

Monthly Update – October 2011

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

A RIVER BRINGS HOPE TO FARMERS

Sixty-five farmers from four USAID TAPP farmer groups will soon be reaping the benefits from one of the Coast Region rivers, the major Ruvu River. The farmers groups, which are all located along the river, are ready to tap the water source to use for pressurized drip irrigation in their newly established vegetables plots.

In October, training on raised beds was conducted in four villages in Kibaha district in Coast Region to farmer groups located along the river in Madimla, Kidongozero, Dawasa and Kwadosa villages. Prior to the training, a one acre size plot of land was prepared to be equipped with pressurized drip irrigation pipes. Hybrid vegetables seeds including tomatoes, sweet pepper and onions will be planted on the land after the pressurized drip installation is completed. By using Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), farmers are expected to sell the produce and earn about Tshs. 500,000 (US \$350) per harvest. A farmer who does not apply these types of agricultural innovations would likely earn an income of Tshs. 120,000 (US \$90) or less from the same size plot of land.

TRAINING ON BASIC AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES TO NEW FARMER GROUPS

USAID TAPP provided basic agricultural practices training to a total of 358 farmers in two districts of Arusha region this month. In Meru district, 218 farmers from the Mbuguni, Songambebe, Mwanzomwema and Ulonga farmer groups received training while in Arusha district training was given to 140 farmers from the Timbolo, Oitera and Sambasha farmer groups. The training taught participants how to identify and control common pests and diseases in *Solanaceae* crops, how to build raised beds to give soil enough moisture for plants, and the proper spacing to provide enough room for plants to grow. Farmers also learned how to use drip irrigation for better water management and application of starter solutions to give young plants energy to grow.

Use of GAPs on a one acre of land with tomato can produce between 30 to 60 tonnes per harvest depending on the types of seeds used and if proper management practices have been applied. Less than 4 tonnes would be harvested on a similar acre which GAPs was not applied.



Photo by Fintrac, Inc.

The Mbuguni Farmers Group prepares raised beds as part of their training on Basic Agricultural Practices. Raised beds help retain moisture in the soil, control soil erosion and promote roots penetration.



Photo by Fintrac, Inc.

Members of the Ulonga Farmers Group in Meru district sowing beetroots in trays during their Basic Agricultural Practices training. Trays help produce seedlings with a good, strong roots system ready for transplanting.

Various farmers groups from Unguja learned the importance of record keeping to better track crop production and harvesting, both quantity and quality. They also received training on the importance of crop rotation, which improves soil condition for a better harvest, and integrated pest management.

Meanwhile, the Jembe ni Mali Farmers Group in Kisakasaka village in Unguja completed the construction of their first charcoal coolers, which will improve postharvest conditions and retain crop quality before the crop is in the hands of buyers. These coolers are low-cost ways to preserve produce using readily-available materials. Farmers can store their produce in a charcoal cooler for up to three days so they can harvest more before going to market or wait for buyers to pick it up. With fresher and longer-lasting crops, farmers earn better prices for their products, directly translating to higher incomes.

ZANZIBAR MENTAL HEALTH GARDENS

A public private partnership with Barclays Bank is helping prepare land at the Zanzibar Mental Health Hospital to be a vegetable garden. Sorghum plants have been planted as live barriers to break wind patterns and for pest management. The joint effort to support will not only provide highly nutritious vegetables for the hospital kitchen, but will also be used as occupational therapy for patients who will learn how to work in the garden and sell the surplus. Various vegetables will be grown on the half an acre garden plot, including tomatoes, sweet pepper, okra, eggplant, Chinese cabbage and amaranth. Passion fruits and papayas will also be planted in the near future. Twelve patients are currently involved in the project.

FINNISH HORTICULTURE ORGANIZATION VISITS ZANZIBAR

A representatives from Finland's Farmers Fighting Poverty program managed by AgriCold paid a visit to Zanzibar and had a meeting with USAID TAPP and TAHA representatives to discuss initiatives to strengthen horticultural farmer groups and improve their marketing network. TAHA is working on how AgriCold could assist farmer groups in Zanzibar in creating markets linkages with consumers. The Finnish organization has been supporting farmers' organizations since 2007 in Canada and Europe (Belgium, France, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden). Between 2007 and 2010, AgriCold – a network of seven agri-agencies in Europe – has supported more than 180 farmers' organizations in 61 developing countries.



Photo by Fintrac, Inc.

Low-cost charcoal coolers, like this one, prevent postharvest by keeping temperatures low inside to preserve produce.



Photo by Fintrac, Inc.

Beds prepared on half an acre plot for vegetable growing at the Zanzibar Mental Health Hospital.

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

“Increased food security through enhanced productivity”

TAPP is a five-year program implemented by Fintrac Inc. in conjunction with TAHA, the Tanzania Horticultural Association. It is 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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