

THE AGRICULTURAL CONSULTATIVE FORUM
Advisory Note to the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

Heading and Title:	Cassava Utilization in Zambia
Initiating Institution:	Agricultural Consultative Forum
Minister's Action:	Adoption of ACF Recommendations on Cassava Utilization in Zambia
Rational/Background:	<p>Cassava is a crop that is widely cultivated in the Northern, Luapula and Northwestern Provinces of Zambia. A number of programmes/projects have been initiated to promote cassava cultivation and utilization in Zambia. It is against this background that the ACF, in collaboration with the Zambia Agribusiness Technical Assistance Centre (ZATAC) held a stakeholder meeting on Cassava Utilization on the 8th of June, 2004.</p> <p>This meeting identified a number of constraints that are currently affecting cassava production and processing in Zambia that need to be resolved. These can be broken down as follows:</p> <p>Research and Extension Constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average yield levels for cassava remain low in Zambia, way below new-variety yield potentials, both under farm conditions and professional management. • Low dissemination of improved cassava technology • Staffing of the Root and Tuber Improvement Team is poor. • Extension service provided to cassava growers in Zambia is inadequate. • Funding to cassava research and extension service providers is insufficient. <p>Marketing Constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cassava marketing initiatives remain limited. The majority of the crop is sold fresh or dried minus chipping or milling. • Processing of cassava remains limited. • No significant input and/or sales to animal feed millers. • Industrial applications largely replaced by imported substitutes. South African export market currently dominated by South-east Asia. • Lack of market development and promotion for cassava. • Logistical constraints resulting from wide production distribution. <p>Policy Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government focus on cassava as a food security crop.

Resource Requirements:	There is need to work out the resource requirements for the interventions proposed below to enhance the performance of the cassava sub-sector. Other key stakeholders, from the private sector and NGOs are also expected to play a key role.
Recommendation	<p>A number of recommendations were made during the meeting to promote the cassava sub-sector in Zambia. The ACF recommends that the Government adopts these recommendations to move the cassava sub-sector forward. The recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased staffing and promotion of training in the Root and Tuber Improvement Team • Government to spearhead research in cassava production • Government to spearhead the multiplication and distribution of released higher yielding cassava varieties • Formulation of policies that promote the exploration and expansion of commercial opportunities associated with cultivation of cassava. This includes the possible utilization of cassava as a substitute for maize in stock-feed manufacturing and export of cassava starch to the lucrative South African Market. • Further promotion of cassava in non-traditional cassava growing areas of the country. This should be accompanied with adequate dissemination of information on cassava processing.
Impact	Increased food security in the country, increased incomes through increased commercial utilization of cassava and potential increased foreign exchange earnings from cassava starch exports.
Other Options Considered:	Continuation of the current status quo in the cassava sub-sector. This translates into continued low yields of cassava, promotion of cassava as mainly a food security crop, lack of cassava-processing research, poor staffing and lack of training in the Root and Tuber Improvement Team and poor provision of extension services to cassava growers. This will see the continued lagging of cassava yields below potential higher yields.

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