Find the full cartoon learning series at: https://www.microlinks.org/library/cartoon-learning-series
Farmers tend to be unaware of new ag. technologies, too scared to try them, and to be unaware of them in practice.
Tendency is for inputs supply retailers to presume that farmers aren't interested in or can't afford new ag. technologies.
Projects tend to often hand out new technologies to farmers for free.
So ... what are other ways to expose farmers to new inputs, make farmers feel okay about trying them out, and give them a way to see the results?
Contests are a common business tactic to market a new product/service or generate positive buzz around an existing product/service!
Okay, but how do contests apply in a rural, agricultural or non-ag. context?
And ... how on earth can contests somehow improve the rate that farmers adopt new agricultural technologies and production methods?

I don't believe a word of this!
Contests can achieve different objectives in terms of farmer behaviour - depending on how they are used.
EITHER
... randomly selecting winners, creating prestige around 'trying something new', and letting others learn from them

OR
... showcasing high-performing farmers as competition winners that others can learn from
Let's first look at an example where very few farmers in an area have started improving behaviors such as using new inputs or equipment...
How can Firms use contests to encourage, foster, and normalize NEW ways that farmers can do things ...

... when most farmers are still not close to the good practice yet ... and probably too scared to try?
Contests allow farmers to 'compete' for a prize as a promotional tactic...
Important new technologies!

Firm showcases new agricultural products / services as having value
Yesss!

All raffle winners get free spraying with some great new products!

Firm selects farmers as random 'winners' to try the new products/services out.
Farmers use prizes on their land, or their land gets prepared by the firm as the prize.
Winners often have to come for a training or debrief to get their prizes
I'm trying new fertilizer because I won it in a competition! Another 20 farmers are doing the same thing - so now I'm not as scared to try!

Contests create prestige around trying something new ... so that it's not as scary or risky.
Other farmers see the results of what they are doing, trust them because they know them, and copy them!
In this raffle winners can get a 1/4 of their land set up with a great new drip irrigation technology!

Other farmers can go and check it out!

Firms are using the random 'winners' to put in place real-life demonstrations by showcasing the 'winners' test cases.
Amplify existing behaviors

Now let's look at an example where some farmers have started taking on new behaviors and we want to influence others too!
.... or when some of the farmers from the random contest are doing so well that you could start profiling them more!
Identify several high performing farmers and select them as contest winners
Or put a spotlight on the most successful random 'winners' from before
Raise their profile so much that others want to be like them!
Amplify through radio, awards, certifications, publicity ...
Supporting firms to use contests as a business tactic to market a new product/service or generate positive buzz around an existing product/service could be very interesting!