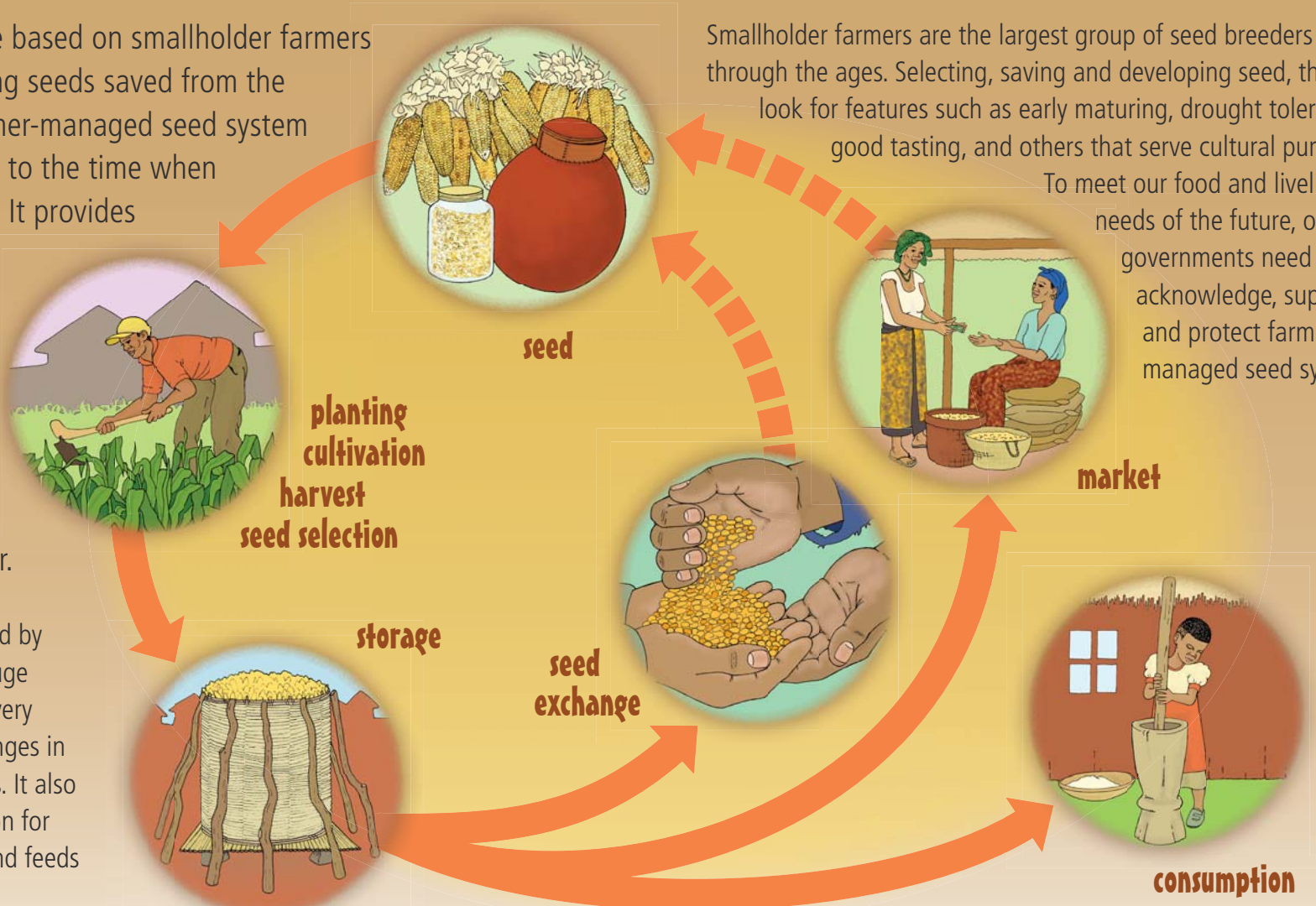


# FARMER-MANAGED SEED SYSTEMS IN AFRICA

**A**frican farming systems are based on smallholder farmers re-planting and exchanging seeds saved from the previous harvest. This farmer-managed seed system is an age old practice dating back to the time when our ancestors first began farming. It provides more than 80 percent of the seed used in producing food for hundreds of millions of Africans on the continent. In Southern Africa, for example, small-scale farmers obtain only about 10 percent of the seed that they use from the formal/commercial sector.

Sharing, exchanging and enhancing seed by smallholder farmers has resulted in a huge diversity of seed and crops. Diversity is very important to help farmers adapt to changes in the climate, such as prolonged droughts. It also provides balanced nutrition for people and animals and feeds the soil.



Smallholder farmers are the largest group of seed breeders through the ages. Selecting, saving and developing seed, they look for features such as early maturing, drought tolerance, good tasting, and others that serve cultural purposes. To meet our food and livelihood needs of the future, our governments need to acknowledge, support and protect farmer-managed seed systems.

