



An International Center  
for Soil Fertility and  
Agricultural Development

# Success Story

## Farmers in Togo Grow Success With Organic and Mineral Fertilizer

Bagname Yatoute and Yao Yentebelime are two farmers in northern Togo who have improved their farms by upgrading their farming techniques.

Yatoute, who lives in Nagbongou, owns a 9-hectare farm. In 1999 he heard about the benefits of combining compost and mineral fertilizers. With help from the nongovernmental organization—Research, Support, and Training for the Initiatives of Self-Development (RAFIA)—and IFDC, he used mineral fertilizer on his field and doubled his yield. This gave the farmer and his 22-member household greater food security.



Combining soil amendments and inorganic fertilizers to improve efficiency of fertilizer use and protect the environment is a basic component of the Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) strategy that is being promoted by IFDC. This strategy also involves participatory development of techniques, capacity building, and institutional strengthening.

Yatoute used to have a difficult time providing enough organic materials for his large fields. He solved this problem by incorporating livestock and agroforestry into his farming system. He, along with other integrated soil fertility management (ISFM) farmers in his village, started a goat farm by using grants from the European Development Funds group. This farm, which now raises 36 goats, is a great success for Yatoute because it provides extra manure for compost, and it serves as a savings bank. Yatoute also started a tree nursery, which allows him to reap even more profits. This year, he realized a US \$50 profit by selling legume trees and date palm seedlings.

Yatoute is not alone in his farming success. Yao Yentebelime, a farmer in Kpong—another village in northern Togo—also began improving his farming techniques. Because his field was small, Yentebelime could not adequately feed his family and was forced to rent fields from other farmers for many years. However, his luck began to change in the mid-1990s when he participated in the ISFM activities. By combining animal dung and compost with mineral fertilizer, he harvested enough maize on his own field to feed his family. Yentebelime also bought two “parcs” (fenced areas where animals are kept at night) per season at two sacks of maize for each “parc” to further increase his quantity of dung.

Besides his improved fertilizer use, Yao changed his cropping pattern, which allowed him time to work on another profitable activity—vegetable production. This year, Yentebelime began to cultivate tomatoes, which he sells at the local market. His increased income allowed him to replace the thatched roof on his house with a corrugated iron roof, purchase a small motorbike, and pay cash for 12 bags of mineral fertilizer from a regional farmer organization.