with the amount we harvest. Moreover its effectiveness is low especially in this rain season. The effort to find another dryer have been increasingly hard as there are less of them in town. I found one at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) in their club known as SURGECO but it's much occupied and can only be accessible by members of club. Sokoine university of Agriculture is about 25km from our farm.

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With this challenge, we should consider organizing one solar dryer for SBS farm for current and future use.



- **Millet**

This is the most performing plot using agro ecology principle. We intercropped millet in the space between mangos line. The performance is as good as seen in the photo below. Eventually this crop doesn't need spray and it seem to be resistant. It was the first plot to get weeded and its

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shining. The two acres plot gives us some energy to do more.



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- **Maize**

In our previous monthly report we pinpointed out the challenges of germination in this plot and the possible causes. We replanted thrice for the farm to be at a full suit. Right now some plants are at the important stage of pollination while others are thriving to catchup. Maize plot covers over 4 acres and most of it is weeded. We have not faced big challenge of insecticide like last year. Most of the plant were resistant and strong. We are looking forward to see how the plot will perform.

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- **Sesame**

This is our important plot for commercial purpose. It's the first time to do it and we have a lot to learn within the process. We started planting on 17 march onward and finished on early April.

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Few plots were left behind by tractor not dug in March and we had to use the tractor we got for sunflower plot to complete them as well as planting. There might be a significant difference in growth between different plots of sesame but it's out of our control. It has been increasingly difficult to find a tractor which can do well especially in virgin plot. The last small plot was done on April 28. Page | 6

Some of our sesame have started flowering especially those planted on the 17th March.



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Weeding at this plot has just commenced and it needs a quick intervention. Two important works ahead in this plot are weeding as well as reducing the number of seedling in each hole. Its recommended to reduce the number of seedling to three or two in each hole.



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This is the last plot done on 28 April.

CHALLENGE.

There is an insect which seem to attach our sesame crop and it needs immediate response to it. With our organic principle we cannot just use any of the conventional methods available. We are in a move to seek for the remedy, however the factory which was producing organic pesticide just stopped producing and they are in a research for a more effective pesticides. It would be good if we could secure a machine (kimango type) which can produce the pesticides from our available combination of trees otherwise producing with manual pestle and motor is laborious and not effective for a large farm.

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- Beans.

We planted our beans on 31st March and they were doing great. Some beans are flowering and others are on the way



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We have come to learn some part of beans plot are semi- swamp hence they have not been effective on supporting beans growth. A large part of one acre beans located near the dam is highly affected with the current heavy rains hence the productivity will decline tremendously. We will not reach our goal of providing enough beans for Mafiri children home 2021-2022 in this way.

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In a way to overcome the situation, we are forced to prepare another plot which is free from wetland to cover the loss from wetland.

The space between the tree lines located adjacent to the street road seem to be perfect for this. This area can only be prepared by a hand hoe as no machine can do it between the trees. The work is underway.

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- **Sunflower**

Last plot for this season, very important plot considering the current shortage of cooking oil in Tanzania. The price of sunflower oil has skyrocketed in recent time in a way that most of people cannot afford. Even the seeds are most priced seeds in this season. We used to get 1kg of seed at 10k but at current the lowest is priced at 25k to 40k. Its said the onset of covid-19 affected the production of cooking oil sector in oil producing country. The effect is being felt here.

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Our plot was done by tractor on 22 April



Planting went on the next day. Right now the seeds have germinated and the future of our sunflower plot is promising.

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