



## Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/innovative-cost-sharing-improves-access-technological-solutions>

# Innovative Cost-Sharing Improves Access to Technological Solutions

Mary, a smallholder vegetable farmer in Western Kenya, used to go to her local agrodealer each season and purchase whatever fertilizer was available, applying it to her soil according to the recommended time and quantity. Unfortunately, each harvest, her crops were growing smaller and more irregular instead of flourishing. She didn't understand why this happened since she had been doing everything "right."

A simple soil analysis, however, would reveal that what Mary really needed was not fertilizer, but lime, which would have corrected her soil acidity and improved overall soil fertility and nutrient uptake. By continually applying fertilizer without lime, she was actually making her soil worse. Since conducting the soil analysis and applying the recommended inputs, Mary's soils have started to recover and her crop yields have already increased dramatically.

Mary is one of many farmers who stand to benefit from soil analysis, a simple and effective farm management tool that determines a soil's suitability for growing plants. In the past, the cost of this technology has made it largely inaccessible to smallholder farmers.

To make soil analysis more commercially viable, a Feed the Future program in Kenya is covering upfront costs to enable a Nairobi-based laboratory to offer professional, comprehensive soil analysis services to smallholders through a national agrodealer network. Participating farmers are trained to collect soil samples and send them to the lab, which analyzes the soil and sends an SMS message to the farmer with specific soil and fertilizer management recommendations.

Over time, the program is expected to bring down the cost of soil analysis by investing in new equipment for the lab. It is part of a broader project implemented by Fintrac Inc. under Feed the Future to help improve incomes, food security and nutrition for 200,000 smallholder farmers in Kenya over five years.