

Zambia's Cassava Value Chain Positioned to Continue Expanding



“Sustained growth of Zambia’s cassava success story is boosted by persistent cooperation among private and public sector stakeholders to develop effective marketing as well as production options”

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Misheck Nyembe, FSRP researcher, interviews traders in Chavuma, North West Zambia about market requirements for dried cassava for informal export to Angola

Strategic USAID and other Donor support in Zambia is helping grow private sector options to market cassava in local and regional markets, and thus sustain and expand income earning options for small farmers and traders

Challenge: The Zambia crop diversification and cassava production success story started in the early 1990’s with government movement away from a pan-territorial price policy for maize, and with efforts by many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to distribute cassava cuttings. Small farmers in the North especially expanded production and consumption of cassava but improved commercial markets for cassava for other human and industrial use were slow to emerge due to riskiness involved in stimulating a choreographed growth of both supply and demand for the types of cassava needed by commercial clients. Farmers are becoming aware and experimenting with new cultivars of cassava which have also emerged. This production potential, however, has a long ways to go in linking with potential human and industrial demands for cassava products so that small farmers can significantly expand profitable production and commercialization options for this crop.

Initiative: Recognizing the need to marry a development perspective looking out for the entire cassava vertical business chain with a stakeholder action task force to effectively orchestrate new opportunities, a value chain task force was formed in 2005. This has broad participation of private stakeholders and multiple donor support. The **Zambian Acceleration of Cassava Utilization (ACU) Task Force** is assisted by the USAID supported **Agricultural Consultative Forum (ACF)** and the **Food Security Research Project (FSRP)**, as well as by **Program Against Malnutrition (PAM)** which is supported by the Government of Zambia and a multi-Donor consortium. Equally important, private sector and other NGO stakeholder cooperation has been a persistent force to help systematically identify commercial market options and developing product standards as well as coordinating development efforts to assist further growth of the cassava value chain. A key private sector actor firm, **Tiger Feeds**, worked with the ACU to evaluate to potential of cassava as an additional ingredient in animal rations being manufactured for the Zambian market. Simultaneously other participants in the ACU cooperated to develop cassava trading standards.

Results: Private sector firms and development organizations continue to work on their own but also through the ACU task force. Importantly, task force members cooperate in seeking progressive solutions to evolving production, processing and marketing challenges and uncertainties, and thereby to gradually expand commercial supply for the value chain market niches. The payoff to is in helping achieve an income growth enhancing environment for small holders, which comes from combing the diagnostic assessment focus on system-wide constraints with the action orientation of task force stakeholders. Several definable outputs have helped establish a commercial foundation to support further growth: 1) draft cassava trading standards, poised for adoption by the Zambian Bureau of Standards; and 2) cassava-based livestock feed formulations suitable for Zambian production systems in the poultry, pig and dairy industries. Tiger Feeds has begun commercial purchases of cassava chips. Supplies of suitable chip supplies are still relatively limited, but domestic traders now have assured market if they can work with smallholder groups and traders to develop greater supply. Based on experience from Nigeria, the Government of Zambia has also begun to consider options for mandating use of a composite bread flour with a 10 % cassava flour content. Much work remains to be done to assist smallholders and small traders in the process of learning how to produce inputs required by different end users in the cassava value chain. Other industrial users are also experimenting with product formulations using cassava starch, whose production in Zambia will be easier to develop with greater supplies of reliable quality cassava chips for industrial users. Informal as well as formal regional trade will more easily grow with greater production and processing of cassava chips for making flour for human consumption. Most encouraging, and despite a modest production season for many crops in Zambia, cassava production for the 2006/2007 production season is estimated to have increased yet again, and to have surpassed the record output levels in the prior year, reaching a point of 17 percent above the 5 year Zambian average for cassava.