

Action-Research Project on Decentralised Market Information Services in Uganda

Report of Final Project Workshop

Ridar Hotel, Kampala, 8 – 9 December 2004

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
AT (U)	Appropriate Technology (Uganda)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CDO	Cotton Development Organisation
CEDO	Community Enterprise Development Organisation, CEDO
CPHP	DFID Crop Post-Harvest Programme
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DETREC	Development Training and Research Centre, Lira
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
ELF	Extension Link Farmer
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GoU	Government of Uganda
HH	Household
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDEA	Investment in Developing Export Agriculture, USAID Funded
IDP	Internally Displaced Population
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
LC	Local Council
LDLG	Lira District Local Government
LIDFA	Lira District Farmers Association
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MIS	Market Information Service
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NARO	National Agricultural Research Organisation
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NRIL	Natural Resources International Ltd
NRI	Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich
PAP	Poverty Alleviation Project
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PMA	Plan for Modernization of Agriculture
PM&E	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RL	Radio Lira
RO	Regional Office, Crop Post-Harvest Programme
SAARI	Serere Agricultural and Animal Production Research Institute
UCA	Uganda Cooperative Alliance
UCE	Uganda Commodity Exchange
UGTL	Uganda Grain Traders Limited
UNFFE	Uganda National Farmers Federation

UNHS	Uganda National Household Survey
UOSPA	Uganda Oilseed Producers and Processors Association
UPPAP	Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Project
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WRS	Warehouse Receipts Systems

Exchange Rates

£1 = USh3,100

\$1 = USh1,750

(December 2004)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the DFID funded action-research project “Decentralised Market Information Service in Uganda”, a two-day final project workshop was organised at the Ridar Hotel, Kampala, on 8 & 9 December 2004. It involved 35 participants from different stakeholder groups (e.g. farmers, traders, DFID Crop Post-Harvest Programme RO/NIDA, PMA Secretariat, NAADS, Local Government Lira, local researchers, IITA / Foodnet, AT Uganda, Natural Resources Institute, Uganda Commodity Exchange, Uganda Cooperative Alliance, and radio broadcasters). The objectives of the workshop included:

- Presentation of the research findings;
- Discussion of the way forward.

Following the presentations the following four working groups were constituted:

- Working group 1: The role of Private-Public-Partnerships in Market Information Services that are financially and institutionally more sustainable.
- Working Group 2: The choice of media in transmitting market information
- Working Group 3: Prerequisites so that farmers can make effective use of market information
- Working Group 4: Improved post-harvest quality standards and value addition

The workshop discussions and deliberations highlighted the following key issues and way forward for market information in Uganda:

- There should be a strong pact between private and public institutions in developing market information in Uganda. The public sector should provide guiding policies for ease of information sourcing, fund data collection, avail formats and channels for dissemination of information, regulate the media to include information which is relevant and vital for use as a public good and it should monitor related activities. The private sector should equally be involved in and fund data collection, analysis, dissemination, and monitoring of development processes.
- Market information services should be better harmonised taking into account all stakeholders’ needs.
- A favourable environment needs to be in place so that farmers can make use of market information, e.g. favourable policies, security, basic education, infrastructure, financial institutions, and demand for produce.
- FOODNET should seek funding for the production of more radio programmes from institutions such as the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture and NAADS.
- Farmer training should be integral with other stakeholders involved in market information.
- The use of a multi-media approach to disseminate market information should be encouraged. This involves radio, printed media, telephone, and field training. It was recommended that village telephones should be made more available to the rural population.

- A survey on Radio stations should be done to establish how much time is relegated to agricultural information before lobbying the broadcasting council accordingly.
- There should be a set standard for Ugandan commodities to compete favourably with other commodities within the region and internationally. Training of farmer groups in related matters is required in this context (e.g. by NARO research organisations, extension services, NAADS, NGOs, UCDA, and UBOS). There should be bylaws to enforce standards of produce in Uganda. A warehouse receipt system should be reinforced to attain quality of produce, and buyers should enforce quality since the role of the consumer is vital in determining what to purchase.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) Crop Post-Harvest Programme has funded the two-year action-research project “Decentralised Market Information Service in Lira District” since January 2003. In addition to Lira, project activities were subsequently also undertaken in Apac, Kasese, and Soroti Districts.

