

# FES HELPING SMALLHOLDER FARMERS ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE



The Malawian agriculture sector relies heavily on rain-fed crop production. Climate variability and an increased frequency of extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods, seen in past decades have had a significant impact on agricultural productivity. Smallholders can no longer rely solely on rain-fed crop production and traditional crop production technologies. **Farming and Engineering Services Ltd (FES)** has created its Emerging Farmer Department (EFD) specifically to equip and service the needs of these smallholder farmers who are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. As Managing Director, Mike Aldworth, states: "FES aims to improve the access to products and services that can boost productivity rates of smallholder farmers and provide strategies to mitigate climatic shocks."

## Irrigation technologies suited to smallholder needs

Irrigation development is one of the main priority intervention areas listed in the National Agricultural Investment Plan 2018 and it is estimated around 300,000 hectares of land is available for irrigation in Malawi (National Irrigation Plan 2016). Despite this, the promotion of widespread access to irrigation technologies for smallholder farmers is in its infancy. FES believes it is best positioned to provide irrigation equipment suited to their needs and the associated training, installation and servicing requirements. The



**Drip irrigation supports small farmers to adapt to climate change by providing efficient use of water supply directly to the crop root zone - Mitundu, Lilongwe District**

irrigation technologies that FES offers include drip irrigation, sprinklers and pivot systems.

FES is the sole distributor of high quality, affordable, small-scale drip irrigation kits: Netafim Drip-Kits. Access to drip irrigation by utilising local water sources mitigates low seasonal rainfall. It prevents crop failure caused by prolonged dry spells and enables optimum water utilisation in the dry season. By irrigating the land, smallholder farmers can produce a greater volume of crop of a higher quality, grow crops throughout the year (accessing high-value markets), and have improved resilience to climate shocks.

## Preserving the agro-ecological system while boosting productivity

The advice, products and services which FES offers smallholder farmers are those that inherently mitigate environmental degradation and contribute to ecosystem preservation and renewal. An example of this is the new state-of-the-art AgriLab based

at the FES Blantyre Head Office. AgriLab provides soil testing analysis and consultancy services to ensure the agricultural sector has the equipment and scientific expertise to close the gap between optimal and realised yield.

## Mechanisation and climate smart agriculture

FES promotes mechanisation technologies which deliver minimum tillage in line with climate smart and conservation agriculture strategies. FES provides a range of services tailored to smallholder farmer needs: equipment sales, lease-to-hire models and entrepreneur-based models. Our mechanisation services incorporate the latest technological advancements that build the capacity of smallholder farmers, including the 'Hello Tractor' application.

If you would like to learn more about our EFD solutions or you have a climate challenge to solve, give us a call or come visit us. **Let's talk.**



**Productivity improvements are imperative to mitigate the impact of climate change, the AgriLab team, part of the FES Group, are trained and equipped to conduct advanced soil testing and provide targeted soil fertility recommendations.**



**Facilitating smallholder farmers' adaptation to climate change requires a combination of policy, technical, and research solutions, such as the Emerging Farmer Mechanisation Hub - Kasungu District**



**Holistic, cost-effective agriculture solutions are required to sustain and increase smallholder farmer yields and minimize the risk of crop failure - Lilongwe District**

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