



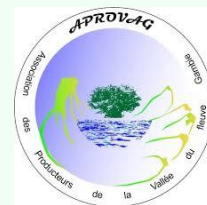
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Mulching of banana plots, an agroecological practice

Experience by APROVAG (Association des producteurs de la vallée du fleuve Gambie) in Tambacounda, SENEGAL

Context: Monoculture of banana - Very hot area - High water absorption through evapotranspiration - Soil impoverishment through monoculture - Soil depletion through long use of chemicals - Impact of climate change (irregular rainfall, flooding etc.)

The Solution: Mulching of banana plots. It consists in covering the banana plants with a layer of straw (vetiver leaves)



Description of the experience



After wintering, the producer fetches 600 bundles of vetiver grass a few kilometres from the field for a 0.25 ha banana plot. Once the bundles are loaded and brought to the field, the producer mulches the plot. This involves spreading vetiver straw 15 to 20 cm thick over the entire plot. It is not advisable to use millet or maize stalks and millet bran as mulch, as these by-products decompose with great difficulty. Vetiver leaves are recommended for their organic content and antifungal properties.

Other characteristics



Impacts

- Maintaining soil moisture
- Soil fertilization
- Increased banana production
- Accelerated banana growth



Challenges

- Bush fires
- Distance of vetiver leaf cutting areas from fields (difficult transport)



Lessons learned

- The decomposition of the straw also fertilises the soil
- Mulching greatly reduces the proliferation of weeds

Area: Rural Development - Natural Resource Management

Period: 1980 – present

Further Documentation: Manual for good banana producers

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