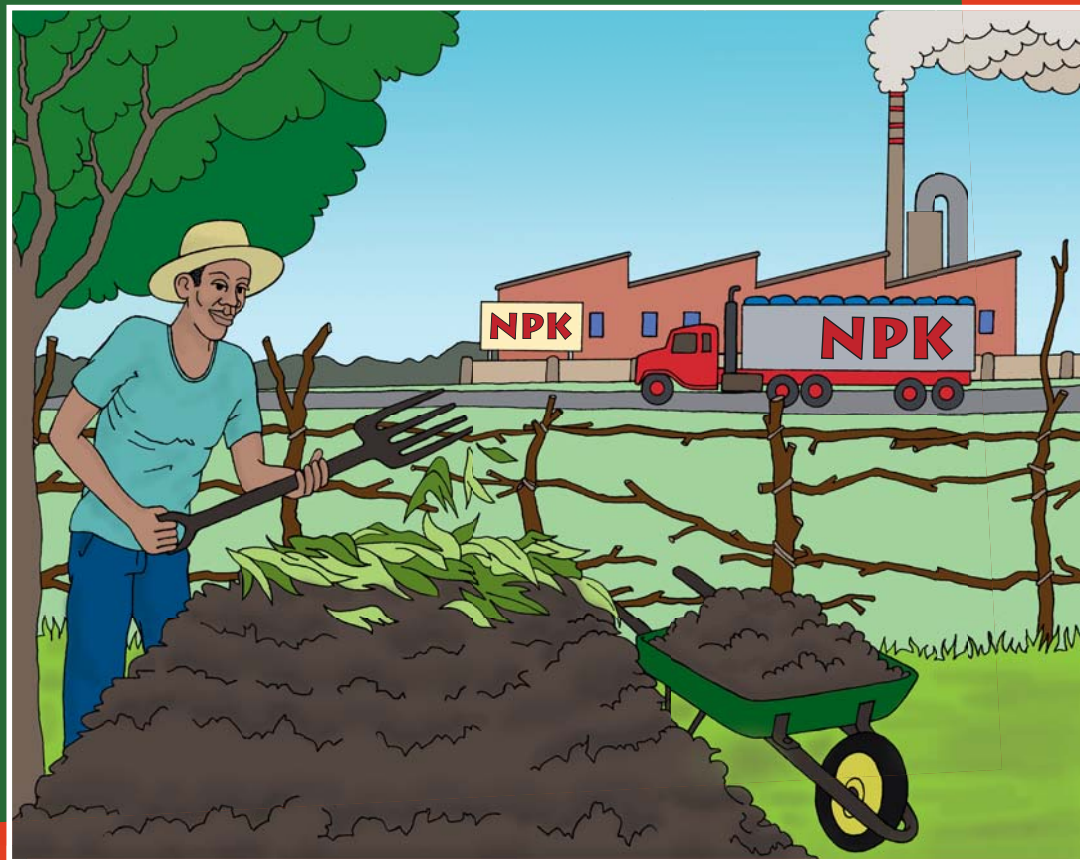


# WHAT ARE SYNTHETIC FERTILISERS?



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**T**here are two kinds of fertiliser: **organic** (natural) and **inorganic** (synthetic). Organic fertilisers are produced from substances that occur naturally in the environment. Synthetic fertilisers are man-made combinations of chemicals and inorganic (not living or natural) substances.

Synthetic fertilisers –

- are developed in laboratories or other off-farm facilities and combine nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium and others in different ratios;
- **act quickly** by supplying essential nutrients to the soil, which are quickly taken up by plants;
- are manufactured and packaged in factories; and
- are stored in warehouses and distributed to various outlets or agents throughout the country.

The use of synthetic fertilisers is widely promoted by African governments to increase yields. Many governments subsidise the use of synthetic fertilisers – such as NPK – as part of farm input subsidy programmes.