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SEEDCODEX is boosting crop productivity by tackling fake seeds in Nigeria

In Nigeria, many families solely depend on crop farming for the provision of their basic needs. However, lack of access to quality seeds has affected crop productivity, making it difficult to guarantee production and for families to adequately meet their basic needs.

Over the years, smallholder farmers have lost millions of naira due to fake seeds. More than 50 per cent of crop seeds sold in the country are sub-standard and sometimes fake. Farmers have complained about the exposure to illegal seed practices, including fake seeds, fraudulent labelling and regulatory offences.

In addition to destroying the economic prospects of the country, the continuous use of illegal seeds has reduced investment by breeders and seed producers to develop, produce and deliver better quality seeds.

In 2020, the National Agricultural Seed Council (NASC), with the support of Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), introduced the NASC SEEDCODEX, an electronic seed authentication tag to provide farmers with quality assurance through tracking, traceability and provision of quality seeds.

The new tag has a scratch-off code which complements the existing tags of the Seed Council. It is now attached to the pack of every seed sold in Nigeria. Smallholder farmers are happy to hear this and have embraced the innovation.

During the unveiling ceremony of the SEEDCODEX, President of the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Arc Kabiru Ibrahim said, "the SEEDCODEX will

promote farmer's access to better seed breeds which will help farmers withstand harsher droughts, extreme heat and unpredictable flood associated with climate change".

This initiative is expected to help farmers substantially boost and guarantee harvest, generate more income to take care of their basic family needs. With the new scratch-off code, farmers are now able to send certain codes via text messages and get instant response to verify the authenticity of the seed. The access to high-quality seeds enables farmers to boost their crop productivity while improving their livelihoods.

