



Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities in Southern Africa

Input Trade Fairs

Input Trade Fairs are fast becoming the preferred method of agricultural input distribution in many areas where the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) works. Through this system, vouchers with a cash value are distributed to farmers identified as requiring assistance. These farmers gather together at the fairs and “purchase” agricultural inputs and seeds of their choice, using their own discretion on which items meet their specific needs. The fairs promote greater involvement of farmers in the decision making process and support local agricultural retail businesses.



Small-Scale Irrigation

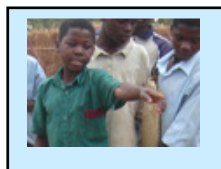
Very large yields are possible from small areas of land. However, all the right factors must be in place. One of these is good water management. Farm communities in the region require better ways to utilize water resources to maximize yields.



Therefore, FAO is promoting small-scale irrigation technology in the region. The hardware for drip irrigation and treadle pumps are provided to beneficiaries primarily for vegetable production. There is a drive to encourage communities to intensify vegetable production as vegetable crops have higher value than cereals, can be grown year round in most places, and are important components of nutritious diets, which are especially vital for HIV/AIDS patients. FAO supports irrigation extension services, where possible, and regularly provides extension workers with technical information.

Gardens

The southern African diet is heavily reliant on maize. Too much reliance on one crop for both subsistence and sale can precipitate crisis in times of crop failure. Through supporting gardens at schools, hospitals, Neighbourhood Care Points, and homesteads, FAO promotes introduction of life-long healthy and more diversified eating habits. Beneficiaries learn the value of crop rotation and aspects of the business of farming, such as marketing. High HIV/AIDS mortality rates have left millions of children orphaned. The intergenerational transfer of agricultural knowledge from adults to children is in jeopardy. Support to gardening activities ensures that children and parents



learn how to produce a diversified and balanced diet on a sustainable basis.

Conservation Agriculture

FAO is introducing new agricultural techniques that benefit both farmers and the environment. The three main techniques of Conservation Agriculture – minimal soil disturbance, building up crop residue, and rotating crops – allows organic matter to build up in the soil. This results in greater retention of water and nutrients and creates better micro-flora environments in soils. Improved soil means increased yields. These techniques can be particularly beneficial in the southern African region where farmers have little working capital and where the HIV/AIDS pandemic is hitting farm families particularly hard. Savings in terms of labour and lower farming costs over time helps families that are losing productive farm labour and becoming increasingly burdened by medical and care expenditures for ill family members.

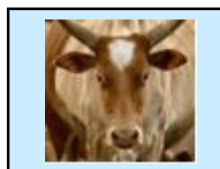


Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools

Children between the ages of 12 and 18 are taught agricultural and life skills at special schools. With the number of orphans and child-headed households increasing, these schools help fill knowledge gaps left by the premature death of parents. Farming skills are combined with life skills lessons, such as personal hygiene, money management, gender, and HIV/AIDS. WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, Peace Corps, and NGOs are partners in the project, with WFP providing food for the children who attend the schools.



Transboundary Animal Diseases



Controlling transboundary diseases is important for protecting livelihoods of livestock farmers and protecting the livestock industry. FAO is playing a key role in the control, surveillance and prevention of transboundary animal diseases in southern Africa, in particular Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP). FAO increases awareness of transboundary diseases and supports active animal disease surveillance and data collection for timely decision making. It also assures the use of proper standards and procedures for diagnostic testing and supplies high-quality vaccines.

FAO Succeeds Through...

Coordination and Sharing of Technical Expertise...

FAO helps coordinate agricultural interventions in the region and provides up to date technical advice to the various actors in the agricultural sector. During crisis and post-crisis periods, FAO assists by working together with governments and the many non-governmental organizations intervening in the agricultural sector. This coordinated approach allows continuous dialogue and strategic thinking, helps avoid gaps and overlaps in providing assistance and optimizes impact.

Monitoring and Analyzing Trends...

FAO is a key player in measuring and reporting on the state of food security and agricultural outputs in the region. FAO and WFP carry out Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions (CFSAM) that take place during cropping seasons upon government request. FAO joins agencies as part of regional and national Vulnerability Assessment Committees (VACs), which regularly carry out field surveys to assess food insecurity status and other vulnerabilities of populations. And through its regular contact with farmers and monitoring of their outputs, FAO is able to provide regular agricultural updates to stakeholders.

Innovation...

FAO is an avenue for new technologies and a conduit for cutting edge information. Introduction of Conservation Agriculture techniques and the use of Digital Pens in surveillance of Transboundary Animal Diseases are two examples of innovations taking place in southern Africa.

Working with Others...

FAO works with others. Partnerships are formed with governments, other UN agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Addressing Cross-cutting Issues...

In southern Africa the HIV/AIDS pandemic touches all aspects of life, and is having a particularly detrimental effect on agriculture. FAO ensures that all its activities in the region are sensitive to this environment and applies many activities that directly address the effects of the disease on farmers, orphaned and vulnerable children, women, and communities.

Meeting Today's Urgent Needs with an Eye on Tomorrow...

FAO's role in emergencies is to protect and promote the livelihoods of households vulnerable to food insecurity. FAO works on the basis that the complex factors that have precipitated a decline in livelihoods in many parts of southern Africa require not just short-term emergency inputs, but an effective linking of emergency responses with sustainable long-term development.

Working from Grassroots to Policy Levels...

Field staff of FAO and its partner agencies work hand in hand with farmers and extension workers at the grassroots level. At the same time, the agency keeps abreast of global trends, advises on and influences agriculture-related policies at national, regional, and global levels.



FAO emergency and rehabilitation activities take place in eight countries across southern Africa, as well as Tanzania.

In 2005, FAO's emergency and rehabilitation activities reached 88,000 vulnerable households, or over half a million people, in seven SADC countries. More than 40,000 children at 90 schools were also assisted and thousands of orphans. Thousands more benefited from HIV/AIDS awareness activities and training.

FAO would like to thank the following donors for currently supporting their emergency and recovery work in southern Africa:

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