The project partners include farmers groups, traders, the Natural Resources Institute, IITA-Foodnet, the PMA Secretariat, Radio Lira, NAADS Lira, CEDO, AT (U) and CMIS. Given that the project was coming to an end in December 2004, a final project workshop was organised at the Ridar Hotel, Kampala, on 8 & 9 December 2004.

The need for market information in rural communities is unquestionable. Up-to-date market information improves farmers’ negotiating power and facilitates spatial and temporal arbitrage of commodities. In view of this, the main objective of this project was to test information delivery models for poor farming communities, with emphasis on decentralised market information services and the use of FM Radio. Using an action-research approach, this included the following:

- Participatory and quantitative assessments of information needs of small-scale farmers, processors and traders;
- Preparation and testing of a manual for the organisation of collective marketing activities by small-scale farmers;
- Production of radio series ‘Together to Market’, which was broadcast by Radio Lira in both Luo and English in Lira and Apac Districts, and in Ateso in Soroti District;
- Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the radio series and the Market Information Service established by IITA/Foodnet in Lira District;
- Comparative case study in Kasese District;
- Analysis of how radio can be linked to other ICTs.

In view of this, the main objectives of the workshop were to present the findings of the research, and discuss the way forward with regard to market information services in Uganda.

DAY ONE – 8 DECEMBER 2004

OPENING SPEECH

Dr. Willie Odwongo, Executive Director of the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) Secretariat

Following an introduction to the topic and the workshop, Dr Odwongo outlined the elements of the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture, especially the pillar of Marketing and Agro-processing Strategy (MAPS) which has been designed in recent years.

MAPS is based on a number of key elements, including:

- Trade policy formulation for Uganda;
- Building national capacity for trade negotiations (funded by European Union in the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry);
- Developing instruments for bulking commodities and trade finance, including the introduction of a warehouse receipt system. (There is a draft bill to be tabled in parliament in 2005. It will provide a legal environment where traders can borrow funds using stocks in certified warehouses as collateral). A plan for the Agricultural Commodity Exchange under the Uganda Co-operative Alliance has been designed with funding from the European Union.
- Strengthening farmers' organizations to improve bargaining positions through the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS). They have established supportive infrastructure (roads, rural markets). This strategy encompasses market information whereby a market information service with relevant, timely, reliable and useful information is relayed to market players.

Issues Arising from the Speech

Costs of disseminating market information

Workshop participants raised the issue of high broadcasting costs and that the benefits of market information should be established to allow a cost benefit analysis of market information.

Reactions

- Many studies have been carried out to undertake a cost benefit analysis of market information and the results indicate that the costs are negligible compared to the number of people, decisions made on marketing by farmers, which has led to realization of prices for farmers. (Okoboi Geoffrey, FOODNET)
- There is already a need for market information as exhibited in the number of people who use the SMS media where they are charged US\$120/= for each message they send inquiring for the latest market price. (Emily Arayo FOODNET)

- Market information helps farmers to share experiences through their group meetings which gives them direction to plant and sell particular commodities (Mr Davies Alachu, Soroti)
- There are cost reductions implied for traders who use market information because they are also directed to where there is produce just like the farmer is directed to where there is a market. However, there is more demand for market information especially for timber and wood products. Broadcasting costs are expensive because of the multilingual diversity of people in Uganda. Also, the issue of weighing scales and agro-processing facilities related to value addition should be addressed.(Fredrick Kasozi, Masindi district marketing officer)
- Introducing moisture content monitors for farmer produce will ensure quality which will increase prices and bargaining power for farmers produce (Mr Emmet Murphy, ACDI VOCA)
- Warehouse receipt system should be strict on quality and should go down to the districts to ensure good quality especially of maize so as to ensure East African Community (EAC) standards (NAADS)
- FOODNET has a regional mandate to provide market information; so what ever lessons learnt here are to be shared with 10 ASARECA countries in the region, which makes it more beneficial (Mr John Jagwe, FOODNET)
- It is a concern that PMA and FOODNET design an exit strategy for farmers to suggest a way forward so that farmers can be organized to create their own market information systems. (Mr Geoffrey Omony, AT Uganda)
- Traders are still branded as enemies to farmers; so FOODNET needs to educate traders on using market information as well.

