

KZN

CASSAVA FACT FINDING MISSION

10 – 11 May 2022 | Empangeni

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Overview



On the 10-11 May 2022, the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) in collaboration with the Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, organised a cassava market access farm visit and information day at Empangeni district. This was under the ongoing cassava value chain project titled “Feasibility Assessment: A value chain analysis of the cassava sub-sector in South Africa” funded by the Agricultural Bio-Economy Innovation Partnership Programme (“ABIPP”) of the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), on behalf of the Department of Science and Innovation (“DSI”). The project is implemented in partnership with the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), Trade & Industrial Policy Strategies (TIPS) and FABCO, a primary farmers’ cooperative.

Other stakeholder that participated in the market information day include KZN LED, officials from various tiers from the province, cassava farmers, cassava processors and a trader De Abreu Egidio Fernandes from Gauteng.

The purpose of the fact-finding mission was to assess potential market access for KZN cassava farmers to supply the proprietor of ‘Republic Fisheries and Meat Market’. Mr. Fernandes is a retailer of an assortment of indigenous and niche food items, including fresh cassava tubers and cassava derived products.

Many farming households in the Empangeni area, planted cassava but were constrained by access to a sustainable market. Most of the cassava is locally consumed by households although some sell it in Eskaawain market and a few traders who take it on bakkies to other unknown places.

According to Egidio Fernandes, his store has been importing fresh cassava tubers and other cassava derived products from other countries, including Mozambique and Malawi for the last ten (10) years. He was equally shocked that there were farmers in South Africa cultivating cassava.

“I am happy of this development. We would should procure 100 kg of cassava on a weekly basis” he said.

The KZN scene on cassava agro-processing has been on the uptake. Some of the cassava processors, have managed to produce cassava flour, herbs, bread etc.



The team assessing farmers capacity to supply interested markets. Farming households in this area plant cassava.

According to local communities, a perception existed that cassava products were poisonous and unhealthy. It is for this reason that the NAMC together with its partners, conducted a market information day, to create awareness on cassava as a source of food security, income generation and industrial processing into various products.

Cassava Agro-processors

GKMS Value Adding Cluster represented by Mr Benjamin Koranteng shows off one of their products.



Market Potential

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*I am happy
of this
development.*

*We would procure 100 kg
of fresh cassava tubers
on a trial basis.*

De Abreu Egidio Fernandes, Owner of Republic
Fisheries and Meat Markets, Gauteng.





Market Access

The consumption and industrial use of cassava products is eminent in South Africa. Cassava is consumed in various forms, including fresh tubers, flour (infused or not, with other ingredients), dried tubers, cassava leaves, ... etc. To enhance market access for the local producers, there is a need to establish linkages with the existing traders, facilitate agro-processing in communities where it is produced, and create more awareness about the crop - it's many uses as well as benefits.

Farmers in uMhlathuze local municipality, King Cetshwayo District Municipality have adopted the various cassava varieties bred by the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and are producing cassava in relatively large quantities. Given the fact that most of the cassava products (especially tubers – fresh/ dried, and flour) sold in niche markets e.g. Yoeville market in Johannesburg and retail stores in Tshwane metropolitan are imported from neighbouring countries, the NAMC deemed it necessary to ensure that produce from local producers also gains more access into the formal market.

Fresh cassava tubers produced in UMhlathuze local municipality are mainly sold informally on the roadsides in the evenings and during the free market held in Eskhawini, every Saturday. Therefore, with the assistance of principals at uMhlathuze Local Municipality and representatives of cassava farmers who formed a cluster, the project team initiated an interactive session with the trader (Fernandes) during which a field trip to ascertain the extent to which cassava is grown in local community. Fernandes and other delegates appreciated the good cassava fields and the project team is optimistic that a formal trading arrangement will be achieved between the producers (farmers' cluster) and Fernandes (the trader).

The implementation of the project entails a number of activities, which are generally on track as per the project plan. However, whereas Covid-19 outbreak disrupted the implementation of some activities at the start of the project the lifting of the stringent regulations enabled the research to get back on track

Dr. Moses Lubinga



Funders

Technology Innovation Agency, as the main funder of the value chain cassava study, heard first account of historical cassava farming in the area including its economic and healthy diet contribution

Obakeng Maema, TIA



KZN DARD

The KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, was represented by Hlengiwe Ndlovu. Through one of its entity, Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA), the department has been able to assist emerging agro-processors on cassava with funding. Finding markets outside the province was greatly welcomed.

Hlengiwe Ndlovu, KZN DARD