Theory of Change for Farmer Research Networks (FRNs)

The Need
- Rural organizations that support farmers are numerous and often strong; they form a collective rural infrastructure that could contribute to a grassroots research capacity.
- Participatory methods have been effective on a small scale in producing rigorous and relevant research.
- It is necessary to connect social, technological, methodological, and political capital to achieve widespread change.
- The R+D system has potential to support AEI but needs to adjust its approach to be more inclusive in order to be effective.
- R+D systems lack the ability to produce research outputs that are matched to a wide variety of contexts (social and biophysical).

The CCRP Response
- Study, evaluate, and document process, model, and learnings through FRN principles.
- Cross-sectoral collaborations and convenings, with emphasis on farmer participation.
- Capacity building on AEI, METI, participatory methods, managing power dynamics, leadership, and governance.

Pathway to Change
- Developing underlying principles of, if, and how FRNs are successful.
- Increased use of contextually appropriate options by farmers.
- Analysis of larger datasets provides better understanding of principles and Options x contexts.
- Farmers can derive and understand principles and learning which would not be possible by working alone or receiving extension.
- Large, networked datasets that reveal useful patterns of performance and inspire further innovation.
- More farmers and organizations participating in multiple parts of the research and innovation process.

Contextualized Outcomes that provide evidence for potential at scale
- Stronger, more vibrant, rural organizations.
- Other actors inspired by methodology and principles and FRNs spread.
- Strengthened R+D sector (more relevant, sustainable and accountable).
- More and better AEI evidence.