



Conserving soil or water: accelerating the adoption of Conservation Agriculture in South East Africa

R. Fowler

Pietermaritzburg, South Africa (rmfowler@iafrica.com)

Soil exploitation and loss is exacerbating environmental degradation and desertification in South East Africa, resulting in increasing food insecurity, urban migration, crime and political instability. Conservation Agriculture, involving as it does minimal soil disturbance, maximum soil cover, crop rotation and the integration of crop and livestock production, can reduce and reverse these trends. Initiatives to introduce and promote Conservation Agriculture aligned farming systems in the region have not resulted in wide spread or sustained adoption of the concept. Motivation and adoption in a number of projects in the region are discussed and analysed. It is concluded that limited adoption is frequently due to promoters failing to take actual or perceived needs of relevant stakeholders into account, and some alternative approaches are presented and motivated.