

## EARLY HARVESTING OF CORN

Information and Images taken from RED SICTA's Booklet "Guía de Cosecha Temprana de Maíz y Secado en Casetas Mejoradas"

The hard work and effort that we put in when we cultivate our corn should end with the early harvesting of our crop



### WHAT IS EARLY HARVESTING?

- When the corn is left out in the field, losses can be tremendous due to insects, birds, rodents, fungal and bacterial damage.
- Corn should be harvested when it reaches maturity which is when the husk is dry or when the tip of the kernel turns black

## DRYING OF GRAINS USING DRYING CRIBS

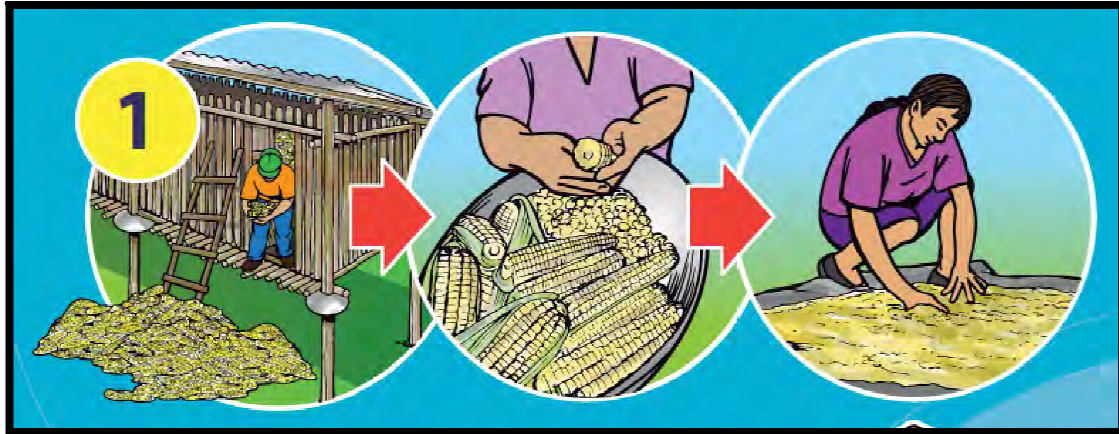
### DRYING OF GRAINS

- Physiological maturity occurs when the grain moisture content reaches 30-36% moisture. After this stage, there is no dry matter added to the kernel
- The use of storage cribs are easy to construct and can be done using local materials such as bush sticks and thatch roof.
- For more information on the construction of the cribs, please check with the RED SICTA Technical Officer, IICA or the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

An economical way to dry corn is to use Drying Cribs. Drying cribs reduce the moisture of the grains using natural ventilation, the air. These cribs reduce the moisture from 35% to 16% in 60 days.



## SHELLING AND DRYING OF GRAINS



Once the rainy season is over, the corn is removed from the cribs and is threshed. The shelled corn is put out in the sun to complete the drying process and to obtain the ideal moisture content of 13%.

## STORAGE OF GRAINS

Once corn is dried, it can be safely stored in containers such as silos or the Rotoplast.



or in plastic bags that are airtight and properly sealed



or even in plastic barrels or buckets

- The most important factor is to ensure that the corn has a moisture content of 13%
- The moisture content can be determined by using low cost methods such as biting, pinching. Another reliable method is by placing a handful of your corn grains in a dry glass bottle and add a few teaspoons of salt. Shake and leave to rest for 15 minutes. Shake again and if you see the salt 'stick' to the glass bottle, it means your corn has more than 15% moisture and you need to put out the corn to dry in the sun for another day and repeat the test with salt until the corn is dry.
- The grains can then be stored in container, airtight bags etc. away from the sun.

**THE EARLY HARVESTING COMBINED WITH THE USE OF DRYING CRIBS AND PROPER STORAGE WILL GUARANTEE GOOD QUALITY . THE CORN CAN BE STORED FOR MANY MONTHS!!!**