

Agriculture Coordination Working Group Journal



The Emergency Rehabilitation and Coordination Unit (ERCU) of the FAO in Zimbabwe

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Articles drawn from presentations compiled by the following organizations

- **National Guidelines for the 2011/12 Agriculture Support Programme**
- **Small holder Purchase Patterns: Findings from the 2010/11 Input Voucher Programme**
- **Report on Urban Agriculture**
- **Contribution of Urban Agriculture to livelihoods**



To download full presentations, and to access other information on agriculture, visit the website www.acwg.co.zw

Next ACWG meeting

Date: Sept 29th, 2011
Time: 9.00am
Venue: Celebration Centre
162 Swan Drive
Borrowdale, Harare.

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NEWS

Data collection for the 2011/12 Agriculture Season

In an effort to coordinate agriculture support programmes for the 2011/12 season the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is compiling a database of all agriculture interventions to be implemented during the aforesaid period. A data collection tool has been developed, and circulated to all partners. All NGOs yet to submit information to FAO are urged to contact Kudzayi Kariri (kudzayi.kariri@fao.org).

NGOs are reminded to observe protocol by notifying relevant provincial and district authorities of their programme activities.

FAO Agriculture photo contest

The FAO photo contest is ongoing, the theme is agricultural markets, all interested stakeholders are reminded to submit their photographs by the 31st of October 2011. For further details please contact Caroline Hungwe; caroline.hungwe@fao.org

Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) 2012 Workshop

The workshop is expected to review achievements, challenges and gaps in humanitarian response in 2011 and factor lessons

learnt into the context analysis and scenarios building for 2012. The workshop will be held from 6-7 September 2011.

Training on Conservation Agriculture

The African Conservation Tillage Network is offering international training courses on Conservation Agriculture. The training aims to contribute to building the capacity of frontline agricultural extension and research staff in the development and promotion of conservation agriculture technologies.

TRAINING SCHEDULE AND VENUE

Location	Date	Application deadline	Training language
Arusha, Tanzania	15 - 25 Aug 2011	15th July 2011	English
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	12 - 21 Sept 2011	12 Aug 2011	French
Lusaka, Zambia	1 - 10 Oct 2011	1 Sept 2011	English

The cost is USD 2,500 per participant.

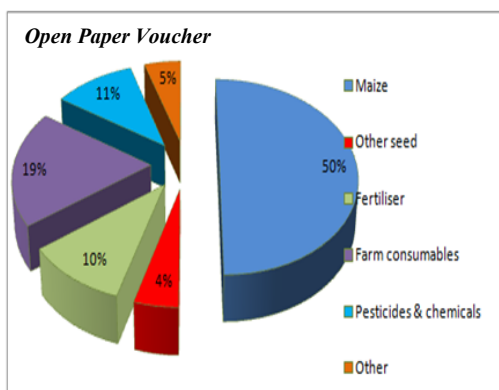
Apply online: www.act-africa.org/cacourse/onlinereg.html or contact info@act-africa.org

Small holder Purchase Patterns Findings from the 2010/11 Input Voucher Programme - PRP

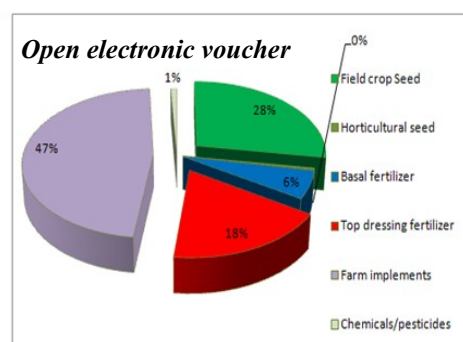
By Erica Keogh -tel: (04) 795768 - erica@grm.co.zw

The Protracted Relief Programme (PRP) presented findings on the purchasing patterns of farmers that received vouchers during the 2010/11 season. The purchases varied across districts based on agro ecological regions.

An analysis of the 20 districts where open vouchers were distributed shows the majority of beneficiaries purchased maize seed regardless of suitability of the agro ecological region to maize production. About 50% of voucher expenditure went to maize seed, of which 33% was Hybrid, 4% OPV while 63% was unspecified. This was followed by farm consumables at 19%, fertilizer at 10% which comprised 55% top dressing, 19% Compounds while 26% was unspecified.



