Script for Video

Scene 1: Opening scene: A male farmer stands in front of a well managed, high yielding maize field with big cobs and introduces himself. Farmer in view, talks to the audience.

Hello everyone. My name is ___ and I am a maize farmer, just like you. I used to struggle with the same problems as many of you, and as a result, my gardens produced barely enough maize to feed my family. However, over the years, I have learned how to increase the number of bags of maize I can get from my gardens.

I started using modern inputs such as hybrid seeds and inorganic fertilizers and started managing my garden following recommended agricultural practices such as improving my soil with organic manure, optimal spacing of the maize plants and timely planting and weeding.

Since I had little money, I started small. However, season after season, I re-invested the extra money I made and after a few seasons, I managed to use modern inputs on my entire field. I now have sufficient maize to feed my family and even sell on the market!

Do you also want to grow more maize? Let me show you how I did it!

Scene 2: In front of a Striga infested, poorly looking maize field. Farmer in view, talks to the audience.

This is what my garden used to look like. My maize performed poorly because I kept using recycled seed. The soil was exhausted because I kept growing maize season after season without using fertilizer. I thought farming using recommended plant spacing was tedious and cumbersome, and weeding was a waste of time. I often delayed planting. After one particular bad harvest, my family suffered badly. It was at that point that I sat down and decided things needed to change: I needed to grow more maize on the land that I had.

I realized that improving my soil with organic manure would not cost me money, only labour. I also recalled being told that I could increase my yields through timely planting, optimal spacing of the maize plants and frequent weeding.

Scene 3: In the village, show farmer selling a chicken to a neighbor and shaking hands with a friend upon securing a loan. In a small shop that sells farm supplies, show how the farmer buys 1 kg of "bazooka", 6 kg of DAP and 6 kg of Urea. Make sure the prices are clearly indicated on the products (bazooka 8,500 per kg, DAP 3,000 per kg, urea 2,500 per kg). Here the farmer is again acting and information is given as a voice-over.

It was more challenging to get improved seeds and inorganic fertilizer. However, in the end, I managed to obtain enough money by selling a cock to my neighbour and borrowing a little from a friend. I used the money to buy 1 kg of hybrid seed, 6 kg of DAP and 5 kg of Urea. These supplies were sufficient to produce maize on an area of 5 by 5 sticks, or one tenth of an acre of my field. I thus choose a corner of my field where I would farm according to recommended practices.

Scene 4: Show how the farmer collects cow dung from his chicken and from public grazing land or the road in a bag. Show how the farmer throws mango peels/banana peels/sweet potato peels… on the field. Show how this is plowed into the land.

Before planting the improved seeds, when I was preparing the land, I applied organic fertilizer such as animal droppings or green manure from plant residue that I collected.

Scene 5: In the small corner of the field, focus on good agricultural practices. Show each practice as detailed as possible! Eg, show how the farmer measures the spacing using something that is typically about 30 cm and about 75 cm. Show the farmer making a hole of 10 cm deep and adding 1 water bottle cap DAP in the hole after which he puts some soil on top. Show the farmer adding one improved maize seed in the hole and covering it with soil. Please consult with Wiberforce on how to do these things. Again, farmer acts and voice-over explains what farmer is doing.

At planting time, I decided to use recommended spacing, carefully measuring one foot between plants and 2 and ½ foot between rows. I first made a hole of about 4 inches deep and added 1 water bottle cap of DAP. I then added some soil on top of it. I then put one improved maize seed in it and cover with soil. It is also very important to not delay planting: immediately after the onset of the rain, start planting.

Scene 6: Show a field where the crop is just emerging to illustrate gap filling. Farmer acts and voice-over explains what farmer is doing.

After 10 to 12 days, carefully check if all seeds have germinated. To keep optimal plant density, it is important to resow where seeds did not germinate.

Scene 7: Field at three leaf stage, focus on weeding. Show how a striga looks like when really young. And show a flowering striga so everyone recognizes the plant. Show the farmer removing weeds and striga. Farmer acts and voice-over explains what farmer is going on.

Weeding is particularly important in the first 4 weeks. Start weeding 18 to 20 days after planting. It is particularly important to remove Striga at this stage. In this early stage, the Striga did not reach the roots of the maize plant yet, so damage can still be avoided. Try to remove the Striga before it flowers to avoid it from spreading to the rest of the garden. A second round of weeding should be done at 2 to 3 weeks after the first weeding.

Scene 8: Show a field that is knee high. Show the farmer applying 1 water bottle cap of urea around each plant according to recommended practices. Farmer acts and voice-over explains what farmer is doing.

About 4 weeks after planting, or when the plants are knee high, apply Urea. Apply 1 water bottle cap of urea around each plant.

Scene 9: Show a growing/ flowering field and show how the farmer is removing weeds. Farmer acts and voice-over explains what farmer is doing.

Weeding should be done one last time around the tasseling stage of the maize. And that's it really.

Scene 10: Doing the math – any ideas to make this engaging are welcome! Here the farmer can address the audience again. Can we use visual aids to make this appealing to low educated farmers???

I used to think that farming maize according to recommended practices would be a lot of work and cost me a lot of money. But inorganic fertilizer is essentially free, I just needed to collect it and throw it on the garden. Applying inorganic manure is done only once while preparing the field, proper spacing is done while planting and weeding is done three times. But soon I realized the increase in maize production due to these recommended practices was well worth the extra effort!

