

KWA-ZULU NATAL CASSAVA INFORMATION DAY

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On 29 September 2022 the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) organised cassava Information Day at Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, uMhlabuyalingana Local Municipality. The purpose of the day was to provide more information on the benefits of the cassava plant and to find out from the farmers how they plant and process cassava, the type of cassava they plant and the source of the plant.

Dr Michael Bairu, representative from the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) indicated the value proposition, justifications and cassava production considerations. He explained that South Africa is a water scarce country and more than 20% of households experience food insecurity, malnutrition, unemployment and poverty and cassava can be a solution to all these, furthermore cassava provides much better economic outcome for smallholder farmers.

On the value proposition of cassava, it is a climate resilient crop-it is adaptable to diverse climate and soil. Cassava is easy to cultivate and does not require modern storage and cold chain technologies since the mature roots of the plant can be stored in the soil for up to two years. Currently, there is an increasing demand for the crop and this shows that there is potential for growth.

There are diverse uses of cassava such as human consumption, animal feed and industrial starch. For human consumption, the end products of cassava include porridge, chips and flour amongst other things. Cassava leaves, peels and pulps can be used for animal feed and for industrial purposes cassava can be used to make food additives, sweeteners and medicine.



Figure 1: Dr Bairu from the ARC presenting on the Cassava production

Dr Moses Lubinga from the National Agricultural Marketing Council touched base on the value chain analysis of the cassava sub-sector in South Africa. He indicated that cassava can play a major role in employment creation, food security, poverty reduction, food nutrition, inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods for farmers.

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Figure 2: Mr Sindisile Tembe giving Cassava speech on behalf of the farmers

Cassava value chain has a wide range of business opportunities such as production of phytosanitary approved planting materials, production of cassava tubers for food security and industrial use, agro-processing, logistics, capacity building and financial services.

“Today we have received additional knowledge on the little that we had because we were mostly farming for consumption purposes, now we have been informed about the value chain of cassava and realised that it is a project we can embark on to generate income. More importantly, we would love government-farmer partnership to be strong so that farmers can be involved the planning and implementation of the project because we would like to have a medium to long-term plan with regards to cassava since we can see that it has a growth potential” said Mr Sindisile Tembe, a cassava farmer.

At the end of the session there was cassava tasting whereby the farmers prepared different types of dishes from cassava.



Figure 3: Cassava tasting



Figure 4: Cassava display