



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Dryland Systems

JULY 2015

Six month-progress report

AS Meknes Sais, Morocco

Activity 1 - Sub-activity 1.1. Dissemination of conservation agriculture (CA) in wheat based system for increased productivity and product quality

Introduction

Currently around 6,000 ha are under conservation agriculture (CA) in Morocco. Further to CRP DS research on CA in the action site Meknes, there is a bilateral project on CA that is mapped to CRP DS;

- CANA-project “*Adapting Conservation Agriculture for Rapid Adoption by Smallholder Farmers in North Africa*”, financed by ACIAR

In April 2015, FAO signed with ICARDA an agreement to contribute in the upscaling of certain promising technologies among which conservation agriculture. This means that the number of farmers and areas that will host CA will increase in the next cropping system.

Overview of activities

Total of 34 farmer Extension-farmers managed demonstration fields with CA were implemented under the framework of this CRP (Table 1). Total of 34 ha were covered through these farmer field demonstrations. Higher number of farmers and the area under CA were not reached because the FAO’s funds arrived very late in April 2015, preventing us purchasing the inputs necessary for the operations.

Table 1. CA activities in different zones of Morocco.

Region	# of farmers	Area (ha)	Crops	Mapped project
Meknes/ El Hajeb	4	4	wheat, chickpea	CRP DS
Chaouia/ Ouardigha	30	30	Oat, triticale, vetch and mixtures	CANA
	34	34		

- As part of the CRP DS program, 4 field sites (2 sites under No-Till vs 2 sites under Conventional Till) in 2 communities (Ain Jmaa and Betit) were established as demonstration fields.
- 1 field day was organized with stakeholders (40 farmers in two associations: Ennasir & Bismilah).
- Chickpea and wheat were seeded using no-till and conventional seeders. Wheat and chickpea grain, as well as, biological yields were higher when seeded with no-till seeders (figures 1 and 2).

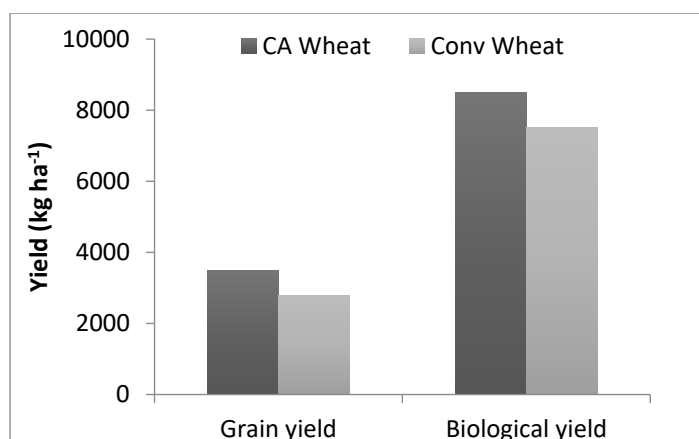


Figure 1. Wheat grain and biological yield under CA and conventional management.

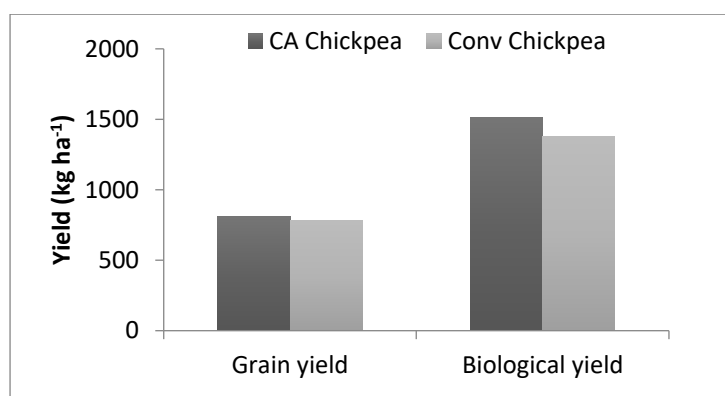
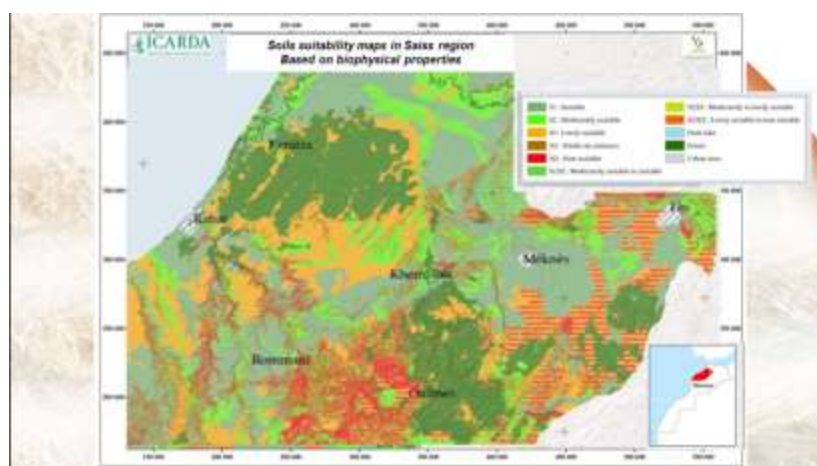


Figure 2. Chickpea grain and biological yield under CA and conventional management.

- Soil suitability map for CA was established under the CRP DS. It shows that based on biophysical properties, more than 60% of soil are highly to moderately suitable to no-Till for cereal-based system in Meknes-Saiss region.



Conclusion

The limited fund allocated to CA activity in Meknes site did not allow to crop large areas under CA. The commitment of FAO to contribute in the upscaling of CA in Morocco and the link of the CRP DS work on CA with CANA project is a good sign for better adoption of CA in Morocco.



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