

Ugandan Blog: 2014

By Anne Dennig¹

We had a really interesting time in Uganda this week where we saw a lot of work on value addition. AgriNet has a network of 286 TSS agents in Eastern and Northern Uganda and offices in Tororo, Lira, Pader, Gulu and Kampala. This is a huge network and we could only visit a small part to look at the developments at: AgriFeeds in Tororo; the cassava sourcing area around Soroti; and the white sorghum operation in Lira. At the end of the week William Hoyle joined us, and with Clive and Paul he visited various buyers and investors in Kampala. One of these buyers, Jakana, is interested in sourcing oranges, so we followed this up with the Soroti network.

AgriFeeds



Jacinta is the manager of AgriNet's agro-processing plant, AgriFeeds. She uses the AgriNet farmer networks to source for raw ingredients. AgriFeeds is renting their processing buildings and stores in Tororo but has plans to build their own processing plant. To do this they will need capital, and therefore they are keen to toll process their feeds and flour through TSS. AgriFeeds, with help from an ABiTrust grant, has been scaling up their production of animal feeds and maize flour. The two products are linked; to process the maize flour the de-hulling process leaves maize

germ, which is used as one ingredient of the feeds. As well as new milling, mixing and weighing equipment there is now a laboratory equipped with an aflatoxins kit, moisture metre etc. AgriFeeds has applied for UBS certification for both animal feeds and maize flour. This will mean that they will be able to export the feeds and expand their Ugandan market for maize flour.

Cassava Collection and Milling in Kyere



Since 2010 Moses has built up a regular supply of cassava flour from Kyere to several buyers including Kemwa Foods in Nakuru. Kemwa uses the cassava flour to make Jari, a popular inexpensive porridge with a large demand from the many shops that serve this large "base of the pyramid" market.

Moses travelled with us to Soroti to discuss with Engineer Opio (who sources and mills the cassava) how to upscale the supply of cassava flour. To do this the Engineer's Soroti network needs to organize more TSS agents in Kyere to link with the cassava farmers. These are smallholders who would not normally be able to export their commodity. Therefore bringing the farmers together, adding value to their crop by milling, and then enabling them to export, is a big achievement for TSS. It returns a better price to the farmer, earns a good commission for the network, and the buyers are happy with the product and the service.

Our first visit to Kyere was just after the sun had set. The mill was processing the

¹ Edited by Anne Dennig in 2014

dried cassava for Moses' deal but the electricity had failed and the Engineer had to run the mill on a diesel engine. The electricity had been off for most of the day and he was working late because he was only able to operate one mill instead of his usual three. This additional cost of diesel due to power cuts is a major headache for the Engineer. The next day we returned to meet with William Olir, the Chairperson of Kyere Subcounty Farmers' Produce and Marketing Cooperative Society, to discuss how to source a regular two weekly supply of 10 tons of cassava. The Engineer will be paid through TSS for the milling while William will act as a TSS agent to organize the sourcing, quality control and payment of the farmers.

Loading in Lira



This season, AgriNet's agents around Lira, Pader and Gulu have collected 600 tons of white sorghum; paying 700/ UGX per kg cash-on-the-bag to the farmers. We arrived in Lira as 50 tons of sorghum was sent off to Savanna in Kampala for the final cleaning process before going to the buyer, East African Breweries. If you think that sending off 50 tons of sorghum to Kampala is a simple exercise, think again. There are negotiations with loaders, transporters and council officials and the payments for each. There is paperwork, with both the TSS agent and the transporters recording the numbers of sacks and the weight of each one loaded. There are checks on the weights recorded on the sacks and so to cut a long story short, a long and exhausting day was had by all, not least the loaders who carried

over 500 bags of 100 kg and more, onto five trucks.

Value Addition for White Sorghum



We also visited a large store outside Lira where AgriNet has started its own grain cleaning operation, this grain can then be sent directly to the brewery. It costs AgriNet 300,000/ UGX to clean 10 tons of grain at their store in Lira, whereas when AgriNet supplies un-cleaned grain it pays over 1 million UGX per 10 tons to a third party for the cleaning process. AgriNet has bought a grain-cleaning machine for this, but they will quickly be able to recover this cost through the savings made from the value addition.

The Mango Market in Kampala



Back in Kampala we visited the mango wholesale market where AgriNet has linked James K to Noah Masheta. James has made two deliveries and is learning the ropes for this tricky cross-border trade. Careful packing, in open trucks covered with matting, has been a major learning point. This will avoid damage and overheating of these delicate fruit. But James' video clip (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldlkJHBmb5E>) has clearly shown another challenge, the mango fruit fly. For this the Embu mango

growers will need help from the SHOMAP agronomists.

The Insider View with Video Diaries



It is good to see that James has started off his video diary so effectively. This week Jacinta and Tonny also received their tablets from T4T and started filming with Declan, while Moses filmed the value addition of the cassava in Kyere. Declan's partner Sue Price has set up Youtube pages for all the video diarists; they will be able to personalise and brand these with company details and photos. So over the weeks the diarists can post their experiences and we will be able to get a good idea of the challenges that people are facing to show other networks and mentors the insider view.

The Salesforce App



In Kampala Cherryl has worked on using Salesforce and the TSS app on the tablet. As with any new app there are some glitches that will have to be sorted out. With his new tablet Tonny will be able to get online more easily, and we are looking forward to hearing and seeing much more from his network.

Jakana, Food Processing in Kampala

Finally we visited Jakana, a processing factory producing various fruit juices from local produce and with a market for more

orange juice. Jakana would like to source their fruit through TSS, with help from the COB financing. Engineer Opio is a member of TESO Tropical Fruit Cooperative Union in Soroti and introduced us to the marketing coordinator Benjamin Omoding, who is keen to link his farmers to Jakana through TSS. Training for the orange farmers on the TSS process and research into the middle costs and buyer price is underway.



Thank you AgriNet for another instructive trip. It is always a pleasure to be in Uganda and we look forward to our next visit. In the meantime please send us your video clips and deal updates.