PRP open electronic vouchers were distributed in Mudzi, Bula-wayo peri-urban,



Zvishavane and Mutare urban districts. The bulk of purchases (47%) went towards farm equipment, followed by field crop seeds (28%) and fertiliser (18%).

Timeliness of programme activities is critical to ensure positive project results; other critical areas include clear definition of roles of all stakeholders and the need for simplified procedures during the redemption process.

Challenges	Actions
Timing	Start Early
Complex redemption procedures	Simplify procedures
Record keeping	Need for improved training
Security & storage at retailer level	Capacity building for all involved
NGO role	Needs to be clarified.
Poor Communication	Improved networking

August 2011 Price Watch

Bucket of maize grain (17.5Kg):	USD 4.00	(Unchanged since July 2011)
Super White maize meal (10Kg):	USD 6.65	(was USD 6.75 in July 2011)
Roller Meal (10Kg):	USD 4.40	(Unchanged since July 2011)
Big Bundle of leafy vegetables:	USD 2.00	(was USD4.00 in June 2011) Small: R1 (Unchanged since Apr 2011)



National Guidelines for the 2011/12 Agriculture Support Programme

By Ministry of Agriculture Mechanisation and Irrigation Development - Reston Muzamhindo tel: (04)797432

Agriculture support programmes for the 2011/12 agriculture season should focus on supporting farmers through utilising input and output markets. It is proposed that farmers should not receive inputs for free, but contribute towards the inputs through the use of subsidised vouchers or/and contract farming arrangements.

The overall objective of the 2011/12 Agriculture Support Programme is to increase production and productivity of small holder farmers in Zimbabwe, improving food security, livelihoods and on farm incomes.

More specifically the objectives of the Programme are to:

- Target surplus production beyond household food security requirements.
- Enable graduation of farmers from one socio economic group to the next.
- Decrease dependency on annual input support programmes
- provide livestock support in Natural Regions IV and V to enable targeted households to generate income to meet their household food requirements.

Key Features of the Programme

- Providing farmers with access to agricultural inputs using subsidised voucher mechanisms.
- Providing farmers with extension support to ensure increased agricultural productivity and optimum use of inputs.
- Alternatively providing farmers with sufficient numbers of small livestock to generate sufficient income for livelihoods protection and promotion.
- Linking farmers with private sector companies in order to access output markets and to access credit facilities.
- The private sector will be encouraged to ensure that retail outlets have sufficient inputs for the exchange of vouchers for inputs. The implementing partners will document procedures, processes, and monitor results from the Programme as part of building greater public and social accountability

Group A Households:

will be supported by the Department of Social Welfare and the United Nations World Food Programme through humanitarian cash transfers or food for assets programmes.

Group B1 & B2 Households:

will receive a subsidized partially open voucher (restricted to agriculture inputs). The minimum value of the voucher is US\$160. Households will be required to make a contribution of 10% on the value of the voucher received. Households will be required to make a contribution of 10% on the value of the voucher received. Farmers that fail to pay at the beginning of the season may make repayment at the end of the season

Group C farmers:

will receive vouchers based on contractual agreements with the private sector. Farmers will make a 100% repayment on the value of the inputs received at interest free rates.

The Role of Extension Services

The role of extension services is to provide technical & advisory services to farmers. Extension services will work with the NGOs to maintain a system of beneficiary records detailing:

- Province; District ; Ward;
- Name; ID Number; Sex
- Vouchers/Inputs received;
- Date of receipt of inputs;
- Date of planting

The low levels of agricultural productivity among smallholder farmers requires extension and training support to be promoted to ensure optimum use of inputs. The use of Conservation Agriculture (CA) will be promoted, market linkage and contract growing programmes will be promoted to enhance farmers' income and strengthen rural economies.

Monitoring and evaluation of the programme

A committee chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture Mechanisation and Irrigation Development will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Programme. The committee will be in charge of commissioning studies, research and impact assessments. Existing structures from National to Ward level will support NGOs and Communities in the identification of beneficiaries and distribution of vouchers to ensure transparency, accountability and non-partisan distribution. The monitoring and reporting structure will start from the Ward/District/ community to the National level.

