

Robusta Coffee Improvement in Ghana: Achievements and Prospects

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SUMMARY

Several factors have contributed to low coffee production in Ghana but poor planting material has been the major contributing factor. Farmers in the past have relied on local planting material, which is generally low yielding. To ameliorate the situation, a Robusta coffee improvement programme was initiated in 1977. Seed-lot of five half-sib families introduced that year was tested at CRIG against two locally produced half-sib families. Evaluation of individual trees has resulted in the selection of nine clones with average yields of 2-3 tons per hectare over two 5-year cycles of production without fertiliser application. Compatibility and rooting test show that these clones are generally cross compatible and a rooting success of 75-85% achieved by seven clones within 4 months. Subsequently these seven clones have been used tentatively in 1992 to establish wood gardens for mass production of planting material for growers. In this presentation, the breeding strategies adopted to produce new improved planting material in Ghana are discussed. In particular, accounts is given of how parents are chosen with emphasis on yield, yield stability, genotype adaptability, disease and drought resistance and improved coffee quality attributes.