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SNAPSHOT

Agricultural Fair Opens New Markets for Farmers

Agricultural fair introduces farmers to input suppliers and credit facilities, opening up an untapped market.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Smallholder growers learn about new credit and financing options available offered by Trust Bank at the trade fair in Bende. The farmers were able to purchase necessary supplies and network with suppliers and financiers.

“We need another day like this after harvesting time for us to buy all these useful items...this has never happened in Bende before. This project is bringing meaningful development to this community.”

Josiah Mugano, smallholder farmer

Telling Our Story

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Despite increases in yields and sales, smallholder potato farmers in the remote Bende area are having trouble accessing the inputs they need to continue improving their crops.

The USAID Smallholder Technology and Access to Markets Program (STAMP) is working with both the rural producers and agricultural input suppliers to open up a new market, benefitting both parties.

To facilitate this new market opportunity, USAID-STAMP organized a small agricultural fair in with 16 suppliers, buyers, and banks, who displayed their products and services to 177 potato growers.

The program has been working with these growers since September 2011, helping them improve their production practices and linking them with a buyer, Seed Potato Co-op. Their remote location, however, has made it difficult for these growers to purchase additional inputs such as seed, fertilizers, and protective clothing.

At the recent event, these smallholder growers met with representatives from seed companies; fertilizer and chemical suppliers; irrigation and spray equipment suppliers; and packaging distributors to discuss prices and supply of inputs and equipment. The event helped both the farmers and suppliers realize the potential value of doing business together.

Suppliers expressed interest in tapping into this emerging market. Bank representatives showed willingness to extend credit to the farmers for the next potato growing season. The suppliers were also able to network amongst themselves, building relationships and discussing shared delivery options for goods bound for Bende.

For their part, the farmers were thrilled, purchasing a number of items on the spot and arranging for future purchases. The most popular items were irrigation spare parts, power generators, and potato packaging materials.

Josiah Mugano purchased seeds and pesticides and is looking forward to future events. “We need another day like this after the potato harvest. This project is bringing meaningful development to the community,” he said.

USAID-STAMP is confident events such as this one help build sustainable relationships that serve as a platform for additional suppliers and credit providers to begin working with smallholder farmers, further expanding the availability of finance and inputs, and increasing farmer productivity and incomes.