PRESENTATION

Overview of the project “Decentralized market information service in Lira District”; Mr Ulrich Kleih, Natural Resources Institute, UK

Mr Kleih provided an overview of the decentralized Market Information in Lira district.

He outlined the details of the outputs produced and paid due gratitude to the funders of the project who are the Crop Post-Harvest Programme of the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The project duration was from January 2003 to December 2004. Project partners included The Natural Resources Institute (NRI), Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA), FOODNET of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Appropriate Technology AT (Uganda), and National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), Radio Lira, Voice of Teso, CEDO, CMIS and farmer groups in Lira and Apac.

Project activities carried out

The inception workshop was held in Lira in January 2003.

A baseline study was subsequently carried out in 5 sub-counties of Lira district on farmers' and traders' livelihoods and needs and sources of information. The methodology of the baseline study encompassed Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), and questionnaire survey. The fieldwork was carried out by five survey teams.

Drafting of an advice manual for organizations of collective marketing by small-scale farmers took place in July to September 2003. Testing of the manual as part of the in-the-field training started in 2003 and ended in mid 2004.

Production of 10 radio spots entitled "Together to market", in English and Luo October to December 2003. Broadcasting of the radio spots on Radio Lira in English and Luo from January to September 2004. Monitoring of the reactions to the radio spots from March – September 2004. Production of Ateso version of Together –to-market in July 2004. Broadcastng of Ateso spots from August 2004.

Comparative case study of farmers' information needs and case study in Kasese district in July and August 2004.

Evaluation survey in 7 sub-counties in Lira, Apac and Soroti using Participatory Rural Appraisal and questionnaire survey.

Final project workshop in December 2004.

PRESENTATION

Foodnet's Role in Uganda's Agricultural Market Information System; Geofrey Okoboi, Foodnet, IITA

Mr Okoboi gave an overview of FOODNET, which is an ASARECA Network on post-harvest handling and marketing which started operations in 1999 under IITA.

How Foodnet started MIS and current status. In Uganda, Foodnet is a well known entity in the provision of agricultural market information. It started MIS in September 1999 after the collapse of the government operated Market News Service (MNS) in February 1999. The bulk of funding for the MIS project comes from USAID ACDI/VOCA. However, several other organisations have financially supported the project. These include CTA, DANIDA through UNFFE, RELMA, and Government of Uganda through NAADS.

Currently, the national agricultural market information service is supported by ACDI/VOCA while the localized/decentralised market information service is funded by NAADS. FOODNET is also to start a livestock market information service to be funded by the African Development Bank through Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF)

Role of Foodnet MIS. Using a variety of ICT media, Foodnet has made market information to be cheaply accessible to all stakeholders in the agricultural sector such as small-scale farmers and traders, large-scale traders and processors (e.g. UGT), food relief and food security monitoring by NGOs, government ministries and departments, and research organisations.

FM Radio is the main mode of dissemination targeting small-scale farmers while mobile phone SMS text is becoming a popular method of accessing FOODNET market information by traders.

With well trained and adequately facilitated data collectors spread across the country, Foodnet market information is accurate, reliable and timely. Foodnet has developed and updated a database of price information that has facilitated agricultural research and food security in Uganda.

Foodnet operates the largest network disseminating agricultural information weekly in Uganda (over 10 FM radio stations, 100s of extension workers, newspapers, SMS text on mobile phones, etc).

All this has improved

- Price negotiation by small-scale farmers and traders
- Decision making on when, where to market by market players
- Decision making on production
- Research and policy making
- Etc.

Summary: With financial contributions from various donors, FOODNET has significantly contributed the development of the current vibrant agricultural market information service in Uganda.

Issues Arising from the Presentation

- **Quality of produce.** A remark on the quality especially of maize grain was made and participants wondered whether quality was part of the issues FOODNET was addressing citing an example of maize from Uganda that was sent to Tanzania affected by aflatoxins and could not be used for human consumption.
- **Value addition.** Participants inquired whether FOODNET considers other issues like value addition as part of the menu for market information.
- **Harmonious relationship with traders.** FOODNET should not consider traders as farmers' enemies because both co-exist.

- **Sustainability of market information.** The issue of sustainability came up with questions like how will MIS continue if donors stop funding it.

