FACT SHEET

Project: The dynamics of tomato value chain in Tanzania: A case of Kilolo District and Dodoma Municipality

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Project description
The leading tomato producing areas in Tanzania are Iringa with an acreage of 4,248 ha, Tanga (1,289 ha), Kilimanjaro (900 ha), Mbeya (380 ha), and Dar es Salaam (Temeke district) (353 ha) (MAFS 2002). Other regions with significant tomato production include Morogoro, Arusha, Mwanza and Dodoma. However, much of the tomato production is for the market and involves many actors in the process who are not necessarily confined to one geographical area. In addition, tomato marketing is a delicate venture due to the fact that tomatoes are perishable.

The major purpose of this project is to understand the nature of communication and knowledge dissemination within the tomato value chain and find an innovative intervention to improve the marketing of tomatoes in the study areas.

Description of the research
So far, the project has already carried out an exploratory visit, stakeholder analysis and identification, as well as an inception workshop and baseline survey. Analysis of baseline data and report writing has been completed. Other activities include feedback meeting attended by various tomato value chain actors, participatory mapping to identify nodes and key actors in the tomato value chain, participatory assessment of the effectiveness of the intra and inter communication between nodes and key actors within the tomato value chain, participatory examination of communication linkages between various actors in the tomato value chain nodes, participatory examination of communication and knowledge dissemination pathways among various actors in the tomato value chain, and finally a feedback meeting for the various actors has been conducted.
The project targets to partly support four Master-degree students at SUA, one is already writing his dissertation, the other has her proposal approved and the remaining two will be admitted during the 2013/2014 academic year.

One of the tomato market collection centers in Mazombe division in Kilolo district, Iringa Region Tanzania (Photo: Siwel Nyamba)

**Expected outputs**

- Current status of tomato production and information sharing among actors in the tomato value chain established
- Communication and knowledge dissemination pathways in the tomato value chain identified
- Efficacy of communication and knowledge dissemination pathways in the tomato value chain examined
- Innovative communication and knowledge dissemination pathways in the tomato value chain established.
- Capacity and empowerment of various actors in the tomato value chain enhanced

**Preliminary results**

One major problem in the tomato value chain is the disproportionate power middlemen have over other actors due to the control of information they have on the market situation. They are always fully informed on the current prices and can therefore use this to their benefit. Farmers complained that market middlemen hold leadership positions in the markets, and they are more interested in profit making than serving farmers.

Also, it was reported that there are no clear communication networks with regard to tomato production and marketing in the village. Most tomato producers received low prices because they did not know who to contact to get price information.

Dodoma Municipality has UZIMA radio. One of its main mandates is to broadcast agricultural programmes but people in Bihawana complained that its frequencies did not reach them. There are plans to start Ward Agricultural Resource Centers (WARC) which will help smallholder farmers to easily source agricultural knowledge. In Ilula, on the other hand, there is a village based tele-centre but the operators complained that farmers were not eager to use it as they trust middlemen and stockists as reliable sources of information.

Most farmers mentioned that availability of tomato seed is a serious problem. Available tomato seeds are infected with diseases and prone to insect and pest attack. Farmers also admitted that without group solidarity, it is very difficult to do tomato farming in terms of collective purchase of inputs and forming a marketing strategy to ensure better prices through economies of scale.
In Dodoma, for instance, a tomato production group of 30 people was formed to overcome the market problem. Currently, tomatoes are planted and harvested on the same dates and sold together. Also, the group scouts for markets in Dodoma, Tabora and Dar es Salaam and have direct contacts with buyers in these towns. A group member is sent to look at markets in these towns, sometimes making phone calls and liaising with business people to get the actual prices. However, problems include lack of telephone charging facilities and lack of formal mechanisms for linking and networking with various actors to ease communication within the tomato value chain.

Farmers in Makang’wa and Mbabala mentioned the presence of “Tsunami” and “Yeboyebo” tomato mite attacks. Farmers complain of the poor quality of agri-inputs, especially tomato seed, insecticide, acaricides and fungicides. It would seem that most farmers dislike the trade liberalization policy, and preferred the government to exercise control over these issues.

Lack of timely agricultural information is one of the constraints to small-scale agricultural production and discussions with farmers clearly showed that tomato production was better suited for economically well-off farmers who have enough capital to finance the purchase of agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, herbicides, seeds, fungicides and pesticides; but also meet transport costs.

**Recommendations**

- There is need to strengthen the communication between different actors in different nodes
- There is need to enhance access to market information through improved communication

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