



Food stuffs

MINADER and IRAD: a powerful duo to ensure food security

■ *The two institutions reaffirmed the need for this common front during the launch of the 2020 farming season in the southern zone.*

Many crooks often abuse farmers in the area of seed availability. In response, on 9 April 2020, Gabriel Mbairobe, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER), made public the journal of multiplier producers and of maize seeds and cassava cuttings availability for the

2020 farming season in the southern zone. Objective: provide information on the availability of maize seeds and cassava cuttings certified by the competent services of the Department of Regulations and Quality Control of Agricultural Inputs and Products in collaboration with the Agricultural Investment and Markets Development Project (AIMDP). The launch of the 2020 farming season, initially planned in Abong-Mbang in the East of Cameroon, did not take place because of the corona virus pandemic. Despite this prevailing situation, MINADER reassured that in the past season, there was a significant increase in the production of most foodstuffs to the point of exceeding forecasts. This was during a press briefing at the Yaoundé Hilton Hotel.

These include roots and tubers (cassava, potato), plantain, maize, tomato, etc. Cocoa production also increased slightly due to improved prices on the international market. Paradoxically, the price of coffee dropped. There was also a fresh impetus for the creation of new cocoa, plantain, potato and tomato farms by youths and elites. With regard to food security, let's note that the majority of the 58 Divisions analysed in Cameroon do not present a famine situation. The overall situation is good in 17 Divisions, acceptable in 32 Divisions, but quite deteriorated in the 9 others, especially in the North-West and South-West, due to the socio-political crisis. Although there is an improvement in 2019, the 2020 farming season may face various threats:



Market gardening

the impact of the corona virus health crisis, the persistence of the socio-political crisis in the English-speaking Regions, the harmful effects of irregular rainfall, cash flow tensions affecting the work of projects and programmes in the field, soaring food prices, threats to food security, nutrition and producers' incomes, etc. IRAD's role is crucial with regard to its research on some known short-cycle speculations such as cassava, maize, rain-fed rice, plantain, potato and tomato. For example, 11,410,000 certified cassava cuttings were freely distributed in the various regional delegations of MINADER and 1,650 tonnes of certified maize seed were made available to producers in the 7 southern regions. Emphasis is also placed on intensifying rain-fed rice production, considering the closure of borders by Vietnam, Thailand and South American countries due to covid-

19. This intensification is all the more necessary due to the deficit production of agro-industries such as SEMRY and UNVDA (Upper Nun Valley Development Authority). Thus, more than 60 tonnes of rain-fed and lowland rice seeds were distributed. Various other speculations and cash crops are being promoted, such as plantain, of which 1,500,000 seedling are available. This crop is experiencing considerable growth in Cameroon. There are also potatoes (200 tonnes of seeds available), tomatoes and other vegetables and market gardening crops for which the State provided motor pumps, seeds and especially phytosanitary products to farmers. In the cocoa sub-sector, the aim is to provide producers with seedlings and phytosanitary products to protect orchards. Nearly 6 million seedlings are available for farmers in various production basins. In or-

der to boost this dynamic, the Government of Cameroon is doing more through other initiatives: development of a market information system, regular organization of agro-pastoral fairs in large cities, acceleration of the opening up of production basins in conjunction with local authorities to avoid post-farming losses, awareness raising on the need for warrantage, the setting up of community store houses and good food safety practices. MINADER also underlined the need to avoid food waste. To ensure food security, the 2020 farming season in the southern zone of Cameroon has set a course based on key objectives: respect of Government's recommendations, respect of traceability in the distribution of seeds by making them available to producers through IRAD. The success of this farming season depends on them.