

RESEARCH BULLETIN

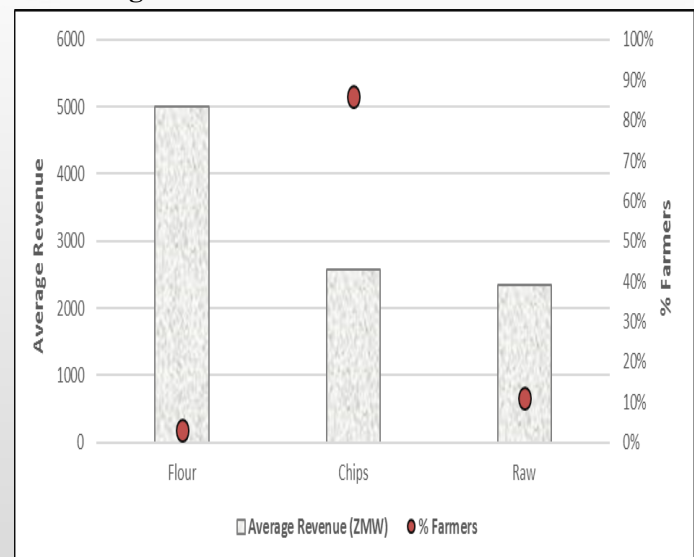
THE STATUS OF THE SMALLHOLDER CASSAVA MARKET IN NORTHERN ZAMBIA

Musika supports the development of commercial relationships between the private sector and the rural smallholder farmers. In Northern Zambia, Musika facilitated the creation of an out-grower scheme for cassava by providing an output firm with equipment and logistical support, which will enhance the firm's capacity to provide farmers with an assured cassava market coupled with the relevant extension services. Following this, Musika conducted a survey in the targeted intervention areas to assess the status of the smallholder cassava markets. Below are the key findings:

- About 40% of the farmers had sold their cassava and commercialization of the crop's root was dominant, second only to Maize.
- As for the key commodity buyers, it was found that the majority of the farmers had sold their cassava to traders.
- Farmers sell cassava in three forms: flour, chips and raw tubers. Cassava flour generated higher revenue while raw cassava generated the least revenue. On average, households had generated about ZMW2,615 from cassava sales annually. The farmers sold an average 1.8 metric tons of cassava per household, regardless of the cassava form. It was also found that the dominant source of revenue for the cassava households was crop production followed by off-farm income. The major contributor to the crop income was maize, which made up 60% of the income, followed by cassava which contributed a third of the total crop income.
- Farmers' access and use of mechanisation was low. Only 7% had used mechanization in their fields and there was also limited investment in modern farming implements such as ploughs, rippers or harrows. For instance, only 1.3% of the farmers had any of the aforementioned farming implements.
- About half of the farmers in the sample accessed extension services. And for the farmers who had accessed extension services, 65% felt that they had excellent understanding. It was also noted that the majority of the farmers who had accessed extension services had contact with extension agents more than three times in a year.

- The most common way in which farmers received the technical information was through group meetings, with the public extension staff emerging as the main source of technical information.
- The commonly used seed variety by farmers was the traditional seed recycled from own production while the improved seed was mostly purchased or given to farmers by NGOs. About 28% of the farmers had used improved seed, and the most popular improved seed type used by farmers was Mweru. The prominence of traditional seed signals low investment levels in improved seed by the farmers.

Average Revenue Per Cassava Form



Enhancing farmers' access to formal cassava markets and associated extension services could help improve farmers' knowledge about the crop's production as well as diversify farmer's sources of income from agricultural production.