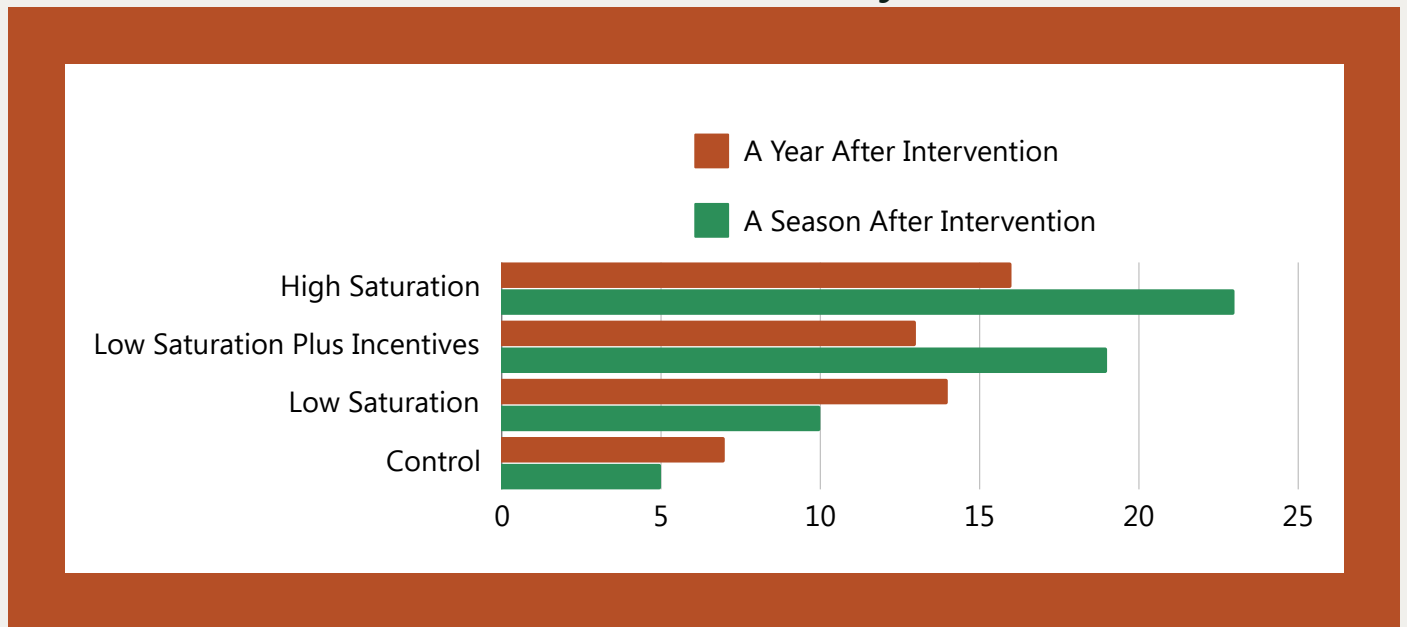


## Innovations in seed trial packs as a marketing tool for new maize varieties

Farmer experimentation is key to adopting new technologies and innovations and adapting to climate change. However, these experiments often happen in small, private settings where other farmers might not learn from them. This study looked at how encouraging farmers to experiment with new maize seed hybrids can generate information for both the experimenting farmers and their neighbors, accelerating the adoption of newer maize hybrids. The experiment evaluates how monetary incentives and the share of experimenting farmers in a village can be leveraged to deepen learning about new seed products.

