

*Africa Tomorrow: Issues in Technology,
Agriculture, and U.S. Foreign Aid*

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AGRICULTURE, AND
U.S. FOREIGN AID**

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Preface

The United States has a stake in the agricultural development of sub-Saharan Africa. Alleviating hunger and malnutrition, expanding stable markets for U.S. products, and maintaining the availability of critical and strategic materials provide humanitarian, economic, and political reasons for a continuing American interest in Africa. Most African countries are predominantly agricultural and their well-being and future development are tied closely to that sector. Therefore, agricultural assistance probably will continue to be a major area of U.S. involvement.

Food problems in Africa are substantial: in no other region of the world has per capita food production declined steadily for over two decades. The Congress expressed its concern for these problems in 1984 with a major supplemental appropriations bill and the creation of a Select Committee on Hunger. This technical memorandum on agricultural technology and U.S. foreign assistance in sub-Saharan Africa was requested by the Select Committee, with support from the Africa Subcommittee, House Foreign Affairs Committee. OTA was asked to investigate several topics relating to current and future African agriculture: technological needs, successful technology development and transfer, and the roles of public and private foreign assistance.

This paper is the result of 6 months' work, including: 1) a 2-day workshop with 14 invited experts on African agriculture, 2) a visit by an OTA contractor to the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in Nigeria, and 3) additional OTA staff research. We do not pretend that this is a definitive work on specific types of agricultural technologies. Instead the paper outlines major issues constraining the development and transfer of sustainable technologies for low-resource food producers. Our findings reflect broad consensus on which potential congressional action can be based. The problems of food production in sub-Saharan Africa are acute. Opportunities for improving the situation abound, however, and many are available to Congress.

This paper was prepared by Scott McCormick, Ted MacDonald, Phyllis Windle, and Chris Elf ring. OTA wishes to thank the workshop participants and additional reviewers for their substantial contributions as well as the many others who generously provided information.



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