

A REPORT OF A TRIP TO THE LAKE ZONE TO PROMOTE ORANGE FLESHED SWEET POTATOES

DATE OF THE CAMPAGN-28TH, APRIL 2004

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INTRODUCTION

Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes (OFSP) are said to contain higher levels of β -carotene which may be used to control vitamin A deficiency in children between the ages of 6 months to 6 years. Vitamin A deficiency is a problem of public health significant in Tanzania. Under the programme of Vitamin A for Africa (VITAA), Tanzania has started to promote the crop in The Lake and Eastern Zones. More than 20 varieties of OFSP are currently being evaluated for adaptability and consume acceptance in the National Agricultural Research Institutions. There are also a few local varieties that are being evaluated for the same.

The livelihood project has also some activities which aim at promoting the OFSP in the project areas through improve market access of the crop and product development.

The Tanzania Home Economics Association (TAHEA) which is one of our partner in the Lake Zone planned to carry out a campaign to promote the production and consumption of OFSP in the area. The campaign took place on the 28th, April, 2004. The Managing partner was invited to present a paper on the status of OFSP in the country.

The campaign

The campaign took place in Buhongwa village where farmers had started to grow the crop on commercial basis. This activity took one day and the Mwanza Regional commissioner officiated the campaign. The Coordinator of VITAA from CIP Uganda attended the campaign and gave a global over view of OFSP. There was also a team of farmers and sweet potato processors from Uganda who brought in various processed OFSP products and equipment.

The campaign made a lot of impact to the farmers of Mwanza. There was a big turn up of the farmer during the campaign. There were also difficulties in distributing seedlings that was brought there as part of the campaign. Farmers had to fight for the seedlings which seemed to be very little to match their demand. Farmers and consumers have been sensitized and the crop now is selling just as the white varieties. The campaign means that project activities 3.1 and 3.3 should respond to the developments that is taking place among the farmers after the campaign.

The coalition partners from TAHEA and Lake Zone Agriculture Research Development Institute (LZARDI) Ukiriguru have recommended that we do a similar campaign in the Eastern Zone as part of promotional work. This will be discussed in a meeting of all

coalition partners during the review of Milestone spending forecast to be arranged early next month. However, more seedlings will have to be multiplied before the campaign.