Reactions to Questions and Comments

- Aflatoxins due to high moisture content in grains has led to Ugandan maize being dumped in Tanzania and instead of human consumption it was used for animal feed.
- On the issue regarding traders as enemies of farmers, a clarification was made that not all traders are cheats but the few middlemen that are should desist from the habit. FOODNET had taken on district commercial officers who are the traders' mouth piece in the districts as part of the team that collects market information and discusses issues on markets on radio talk shows.
- FOODNET is part of the team that holds monthly trade meetings with traders where they discuss issues of marketing with traders.
- The issue of value addition on particular commodities was raised and members suggested that it should be part of the modules for training farmers on attaining high prices for their commodities.
- On the issue of the exit strategy, market information is a public good for which sustainability takes place after a long time. Already other agencies are starting to collect market information like Area Marketing Programme (AMP) in the Western Region, and in Kitgum it is the Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

PRESENTATION

Production of Radio Series “Together-to-Market”; Dr Monica Janowski, Natural Resources Institute

Dr Janowski gave a description of radio formats that can be used for improving access to the market by helping farmers form groups. She mentioned that radio could be used for introducing change.

She highlighted different formats of radio programs, such as:

- Information based market news, which has regular short price bulletins;
- Jingles which bring topics to listeners' attention;
- Dramas (soaps) which create fictional characters to highlight important points;
- Radio packages showcasing real people's stories, experiences and feelings to bring an issue or topic to life and illustrate important points;
- Broadcasts with live programs which wrap-up around the program presenter;
- Combining media. Different media often complement each other – for example, training can be used with radio broadcasts. Since training provides a recipe book for group formation and marketing, radio broadcasts of Together-to-market provide illustrations with voices from farmers.

Raw material for the standard English radio program. The radio recordings for Together-to-Market were prepared in Rakai and Masindi districts. The core interviews were held with farmers talking about their own experiences, feelings and suggestions. The content was mainly focusing on group formation and the benefits of marketing together. Community Enterprise Development Organization (CEDO) provided mobilization, especially in Rakai district.

Contents for new language versions. The local language versions included spots from both Rakai and Masindi with new voice-overs from local farmers in selected language areas (Luo). The Ateso radio spots had fresh material gathered from local farmers in Soroti. Runyoro and Lusoga will have a combination of fresh interviews and voice-overs from the initial interviews done in Rakai and Masindi.

The aim of changing the initial content was to find a balance between local material and material from far away. This was done because findings from responses to the first set of radio spots indicated that farmers were keen to learn about what happens around them but were also interested in knowing what happens in places far away from them.

Issues Arising from the Presentation

- A participant from Uganda Cooperatives Alliance (UCA) wondered why the radio spots were using the word group and was concerned that it could confuse farmers since a group can also be called a co-operative or an association for instance.
- The issue of costs for producing more radio programmes for other languages was raised. Members wondered whether there could be some funding to facilitate production of other radio spots for other languages.
- Participants inquired how much it would cost for a new language version to be produced.
- Dr Janowski and Ms Arayo were commended for the good job they did in producing the radio spots on group marketing and were advised to develop other radio spots on related farming issues like value addition, soil management, crop and pest control.

Responses

- Dr. Odwongo said the issue of using groups was of concern and said that it was clearly explained in the training manual.
- Cassette tapes should be made available to farmers who do not have CD players.
- Ms Arayo from FOODNET said that they are willing to produce more radio spots and for various farming concerns, but there is no extra funding at present to enable the production of more radio spots.
- Dr. Odwongo said that if the PMA is convinced that it is valuable to use radio spots, they will forward the concern to donors for funding.
- A participant from AT (U) said that clear costing for each radio programme be established.

- Dr Janowski said that re-using original recordings and making voice-overs in respective languages would be cheaper than making new versions of spots.

PRESENTATION

Results of Monitoring Survey; Mr Benson Taiwo, Foodnet Market Information Technician.

Mr Taiwo provided the background to the monitoring survey, indicating that crop marketing had increased as a result of market information. He outlined the beneficiaries of the programme, many of whom are women. He then gave some suggestions for the improvement of the Foodnet Market News Service based on respondents' suggestions. These included exchange visits, printed publications of market information, regular training at group level, broadcasting of the programme on more than one local FM station.