**Figure 1:**  
**Non Hosts Wanted to Plant a Promoted Variety**



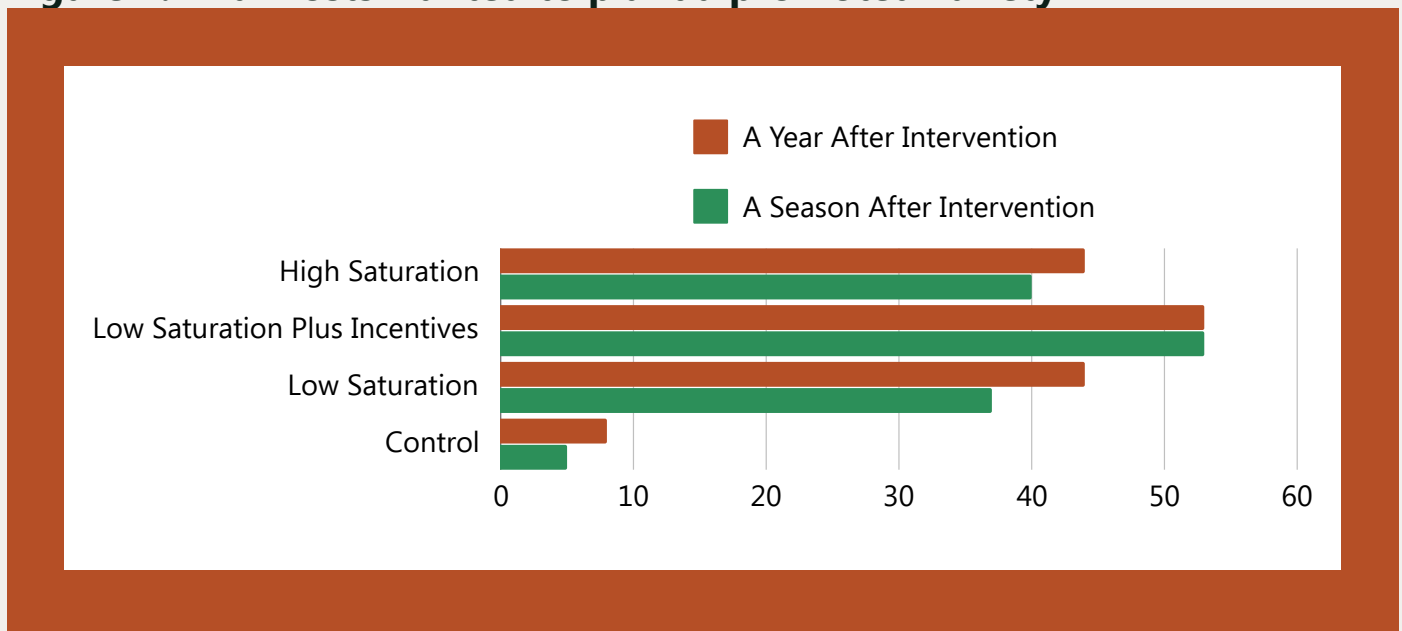
The interventions were at village where, in 52 villages, 10% of farmers were given seed trial-packs (low saturation treatment arm). In another set of 52 villages, 10% of farmers were given seed trial packs and offered Ksh 1500 (at three intervals) to incentivize them to disseminate information (low saturation plus incentives treatment arm), and in another set of 52 villages, 35% of farmers were given trial packs (high saturation treatment arm). We also collected data from another set of 52 villages without any intervention (control villages). The intervention took place during the March 2023 season, and evaluation data was collected a season later (the October 2023 season) and a year later (the March 2024 season).

We observe substantial active dissemination of trial performance by trial hosts to their neighbours in treatment villages. Financial incentives had a positive effect on dissemination, where trial hosts who received them put more effort into reaching their neighboring farmers. As a result of own experimentation and dissemination, awareness about and demand for the promoted hybrids grew markedly among both trial hosts and their neighbors.

## Innovations in seed trial packs as a marketing tool for new maize varieties

As shown in Figure 1, compared to the control farmers, the low saturation treatment arm doubled the demand (the likelihood that a farmer wanted to grow a promoted product – whether they got it or not) of the promoted varieties among the farmers who did not host the trials but learnt from their neighbors – from 5% to 10% one season after intervention and from 7% to 14% one year after the intervention. The impact of the other two treatment arms on the demand of the promoted products among the non-hosts was even higher. As shown in Figure 2, The impact of all the treatment arms on the demand of the promoted products among the farmers who hosted the trials was substantially high, increase demand about 6% to over 50% among farmers who received trial packs and incentives directly.

**Figure 2: Trial hosts wanted to plant a promoted variety**



Further, only 3% of control farmers were likely to plant the promoted products (fresh certified seed – not recycled) a season and a year after the intervention. The high saturation treatment arm modestly increased the likelihood of planting the promoted varieties (to 5%) among the non-hosts. The likelihood of planting those varieties grew markedly among the trial hosts, where the low saturation plus incentives treatment arm achieved the highest effect (from 3% to about 15% a year after). The difference between the effect of our interventions on demand and actual planting of the promoted varieties was occasioned by supply-side constraints where unavailability of the promoted varieties in the market and prohibitive prices were identified as the main ones. For the same reasons, we find many farmers from the treatment villages who recycled these varieties, much more in the midline than in the endline. Increasing the share of farmers trialing new varieties in a village or incentivizing trial hosts to encourage their dissemination efforts can be considered to deepen the impact of trial packs and experimentation in expanding the adoption of new maize varieties, but supply side constraints need to be addressed simultaneously.