



Increasing Production from the Land: A Sourcebook on Agriculture for Teachers and Students in East Africa

By Andrew Coulson, Antony Ellman, Emmanuel Mbiha

Antony Ellman, a long-standing friend of Mokoro, has co-authored this book on sustainable agricultural production in East Africa, published in September 2018 by the Tanzania Publishing House, Mkuki na Nyota. It is targeted primarily at agricultural college and university teachers and students in East Africa, but early indications suggest that it will be of interest to a much wider audience.

The book focuses primarily on small farmers, and (in the words of one reviewer) "does a remarkable job in identifying and explaining the constraints and opportunities which small farmers face. The analysis goes on to discuss ways forward from the farmers' perspective, a very rare approach seldom achieved in the many books and pamphlets on African agriculture published over the last fifty years. It is in the tradition of William Allen's path breaking book 'The African Husbandman'."



Antony writes:

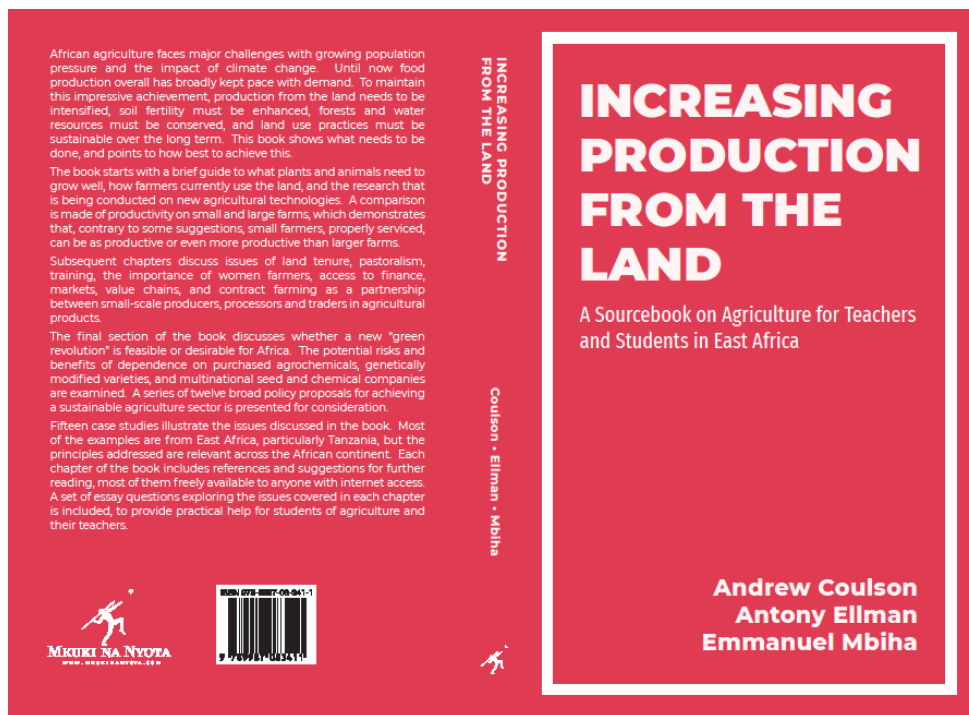
My first job after graduating in agricultural sciences in 1962 was as planner and manager of a smallholder co-operative farm in Tanzania. Since then I have worked as manager, planner, adviser, researcher and trainer on smallholder agricultural projects and programmes in many countries of the developing world, spending twelve years in Tanzania, five years in Sri Lanka, a year in Ethiopia and shorter periods in many other countries of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and South Pacific.

In recent years I and a colleague with whom I worked in Tanzania in the 1960s and 1970s, Andrew Coulson (author of the influential book *Tanzania – A Political Economy*, OUP 1982, updated 2013) have been struck by the absence of locally relevant teaching materials used in the many agricultural colleges, universities and training institutes which have

sprung up all over East Africa. Together with a Tanzanian colleague, Emmanuel Mbiha (Professor of Agricultural Economics at Sokoine University of Agriculture), we produced this book to try to fill the gap.

The book was launched at various locations in Tanzania in September/October 2018. It has had positive reviews and seems to have been well received in Tanzania and elsewhere. People like the local case studies which illustrate each chapter, and the practical approach, based on our collective experience, to the problems facing small farmers in the difficult current context of population expansion and climate change. We understand the book will be placed on the required reading list of all the agricultural universities, colleges and training institutes in Tanzania, and we hope it will have some impact.

The **synopsis in the box on the next page** describes the contents of the book. In Tanzania the book sells at a reasonable price (approximately £9 equivalent). In this country it is available "POD" (Print on Demand) from the African Books Collective Ltd, but at a high price (£30 for single copies, plus £3 P&P). However, the company allows the authors a generous discount for bulk purchases, so if anyone is interested in buying a copy I can supply it for £17 plus £3 P&P. Feel free to contact me at antony@ellman.org.uk. Reactions to the book will of course also be greatly welcomed.



African agriculture faces major challenges with growing population pressure and the impact of climate change. Until recently food production in East Africa has broadly kept pace with demand. To maintain this impressive achievement, production from the land needs to be intensified, soil fertility must be enhanced, forests and water resources must be conserved, and land use practices must be sustainable over the long term. This book shows what needs to be done and points to how best to achieve this.

The book starts with a brief guide to what plants and animals need to grow well, how farmers currently use the land, and the research that is being conducted on new agricultural technologies. A comparison is made of productivity on small and large farms, which demonstrates that, contrary to some suggestions, small farmers, properly serviced, can be as productive or even more productive than larger farms.

Subsequent chapters discuss issues of land tenure, pastoralism, extension and training, the importance of women farmers, access to finance, markets, value chains, and contract farming as a partnership between small-scale producers, processors and traders in agricultural products.

The final section of the book discusses whether a new "green revolution" is feasible or desirable for Africa. The potential risks and benefits of dependence on purchased agrochemicals, genetically modified varieties, and multinational seed and chemical companies are examined. A series of twelve broad policy proposals for achieving a sustainable agriculture is presented for consideration.

Each chapter is supplemented by one or more practical case studies, chosen to illustrate the issues addressed in the chapter. Most of the examples are from East Africa, particularly Tanzania, but the principles addressed are relevant across the African continent. Each chapter of the book includes references and suggestions for further reading, most of them freely available to anyone with internet access. A set of essay questions exploring the issues covered in each chapter is included, to provide practical help for students of agriculture and their teachers.

