

Monthly Update – July 2011

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

STORAGE FACILITIES HELP PRESERVE PRODUCE

Cool storage facilities constructed by USAID-TAPP are helping to minimize postharvest losses throughout Tanzania. USAID Interim Mission Director Karen Turner recently visited cool storage facilities at Mkunazini in Stone Town, Zanzibar, where she was shown how farmers are now able to store produce for up to three days before taking it to market, minimizing losses and streamlining harvest to market efforts. Ms. Turner was impressed with how low-cost charcoal cool-stores constructed for client farms in Meli Nne and Fuoni enable the farmers to keep harvested produce cool and fresh on-site before being taken to market the following morning.

SMALLHOLDER PRICE REPORTING SYSTEM REFINED

USAID-TAPP, in collaboration with Tanzania Horticultural Association (TAHA), conducted a five day market and information survey to collect feedback from farmers who have been receiving market price short message services (SMS) from TAHA. On a weekly basis, TAHA compiles and sends market price information to its members (farmers and stakeholders) to inform them of price trends at various markets in Tanzania and Kenya. The survey interviewed 50 farmers from villages in Kilimanjaro and Tanga, and captured the usefulness of the market information being provided, whether farmers would be willing to contribute to the costs of the service, and farmers' suggestions for improvements. A report of the findings will be made available in the near future.

TRAININGS INTEGRATE HIV/AIDS PREVENTION WITH AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES

Numerous trainings were held this month on HIV/AIDS issues, health and nutrition, and agriculture techniques. In the Coast Region, a three day training session was held in conjunction with program partner UMATI. The trainings targeted small-scale farmers in two districts (Kibaha and Mkuranga) and a total of 25 farmers groups were reached with 370 participants (140 male and 230 female). The training covered several issues, including defining HIV and AIDS, prevention, common myths and misconceptions, stigmatization of people living with HIV/AIDS, and prevention of mother to child transmission.

USAID-TAPP also coordinated with the Zanzibar Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS (ZAPHA+) in conducting a Training of Trainers (ToT) for two ZAPHA+'s farmer groups. The ToT session was given to 50 members from Mahonda village. Training topics included cropping plans, nursery establishment, land preparation, tomato transplanting techniques and other good tomato production practices.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Khamis Mbarouk (holding baby) and other ZAPHA+ group members learn the benefits of using seed trays at nutrition and agriculture training in July.

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

“Increased food security through enhanced productivity”

TAPP is a five-year program designed to increase smallholder farmer incomes through enhanced productivity, crop diversification and improved market access.

Visit www.Tanzania-Agric.org for more information on upcoming activities and to receive copies of monthly bulletins and success stories.

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NEW VALUE CHAINS IDENTIFIED FOR SMALLHOLDER PRODUCTION

Vanilla is an expensive and relatively rare commodity with great international demand. Thanks to efforts made by USAID-TAPP this month, hundreds of smallholder farmers will soon benefit from their integration in the vanilla production value chain. A cooperation agreement was facilitated between two leading vanilla producing organizations - the Kilimanjaro Vanilla Growers Cooperative Society (CHAWAVAKI - Chama Cha Wakulima wa Vanilla Kilimanjaro) and the Farmers' Development Association (MAYAWA-Maendeleo ya Wakulima) in Kagera.

In negotiations between the organizations, it was agreed that extension services must be expanded to teach smallholder farmers improved methods of organic vanilla production and harvesting, small scale infrastructure and processing plant facilities must be improved, and marketing efforts must be spread to a wider audience.

It was decided that MAYAWA, more experienced in vanilla production, will provide technical assistance to CHAWAVAKI farmers and the two organizations will also collaborate their efforts in exporting processed vanilla products. The goal of the new partnership is for 530 farmers to produce over 98,000kg of vanilla to be processed and sold over the next five years.

STAFF INVESTIGATE NEW TECHNOLOGIES

USAID-TAPP staff attended a workshop in Arusha on agronomy which included a visit to Rijk Zwaan Afrisem, a leader in breeding vegetable varieties (tomato, African eggplant, and Chinese pepper) and producing reliable and affordable seeds for the Tanzanian agriculture sector. The week-long workshop, inclusive of interactive discussions, presentations and field visits, gave the participants a solid understanding of the role agronomists play in supporting Tanzanian smallholder farmers.

NEWLY CONSTRUCTED GREENHOUSES TO BE PLANTED

The construction of two greenhouses will soon benefit 26 farmers in the villages of Yoghoi and Magamba in Lushoto. A 52 meter long greenhouse in Yoghoi village will be handed over to 25 members (12 male and 13 female) of the Yoghoi Youth Group who will primarily be growing tomatoes. The other 52 meter greenhouse in Magamba village will be used by a lead client and a producer group that will also grow tomatoes. Greenhouses will be constructed in Malindi and Kwekangaga villages in Lushoto district in the coming months.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

New partnerships will process harvested vanilla for export.

TECHNOLOGY TOOLBOX



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Using seed trays is an easy and affordable way to ensure appropriate amounts of soil and water are being used when germinating plants. Seed trays are the best way to produce strong and healthy seedlings as their mobility allows farmers to move them out of potential threats like excessive sun and rain and makes transplanting the seedlings much easier. Additionally, seed trays also protect roots when transplanting, increasing the survival rate significantly.