Similarly, I used to think that modern inputs such as improved seed and inorganic fertilizer were too expensive. But once I compared the expenditures to the additional maize I would get in the future, I found out these inputs are not expensive at all!

Let us do the math together. To cultivate one acre using improve seeds such as bazooka, I need about 10 kg of seed. Bazooka sells at about 8500 per kilogram, so I would need 85,000 UGX to use Bazooka on an entire acre. In addition, I would need 60 kg of DAP and 60 kg of Urea. DAP is sold at 3,000 shillings per kg and Urea is sold at 2,500 shillings per kg. This means 180,000 shillings for DAP and 132,500 shillings for Urea to use fertilizer according to recommendations on an entire acre. Thus, to use modern inputs on one acre of land, I would need a total of about 415,000 UGX. But look at the result of this investment! Using these inputs, I will be able to harvest about 25 bags from this same acre. For each bag, I can get about 50,000 UGX, so the value of my harvest is 1,250,000. Subtracting the cost of the fertilizer and seed, this means I remain with a profit of 850,000. Now let us compare this to a situation in which I did not use modern inputs: With recycled seed and without fertilizer, I used to get only 8 bags from this acre. Selling these at 50,000 each would mean my harvest is worth 400,000. Remember with modern inputs my profit is 835,000: This is more than double!

Similarly, I used to think that adhering to recommended spacing was tedious and weeding a waste of time. But also here, there are important returns to these practices. Take for example timely planting: each day you are late in planting, your yield will reduce. For instance, if I would normally get 8 bags from one acre, planting one week too late will result in only getting 7 bags. Plant spacing also has a big effect on production. I noticed that by using one foot between plants and 2 and ½ foot between rows as optimal spacing, I could increase my yield per acre form 8 bags to 10 bags. The same holds for keeping the garden free of weeds, as maize is poor at competing. I found out that I can get and extra 2 bags of maize per acre if I weed three times and pay particular attention to removing stirga at an early stage.

Scene 11: Include flashbacks: Maybe show the farmer selling his chicken and buying small amounts seeds and fertiliser in shop again and then show him in front of the small corner of the plot

I know farming according to these recommendations mean more work, and that 400,000 is a lot of money! But you can always start small, like I did. Remember I started in a corner of my garden of only 5 by 5 sticks? The improved seeds, DAP and Ureas required to cultivate on this area was only 41,500. But on that small plot, I was able to get 2.5 bags, for which I got 125,000. My profit was 83,500.

Remember that when I would not have used recommended practices, fertilizer and improved seed on this small plot, I wouldn't even have been able to harvest one full bag of maize! I would have made only 40,000 shillings.

Scene 12: can we show the farmer with some money in hands, in front of a somewhat bigger plot (quarter acre) and in a shop buying somewhat larger quantity improved seeds, DAP and urea.

Over time, I would use the extra money I made by using improved inputs to buy more seed and fertilizer. On my small plot of 5 sticks by 5 sticks plot, I made a profit of 83,500 shillings. If I would not have used modern inputs, I would have had 40,000. So I reinvested the difference, 43,500 and bought more improved seeds and chemical fertilizer. This allowed me to cultivate almost a quarter

of an acre using modern inputs in the following season, generating a profit of more than 170,000. I used the extra money again to buy even more modern inputs. Pretty soon, I was able to cultivate an entire acre using improved seeds and fertilizers.

Scene 13: Start by letting farmer talk to audience. Then show the farmer selling a bag of maize and going immediately to the store to buy inputs. Show the farmer putting money in a container that has a clear label on it reading "seed and fertilizer".

From experience, I also learned that it is often difficult to commit to re-investing my money. Even though at harvest, I tell myself I will use part of the money to buy fertilizer and improved seed, there are many other competing issues that require money and I would often find myself without money when it is time to start planting maize again.

Therefore I now plan well ahead. During harvest, I calculate how much seed and fertilizer I need, and I immediately go to the shop to buy the inputs and store them in a safe place in my house. If the inputs are not available in the store, I put the money aside in a special container and regularly visit the store to see if the inputs are there. In this way, I am sure that when time for planting comes, I have the seeds and fertilizer and can plant timely.

Scene 14: Show the farmer in front of the nice field again, where he recapitulates (maybe throw in a few flashbacks?). Maybe also show the varieties in the store, with a clearly visible price tag. Eg Longe 10 H @ 6000/kg, Bazooka @8,500/kg,...

So, to recapitulate, to become a successful maize farmer, it is first and foremost important to get good improved seed. Preferably, get high yielding hybrid seeds that are early maturing, such as longe 10H or UH5354 (Bazooka). Note that such hybrid seeds can not be recycled: you need to purchase new ones every year. If you can not afford this, try at least to buy Open Pollinated Varieties such as Longe 5 (Nalongo) or Longe 4. These are cheaper and can be reused three or four seasons. Second, apply fertilizer to the soil. Use organic fertilizer from animals or crop residue when preparing the field. During planting, DAP should be used in the soil. When the maize is about knee high, urea should be applied around the plants as top dressing. Fertilizers not only boost maize production, it also reduces Striga infestation. Combining this with timely planting, proper spacing of 1 foot by 2,5 foot and keeping the garden free of weed, you are bound to get much more maize! I strongly encourage you to try this as well. Start small and see for yourself! Good luck!