

Monthly Update – December 2013

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 efforts on selected crops and regions to help transform the country's food security.

ENHANCING FOOD SECURITY THROUGH MARKET ACCESS



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Local buyers in Ruaha Mbuyuni sorting out tomatoes that were recently harvested by the Bilinguka Farmer Group in Malolo, Iringa.

During the month of December, USAID-TAPP's marketing team carried out extensive research on food availability and market opportunities in different regions across the country. During their visits to USAID-TAPP assisted farmer groups, the team provided valuable feedback on market trends and opportunities. Rural farmers provided with market information, technical assistance, and advice on crop diversification, stood a higher chance of meeting the required market standards at major outlets. Before USAID-TAPP intervention, most rural farmers would sell their products at village markets. After trying to sell as petty traders in major cities, consumers were quick to discriminate against their farm produce, seeing it as comparatively inferior because of poor quality, inadequate crop varieties, and having severe quality issues due to incorrect postharvest handling practices.

Now, thanks to the new technologies being taught in rural communities, farmers can compete in major markets with their high value crops; this change has not only raised the interest of local buyers, but also removed the consumers' stereotypical behavior towards farm produce. Small farmers located in Morogoro, Zanzibar, and along the coastal region were able to access larger, more quality demanding markets by adjusting their production to market needs, and supplying high quality produce, and the right volumes that buyers are requiring. By simply following market feedback, a number of farmer groups achieved significant results. In the Eastern zone, a number of farmer groups planted watermelon and fetched excellent profits with one of the groups obtaining Tsh 23,586,110 (\$15,023) for a 34,300 kgs harvest, other neighboring farmers producing tomatoes, brought in a cumulative profit of Tsh 9,333,650 (\$5,945).

USAID-TAPP emphasizes the importance of trainings so that market knowledge allows farmers to make strategic decisions which have greater impact on their income. This month, 160 project farmers from the Southern Highlands were given trainings on market access, with nine farmer groups profiting from market linkages. The Upendo PBG Farmers Group in Kilolo, Iringa made a profit of Tsh 657,830 (\$419) on a small plot of green pepper. Watermelon also prevailed in rural Iringa when the Faraja Idodi Farmers Group harvested 4,200 kgs from one acre under drip irrigation, making a profit of Tsh 981,250 (\$625).

FARMER INVESTMENTS IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN TIME OF RAINY SEASON

In Sub-Saharan Africa, 95 percent of the food is grown under rain-fed agriculture, therefore food production is subject to adverse weather conditions. For farmers to be wellprepared for their next farming cycle before the upcoming rainy season, they need to take initiatives, not only in land preparations, but in investing funds from previous harvests and personal savings into agricultural products and infrastructure. USAID-TAPP saw the largest investments figures from the eastern zone, where the Uvumbizi Farmer Group in Mlandizi, Pwani invested Tsh

5,000,000 (\$3,185) in drip irrigation kits, while the Shaabaa Kigugu Farmer Group in Chazi, Pwani invested Tsh 4,200,000 (\$2,675) in a fertilizer tank, a water pump, and seedling trays. The highest investment number came from the Nyota Mkozi Farmer Group in Vikindu, Pwani, whose members spent Tsh 8,700,000 (\$5,541) on the construction of a borehole and a generator.

STRENGTHENING LINKS IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND NUTRITION

For rural communities, health and nutrition are intricately linked with farming, food production, income generation, and community life. By increasing the agricultural productivity and promoting good nutrition through its program, USAID-TAPP is reducing the critical problems of hunger and malnutrition, especially among pregnant women, nursing mothers, and children in rural communities. In December, the project's health advisors trained 432 farmers—56 males and 376 females—on basic health and nutrition practices such as hygiene and consumption of nutritious foods. In order to increase access to nutritious foods and promote good nutrition among rural communities, USAID-TAPP works with project partners to establish numerous home gardens across the country. Global Service Corps established nine keyhole gardens in Arusha for 84 vulnerable people, and the Rungwe Smallholder Tea Grower's Association is establishing 475 home gardens in Mbeya to improve hundreds of households' nutrition.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

USAID-TAPP's health advisor, Alice Mwambanbale (right), training a group of female farmers in Arusha on basic health and nutrition practices.

In Morogoro, HACOCA established four community gardens (demo plots) and an additional three vegetable gardens were established at three primary schools in Kilosa, giving 93 orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) access to community gardens in Morogoro. Furthermore, USAID-TAPP health and nutrition specialists distributed 2,150 orange flesh sweet potato (OFSP) vines to four project demo plots in Arusha, Babati, and Njombe.

USAID-TAPP has also added two new partners, Njombe Agricultural Development Organization (NADO) and Iringa Mercy Organization (IMO). NADO will provide 3,780 smallholders with technical training necessary for the establishment and management of home gardens, while IMO will provide 5,700 smallholders with technical training for the establishment and management of home gardens, and an additional 5,700 individuals on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention trainings. NADO and IMO will benefit from additional support and supervision from USAID-TAPP agronomists and nutrition advisors who will assist their technical staff in the promotion of good agricultural practices among smallholders who manage home gardens. At the smallholder farm level, productivity growth increases rural income and food availability, which enables improvements in diet. Nutrition interventions delivered through key players in the agricultural sector can further strengthen the linkages between increasing agricultural production, and improving outcomes for the most nutritionally vulnerable—women and young children.

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“Increased food security through enhanced productivity”

USAID-TAPP is a five-year program implemented by Fintrac Inc. 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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