



Program Number 3

Name of program: Nkhani ya Nthaka (Stories from the soil)

Name of Radio Station: Dzimwe Community Radio

Date of Broadcast: 16 November 2015

Time of Broadcast: 13:30

Length of Program: 10 Min59 sec.

Topic: Soil quality management

Sigtune 16 seconds

Presenter: Good afternoon to you all our dear listeners wherever you are getting in touch with us. My name is Tony Gonani. I have also come back with another special edition of *Nkhani ya nthaka* (Stories from the soil). Remember that this program is aimed at finding the best mechanisms that will help to sustain our soils through proper management and policy development here on Dzimwe Community Radio Station.

In today's program, we are going to look at a topic called soil management and with me in the studio is Mr. Johns Kaimbwa from the Department of Agriculture and Climate Change of Malawi Lake Basin Program. He will explain more on soil management.

Presenter: welcome to the program.

Mr.Kaimbwa: You are welcome too.

Presenter: What is the definition of soil quality management?

Mr. Kaimbwa: Thanks! Firstly, let me explain here that soil works for you if you work for soil by using management practices that improves soil quality and increase productivity and profitability immediately and into the future.

Now, soil quality management is defined as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustain plants, animals, and humans. For this reason there are a number of factors that can be observed.

Firstly, we look at No-Till. This method allows farmers to grow crops or pastures without disturbing the soil through tillage by protecting it from wind and water erosion that can wash away the top soil.

Secondly, a farmer is supposed to look at drainage systems, this helps him or she to manage the rainfall run off to prevent soil erosion.

Thirdly, feeding the soil; we can feed the soil through the application of manure so that we can enrich our soils with fertility.

Fourth, crop rotation; to improve the quality of our soils, we need to practice crop rotation. This is important because what happens is that if we have planted maize in this year, we need to plant different crops in the next growing season as it will help to balance the nutrients consumption of the soil as maize can consume nitrogen or phosphorus, that were previously left by other crops.

So if we deny crop rotation then we are making our soils to be the breeding sites for diseases that can cause problem to our crops. So, we need to consider the advantage of crop rotation as it helps to break the cycle of pests and diseases in our fields that can also contribute to low yields as they cannot find food for their survival. Therefore, I emphasize that we must take an initiative to care for our soil to sustain our daily living.

Presenter: What should be done to avoid exposing and disturbing our soils?

Mr. Kaimbwa: There are several factors that needs to be followed, firstly we always say that soil erosion is mainly done if our soil is dusty; it can be easily washed away as we reduce the bonding of our soil.

In the modern world, farmers are encouraged to avoid disturbing the soil by covering our soil with grasses or the maize stalks that promotes compatibility of the soil and is protected from direct sunlight there by moisture is maintained in the soil. We also encourage farmers to plant other recommended trees that its leaves add fertility to our soil. Such trees are like Jere Jere and Nsangu winter thorns (faidaherbia) they are helpful to protect our soil erosion, and I also once talked about Vetiver this too protects our soil from being polluted.

Insert women song.

Tilele tilele nthaka yathu ndi ulimi wa manyowa (let's care for our soils by applying manure)

Presenter: When should we start observing soil quality management?

***Mr. Kaimbwa:** Everyone who wants to start dealing with soil, e.g. a farmer, must start from the beginning, whether the soil is fertile or not. That step is very important, had it been that we have jointly agreed to start caring for our soils we couldn't complain of soil depletion due to chemicals that are being applied to soils such as fertilizers. Fertilizers do not add fertility to the soil is just a chemical that can be used for a short period of time for our crops. I want to encourage farmers to adopt new techniques of farming by utilizing the availability of natural resources' for our soils and its fertility will be maintained forever.*

Presenter: What are some of the trees that can be planted together with our crops and that are adding fertility to our soils?

***Mr. Kaimbwa:** Well, I have mentioned Jerejere, Nsangu, (feidahebia) mthethe and the likes... The leaves of these trees help to add fertility to our soils and there will be no need of applying chemicals fertilizes for bumper yields.*

Presenter:

Listeners, with that voice we have come to the very end of our today's edition of the Stories from the soil here on Dzimwe Community Radio station. Remember that this segment is part of an audio series related to the International Year of Soils. It has been produced with the support of the World Association of Community Broadcasters, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2015."

Let me once again thanks our agriculture advisor Mr. Johns Kaimbwa for coming to this special program. Do you have questions or comments please call or send sms to the producer of the program on 0884469147 and we shall help you.

From me the producer of the program Tony Gonani, I say good bye!