

Monthly Update – October 2012

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

OVERVIEW

USAID-TAPP is increasing incomes for smallholder farmers, improving nutrition, and expanding markets through agricultural innovation and commercialization. The program is part of Feed the Future, the US government's global hunger and food security initiative to break the cycle of hunger and poverty in the developing world. Feed the Future is focusing on the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT), a region the Tanzanian government has identified as the most conducive for agricultural growth. Working with our partners and the Government of Tanzania, USAID-TAPP is concentrating our efforts on selected crops and regions, including SAGCOT, to help transform the country's food security.

COMMUNITY BUILDING THROUGH YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE

With more and more youth from rural areas focusing on moving into bigger cities in search for greener pastures, the delicate art of agriculture is left to the imagination of the older generation. By getting youth involved in farming from an early age, the Kiwauuko Farmers Group from the Coastal region is not only teaching 20 youth, four females and 16 males, essential agricultural skills which will help fill the gap in this age-old tradition, but also giving them an opportunity to work on a banana farm, with each member taking turns to tend to the crops.

As part of its objectives in promoting horticulture as a sustainable business and as an alternative source of income, USAID-TAPP has contributed to the framework of the one acre farm through the contribution of banana suckers, a drip irrigation system, and technical assistance.

Seen as a waste of time by his peers, Jacob Constantine, the group leader, shrugs off the discouraging comments and embraces each week spent out in the fields immersed in the colorful green horizon of the 1,600 healthy bananas trees, happily weeding the rows and incorporating crop management in his weekly activities.

In the hopes of greater returns for their hard work and the Tsh 300,000 (\$191) spent on land preparation and an additional Tsh 20,000 (\$12.74) per week on diesel to run the generator for irrigation, the group is looking at a Tsh 16,000,000 (\$10,192) profit from total sales when they harvest in January 2013. To become one of the main suppliers for the mainland, the group leaders will also reinvest most of the revenue in the production of more banana trees, giving them a competitive advantage in the market.

CURBING THE RISING DEMAND FOR ONIONS IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

Standing at five meters tall, this sweet crystalline crop, better known as sugarcane, has been providing food security to the Sakas family for the last 10 years. After a visit to one of USAID-TAPP's field day in August of this year, where participants learned about Good Agriculture Practices (GAPs) for onion production, including raised beds, onion transplanting and drip irrigation, Boniface Sakas, the eldest son and an avid sugarcane producer from Turiani, Morogoro, joined forces with his three younger brothers to implement the practices on the family farm. Excited about their newfound skills and eager to cater to an international market with a high demand for onions, the quartet restructured their 10 acres of land in preparation for planting the precious crop. With a total of Tsh 20,000,000 (\$12,739) pumped into the drip irrigation system and an additional Tsh 2,500,000 (\$1,572) into seeds, the new project was complemented with technical assistance from USAID-TAPP's senior agronomist, Geoffrey Bakari, on



Photo by Fintrac Inc.
Jacob Constantine smiles proudly looking at his banana plantation, which boasts 1,600 healthy banana trees.

transplanting, raised bed, spacing, and crop management. Setting their eyes on the Comoros Island as their main buyer, the Sakas brothers will not only be curbing the rising demand for onions in this archipelago of volcanic islands off the south-east coast of Africa, but will also be amongst one of many onion farmers maintaining Tanzania's placement as the sixth onion producer on the continent.

In just under a month after installing the water system and balancing the soil properties, the Sakas brothers' land has filled out beautifully with green shoots sprouting from the ground. Sitting on one of Tanzania's highlands best suited for vegetable production due to the varied climatic conditions, reliable and well distributed rainfall, and possibilities for irrigation, the farm is expected to harvest 23,000 bags of onions by February 2013, raking in a profit of Tsh 138,000,000 (\$87,898) from total sales.

BASIC PRACTICES BEAT HARSH CONDITIONS TO PRODUCE LARGE YIELDS

Earlier this month, USAID-TAPP conducted a field day training on Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) for tomato production at Sanyaa Juu, Moshi. The event was attended by 175 farmer group representatives from nine villages and 50 stakeholder partners. The event gave farmers an opportunity to witness firsthand the startling differences in production and the rewards that one of their fellows, John Lesiriam, is reaping after only two and a half months of implementing them on his tomato crops.

After tireless days of building raised beds, identifying and controlling pests and diseases, and mastering the art of drilling irrigation for better water management, Lesiriam proudly smiles at the successful outcome of his first attempt of farming as he stares into the horizon and mentally counts the eight ridges draped in vines before recalling the stature of his farm when he first started.

Under the guidance of USAID-TAPP, Lesiriam invested a total of Tsh 2,902,930 (\$1,849) into the project. Through his perseverance and hard work, he was not only rewarded with a return of 2,500 kilograms of tomatoes, but has also managed to beat the odds and weather out Mother Nature's harsh conditions. Overflowing with red crops on his farm, Lesiriam still has plenty of tomatoes to harvest, bringing his total harvest to 3,000 kilograms by the end of next month.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.
Tomato crops trellising off the vines from John Lesiriam's tomato field located in Sanyaa Juu, Moshi.

This cash crop cultivated in the southern and northern highlands of the country doesn't only serve as a great source of nutrients for Lesiriam and other Tanzanian farmers, but also as a great source of income.

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. 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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This report is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the sole responsibility of Fintrac and does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.