

INTRODUCING —

**The Africa Program
of the
International Plant Nutrition Institute**



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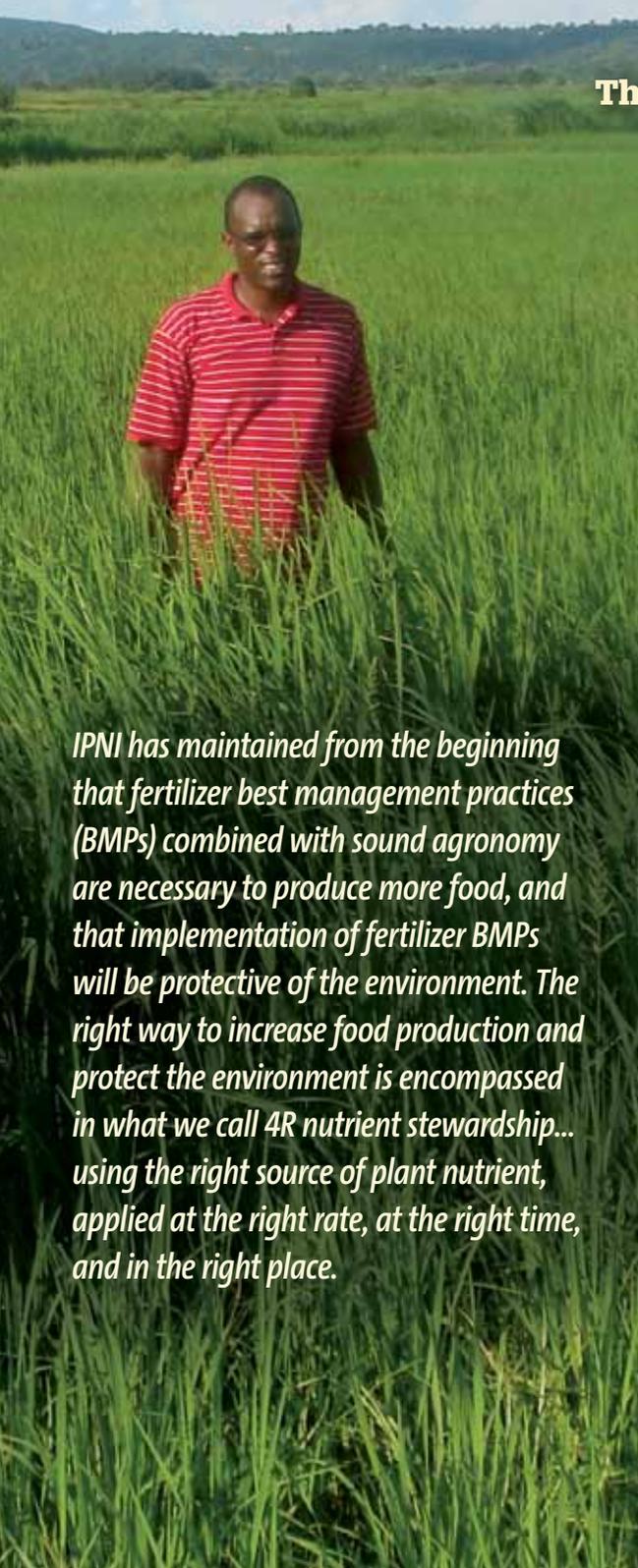
The IPNI Africa Program

The IPNI Africa Program will work with member companies to foster partnerships with national agricultural research and extension systems, universities, international agricultural research systems, and other stakeholders to synthesize information and develop research programs to encourage fertilizer use in ways that are technically efficient, economically viable, and environmentally friendly.

The program will facilitate establishment of a network for sharing information on site- and crop-specific fertilizer BMPs for various cropping systems among researchers in Africa and other regions.

Emphasis will also be placed on supporting and collaborating with existing projects to develop and promote innovative mechanisms to transfer knowledge on fertilizer BMPs to input suppliers, agricultural service providers, extension services, and farmers.

The program will focus on sites in the sub-humid zones, due to their high potential for agricultural intensification, and will cover both commercial estates and subsistence-oriented agricultural systems.



IPNI has maintained from the beginning that fertilizer best management practices (BMPs) combined with sound agronomy are necessary to produce more food, and that implementation of fertilizer BMPs will be protective of the environment. The right way to increase food production and protect the environment is encompassed in what we call 4R nutrient stewardship... using the right source of plant nutrient, applied at the right rate, at the right time, and in the right place.

Fertilizer Use

Fertilizer use is extremely low in much of the sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region, covering more than 40 countries south of the Sahara, except South Africa.

Low fertilizer use is one of the main factors explaining lagging agricultural productivity growth in SSA.

Over the past 5 decades, cereal crop yields have been stagnant at less than 1 t/ha, despite an increase in food demand by 3 to 3.5% per year due to a rapidly growing population.

Currently, chronic food insecurity affects 28% of the 700 million people who live in SSA.

At the present trends of population growth, cereal crop productivity must grow by 4% annually or more than double by 2020 to make SSA self-sufficient in cereal production.

Most of the soils in Africa are inherently infertile, and poor agricultural management practices during the past decades have led to a severe decline in their productive capacity.

Nutrient balances for SSA show large negative values, and losses of nutrients are estimated at more than 50 kg/ha annually.





Agriculture is the most important sector in the economies of most African countries.

It contributes about 30% of the continent's gross domestic product (GDP) and about 50% of the total export value, with 70% of the continent's one billion population depending on the sector for their livelihoods.

The level of agricultural development and fertilizer use varies considerably between countries. Fertilizer consumption is mostly restricted to 10 countries, and main fertilizer consumers include Egypt (30%), South Africa (23%), and Morocco (9%).

The commercial farming sector produces more than 60% of the total marketed agricultural output of the 10 countries that use the largest share of fertilizers.

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