EUFM05 the ‘Snapping finger millet green’ variety released in Kenya was the first finger millet variety released. Post-launch of this innovative cultivar, response has been very positive with adaption rate of almost 100% in the Bomet county of Rift valley in Kenya. The release of improved ‘snapping’ finger millet varieties is a key milestone in reducing labor costs at harvesting and will ease the burden on women farmers and children who mostly perform this activity.

As a Stage 4 and a Maturity level 3 innovation, this cultivar has been taken up by users and are contributing to nutrition and food security goals, poverty reduction, livelihoods & jobs, gender equality, youth & social inclusion. Policy and/or practice changes influenced by these innovative business models have led to adoption or impacts at scale or beyond the direct CGIAR sphere of influence. This is evidenced by the farmers in Bomet county, Rift valley in Kenya who have adopted the variety for cultivation, with an adoption rate of almost 100%.

Finger millet is a crop native to eastern Africa and is extensively cultivated in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, and Malawi. This millet is a staple food grain to a large population in the region and many rural livelihoods also depend on this crop for their income. Wide adaptability, drought tolerance, less input requirement, higher nutritional quality, higher multiplication rate and longer shelf life makes finger millet an ideal crop for use as a staple food and for famine reserve. However, the cultivation of the crop is declining in the region, mainly due to its high labor requirements especially in planting, weeding and harvesting operations which are usually done by hand and by women and children.

During germplasm missions in western Kenya and eastern Uganda, finger millet cultivars whose stalks “snap” upon sudden bending were discovered, however they were poor agronomically and farmers were not adapting them. ICRISAT-ESA decided to improve them and reintroduced them to the farmers.

To reduce women and child labour in African region Since 2018

A cultivar with a “snapping trait” with stalk that snaps when suddenly bent beyond an angle of 45° was discovered, improved, and released. The cultivar with this trait is now being harvested easily by hand and faster when compared to when using a knife, besides being less tiring for the farm workers.

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During an agricultural show in 2018 in the rift valley of Kenya, the exhibition area where ‘snapping finger millet variety’ was showcased received the highest number of visitors.

It takes 20 women to harvest one acre of finger millet a day, each harvesting a bag of un-threshed finger millet at Kshs 200 (USD 2) totaling USD 40 an acre, compared to 4 women each harvesting 5 bags each at Kshs 100 (USD 1) for the snapping variety totaling USD 20 a day.

http://gldc.cgiar.org