

## Groundnuts in Kenya

In Kenya, ICRISAT has been working with TechnoServe Inc., Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) to evaluate and promote improved groundnut varieties developed by the ICRISAT groundnut breeding program based at Chitedze Research Station near Lilongwe, Malawi.

Although groundnuts are widely grown by smallholder farmers both for food and sale in western Kenya, there are no groundnut varieties listed in the national variety catalog. This is somewhat surprising given that groundnuts are a major food and cash crop in neighboring Uganda where several improved ICRISAT varieties have been released and widely adopted by farmers.

Groundnut rosette disease is a major constraint to productivity in both countries and the rosette-resistant Spanish varieties ICG 12991 and ICGV-SM 99568, and the Virginia variety ICGV-SM 90704 have performed well both on-station and on-farm involving more than 10,000 farmers. Grain samples from these varieties have been provided to local traders and processors and are

already finding their way into both informal and formal marketing channels. TechnoServe has established the farmer-owned Kenya Smallholder Farmer Investment Company (KESFIC) to improve groundnut – and other crops – marketing to stimulate farmer investment in the use of improved seed and complementary inputs.

Discussions have started between the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) and KARI to enter these varieties in National Performance Trials and for Distinctness-Uniformity-Stability (DUS) testing which is mandatory for the selling of certified seed. Several commercial seed companies have shown interest in groundnuts and Kenyan farmers are beginning to recognize the potential of the crop in the maize-based systems that predominate.

**Contributed by:** Richard Jones  
ICRISAT  
Nairobi, Kenya