



Research Into Use *sharing lessons to enable innovation in agriculture*

RIU Malawi, Africa Country Programme Annual report, 2009-2010

Livestock platform (piggery)

Decentralizing pig market structures with links to commercial buyers

i. Why are you working on/facilitating this innovation experience?

The Livestock Platform is one of the four commodity based innovation platforms recommended by the Malawi National Innovation Coalition (NIC) to be implemented by the Research into Use Malawi. Livestock constitutes a developing sub-sector of agriculture with underutilized and underestimated potential to contribute to household and national food security in Malawi. Currently there has been a rapid increase in pig production of improved breeds (Landraces, Large White and Tristars) through interventions by donor supported projects and NGOs who supplied breeding stock and extension services to pig farmer associations in Malawi. However, the challenge faced by farmers has been finding a stable market for these pigs so as to improve their economic returns/benefits. On the other hand, the commercial pig processors have been experiencing inadequate supply of quality pigs to meet the domestic demand. The private pig processors have instead been importing pork to meet domestic demand. This has been happening due to non-availability of structured pig marketing facilities. The purpose of the innovation therefore is to connect farmers to consumers and processors through creation of formalized pig marketing structures and points. This will improve the linkage between value chain players hence align production with market requirements and enhance value chain efficiencies which would ensure better prices for farmers and benefit other value chain players. The ultimate goal is to make the existing pig farming systems more competitive with improved management technologies to achieve high off-take rates, better quality products and higher incomes.

ii. What is your role (what do you mainly do) and how has this changed development(s)?

The role of RIU in this initiative is mainly to broker linkages between the pig farmer associations and the pig processors. The brokerage is in form of: bringing together all stakeholders in the pig industry value chain to discuss modalities for improving the marketing of pigs; determining the private processors demand in terms of number of pigs they may buy from the markets, the expected quality requirements and make this information known to farmers; negotiating for the signing of contracts between piggery farmer associations (suppliers) and private pig processors; providing grant funds and technical coordination to the livestock platform for construction of formalized pig market structures in strategic and decentralized locations in Malawi; publicizing pig market initiatives to the public; drumming up policy support from government about the pig markets; facilitating training of the pig

farmer associations in pig husbandry techniques to meet expectations of private pig processors, group dynamics, business management and marketing.

iii. What is driving the innovation (market, project, policy change, etc)?

The innovation is being driven by the market and the commercialization of pig enterprise.

iv. What forms of partnership are involved and what is their significance in respect of the outcomes thus far?

The partnerships are in form of facilitated joint meetings to review and plan together the activities of the platform; the partners (including private pig processors) have jointly been involved in the construction of the decentralized piggery markets in strategic locations; publicizing the markets initiatives to other stakeholders in the district.

v. What is different/special about the way partners interact and how is this evolving over time?

This arrangement has enhanced the communication between partners that were not normally interacting. For example the current arrangement has enabled the Academia (Bunda College) directly interacting with the private sector as well as the private sectors directly discussing their expectations with the farmers.

vi. Are there any special ways of working required/evolving that will allow the innovation to be achieved?

The signing of memorandum of understanding between the private sector and the piggery associations will make the partnership stronger. The innovation platform gives opportunity to the actors to discuss their common problems in a way they could together work towards exploring opportunities for solving the problems.

vii. Who are the key players and why are they important – and how are key players and their respective roles evolving?

Piggery associations as pig producers; private sector (meat processors) provide markets; NGOs – provide extension services to the associations and publicity and government provide extension services, veterinary services and policy. The platform engages the farmers, input and service providers, market players as well as policy makers in a process of continuous communication to enable bottlenecks in livestock production and marketing and choose feasible solutions to be tested and implemented within their specific contexts.

viii. Is there an innovation champion or coordinator?

There is an Innovation Champion elected by the Platform members

ix. What strategies are in place to link local innovation activities to the wider economic and policy environment?

There is the National Innovation Coalition (NIC) that acts as platform for leveraging policy advocacy with government and wider national community. Government representation in the platform is at both higher and lower levels.

x. What strategies are used to ensure inclusiveness of stakeholders and opinions – particularly the poor?

There is devolvement of responsibilities for certain platform activities with farmers taking the lead. The platform has thematic groups to accomplish specific tasks within the platform and each thematic group has representation of a wide range of stakeholders.

- xi. What have been the unexpected outcomes thus far, and what was/is their significance?**
 Unexpected outcomes: Other coalitions of partners within the platforms are taking shape i.e. some platform members are teaming up to become pig buyers due to the promising prospects in the markets. The initiative of having decentralized pig markets has also attracted funding from One Village One Product (OVOP) to finance the purchase of processing equipment of pork products to achieve market integration.
- xii. What strategies/mechanisms are used to learn, adjust and refocus during the innovation experience?**
 There are quarterly platform meetings where members review progress and share experiences; platforms also document and produce quarterly reports capturing progress, successes, challenges and lessons learned.
- xiii. What have been the main lessons learned thus far and how has this influenced your way of working and the innovation experience?**
 Platform members will only be active in the innovation initiatives if they can see prospects of some tangible benefits in their participation; managing partnership requires patience and diplomacy and requires a lot of consultations; the private sector is more proactive in driving initiatives identified in the platform than the public service.
- xiv. To what extent is the innovation experience influenced by/ dependent upon the political environment and how are you dealing with this?**
 The government and city assemblies discourage illegal unregularized slaughter points of pigs. These formalized market structures are therefore in line with expected hygienic pig slaughter standards stipulated in the city/council by-laws. It is hypothesized that improved marketing will restrict illegal slaughter points, and thus minimize incidences of African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreaks.
- xv. What new skills and knowledge are emerging as a result of your work?**
 The new skills and knowledge are negotiation skills, networking amongst stakeholders and sharing of information. The pig farmers/associations are adopting the mentality of approaching pig farming as business.
- xvi. What indicators quantify the social and economic changes occurring through your activities in this innovation experience?**
 Indicators:
- increased sale of pigs by farmers
 - increased income among farmers from pig sale
 - improved pig management practices
 - increased pig numbers and productivity.
- xvii. Formulate a statement that builds plausible connections between your activities and the indicators identified under (xvi), to substantiate – in hard figures – the scale of the impact, and indicate how you expect this to evolve over time.**
 Around 19,600 farmers will increase their incomes by selling their pigs at competitive prices at the decentralized markets established with assistance from Research into Use (RIU) Malawi.