

Breeding Efforts to Improve Coffee Production in Ghana

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SUMMARY

Ghana's coffee production has been progressively going down with below 2,000 tons being produced in 1984. This decline is mainly due to poor yields being encountered by farmers. Though this could partly, be due to unsatisfactory farm management, it seems the major factor is poor planting materials. Breeding attempts being made to help rectify the situation include the development of high yielding robusta and arabusta coffee. The arabusta programme is mainly to improve the quality of our coffee. So far some robusta selections have been made which give about 3 tons/ha. This is a significant improvement: over the local robusta, which gives 0.8 tons/ha under similar conditions.

First (F1) and second (F2) generations of arabusta coffee have exhibited wide variations in most agronomic aspects such as flowering time, fruit maturation and plant structure in the field. Also, the presence of genotypes with high yielding capacity makes this programme very important in Ghana as such genotypes are being exploited either as varieties in themselves or as parents for further breeding programmes. Backcross to the arabica parent has shown some improvement in establishment and vigour which might be a reflection on yield improvement. This paper reports attempts being made at developing high yielding robusta and arabusta coffee to meet the farmers' requirements in Ghana.