Categorisation of Rural Households

Category	Targeted households
A: Poor households with limited land and labour	12,161
B1: Poor households, with access to labour and land, but no cash. Households can gain food security through cereal production support, or improved garden or livestock production in combination with extension	321,045
B2: Emerging small holder farmers with land and labor but cash constraints. Households can increase productivity, to achieve food and income security. Increase cereal production and/or sale of agricultural (including livestock and garden) produce and improve livelihood through sale of agricultural produce	470,585
C: Farmers that have labor and land, but no credit access. Support engagement into market linkage arrangements with private sector and produce surplus.	68,923
TOTAL	872,714

Report on Urban Agriculture - Joint Initiative

By Richard Nyamanhindi - tel : 0772432201- rnyamanhindi@zw.mercycorps.org

The Joint Initiative (JI) conducted a study to review the impact of low input gardens (LIG) in urban areas. The purpose of the review was to identify international trends and developments on urban agriculture (UA) and to review the changing programme context in Zimbabwe.

Contributions of Urban Agriculture:

Urban Agriculture contributes to food security, employment, waste management, long-term nutritional health of children and general community well being. Key features of UA include low start-up costs, short production cycles, and high yields per unit of time and unit of land and water. It also enables direct access to a diversity of nutritionally-rich foods, savings on food bills and income from sales. It is the easiest way to secure access to a healthy diet that contains adequate macro- and micro-nutrients, school gardens are a proven means of promoting child nutrition.

Impact of Low Input Gardens

The traditional urban garden was devoid of any diversity with covo or chomolia as the main vegetables grown and consumed by the household. NGO support towards household gardens widened the range of vegetables a family can grow by providing seed for other different types of vegetables that include carrots, tomatoes, onions, spinach among others. JI households with low input gardens were able to more than double the area planted for household gardens (from an average of 6 – 15m²) and increased

the net incremental benefit from their investment from 4% to 98%. Urban communal gardens appear to offer advantages over household gardens given the prohibitive cost of water and small size of the individual household gardens based solely on cost benefit analysis).

Gaps in current approaches

Training and promotion of preparation of new vegetable varieties to encourage dietary diversity. This includes training in low-cost methods of post-harvest preservation and processing, improved training on integrated pest management (low-cost, non-chemical pest control methods), marketing and demand-driven cropping calendars, record-keeping, costing and pricing and linking with micro finance. The social benefits have not been adequately captured and documented. Security, opportunities for integrating small livestock production (especially rabbits), opportunities for increased integration of herbs and fruits into urban gardens.

Conclusions

There is need to clearly state the objectives and the expected outputs and outcomes for each project. Interventions need to be tailored to the needs and capacity of the targeted households, the characteristics of the local environment as well as specific objectives of the project. It is important to understand that there are no 'one size fits all solutions.

Contributions to Urban Agriculture to Livelihoods - Municipal Development Partnership

By Takawira Mubvami - tel : (04) 774385 - tmubvami@mdpafrika.org.zw

The Urban Agriculture impact Assessment was carried out with the following objectives:

- To establish the contribution of UA to household income, nutrition, livelihoods and poverty reduction
- To assess contribution of UA to HIV mitigation
- To assess gender dynamics
- To establish typical size of plots and type of activities
- To assess production levels /opportunity costs
- To determine alternatives to UA

Methodology and Sample

The study was carried out in four urban centers (Bulawayo, Harare, Bindura and Gweru) and data was collected through a desk study, key informant interviews and a structured questionnaire. A purposive sample of 400 households (100 household per city) practicing UA were interviewed with 90% of the households interviewed located in high density suburbs.

Preliminary Findings

- The UA production system was dominated by maize (95%, off plot) and leafy vegetables (96%, on plot) which were grown mainly for household consumption. 28.1% households were self sufficient in maize and 51.4% in vegetables.
- Household monthly income was between USD 35 -150.
- UA contributed positively to livelihoods and poverty reduction through reduced budget expenditure on maize and vegetables

- Contribution of UA to HIV mitigation and nutrition was negligible
- UA was dominated by women.
- UA was commonly practiced on fallow public land (off plot) and back yards on plot). On plot were generally smaller (<100m²) than off plots (40- 8000m²).
- 50% of the households purchased agriculture inputs

Challenges

- Restrictive urban policies and regulations;
- Lack of organization and representation of urban producers;
- Limited access to land, credit and financing; insecure land tenure and support services
- Inadequate technologies and management practices
- High production risks in the urban context (e.g. pollution, theft)

Recommendations

- There is a need to document our experiences in order to draw lessons learnt.
- Reorganize urban farmers.
- Improve security and access to resources e.g. land, water funding and training.
- Engage policy makers and relevant stakeholders to lobby and advocate for policy review on urban agriculture .