About the radio spots translated into Luo, he said that the biggest number of beneficiaries were group members. The most favoured spots included the following:

- Women and men in groups
- Why market together
- Getting market information
- Money matters in groups
- Keeping going
- Why form groups?

Comments on Presentation

- The issue of using video documentaries and radio cassettes during farmers training was raised as an integrated approach to show farmers what happens in other places so as to enhance their comparative skills in farming and marketing.
- A trader from Lira who said that the volumes of commodities from Lira to other districts and to Rwanda, Tanzania and Kenya have increased as a result of market information raised issues related to inter-district trade.

Remarks by Mr Moses Orem Opio, Agricultural Officer, Lira

- Farmers are yearning for more market information because of the positive results realized by using market information.
- Apac District Agricultural Network (ADAN) is forming an umbrella institution for all agricultural institutions in Apac to be emulated by Lira.

PRESENTATION

In-the-field Training of Farmer Groups, Mr Godfrey Omony, Appropriate Technology (Uganda)

Mr Omony gave a background of the in-the –field training, which was supported by the DFID COARD Project. The focus was on participatory soil fertility enhancement and group marketing in the Lango and Teso agro-ecological zones. The activities included training in group marketing, use and collection of market information; group dynamics, drawing of work plans and exchange visits. The target population were farmers who were facilitated by extension staff, AT(U) staff, CEDO trainer and IITA trainer.

The training. Training was carried out at 2 levels. One centralized and at sub-county with 23 farmer group representatives in sub-counties. They spent 2 days in each sub-county where 13 neighbouring and 4 participating groups attended. Methodologies included lecturing, brainstorming and group discussions.

Assessment and results. Group record keeping needed improvement, there is a need to establish market information centers, selection of market teams needs to be more participatory, training in group dynamics needs to be done, especially in Kamuda Soriti. It was also indicated that groups had formed marketing committees.

Issues Arising from the Presentation

- Participants were concerned about the poor results in Soroti Kamuda County.
- A comment was made that marketing communities need to be ‘propelled’ for activities.
- On the diversity of results, participants wondered whether farmers were not interested or whether there were any follow-ups to consider for future activities.
- There is a need to improve the soil fertility in order to get good yields.
- There is a need to reinforce the marketing committees and link them to the district commercial officer who will link them to better markets and further opportunities for trainings.

Responses

- There is a plan to carry out more soil fertility testing to establish proper fertility technologies that can be applied.
- Farmers will be taught in planned production.
- There should be improved market linkages by forming joint group meetings.

PRESENTATION

Results of Evaluation Survey; by Mr Ulrich Kleih, Natural Resources Institute

Mr Kleih started his presentation with an overview of the locations where the survey took place in October 2004 (seven sub-counties in Lira, Apac, and Soroti Districts), followed by the survey methodology which included: Livelihoods Approach, and a combination of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), and questionnaire survey. The data was collected by six survey teams.

Although overall maize is the crop grown by the majority of households, crop preferences can be location specific with cassava, millet, beans, sorghum, sweet potatoes, cotton, simsim (sesame), groundnuts, etc. all playing an important role in the farming system. Constraints to agricultural production include problems such as, drought, lack of capital, pests and diseases, lack of markets, lack of seeds, lack of implements, etc.

The analysis of the marketing system shows that most traditional food security crops are at the same time also important cash crops (e.g. maize, cassava, beans). Otherwise, cotton is the traditional cash crop in the area. The survey also reveals that most farmers primarily rely on local buyers and local markets. District markets and non-local traders play a less important role.

According to the survey, it appears that women are more reliant on neighbours / fellow farmers and traders/ buyers for market information, whilst men's main sources of information are through fellow farmers / neighbours and the Radio Lira Market News programme. Constraints to marketing include, low / fluctuating prices, lack of transport, lack of market information, lack of storage facilities, and lack of post-harvest technologies.

A range of suggestions was made as to how to improve the marketing system, e.g.

- Encourage group marketing;
- Continue training on group dynamics and market information;
- Farmers should be linked with better markets;
- Produce buyers should be trained on marketing;
- Market information sources should be diversified (radio, posters,)
- Etc

As for the listenership of the programme of radio spots on Together-to-Market, 68% of the households interviewed said that they had listened to them. Out of those, about 30% indicated that they had listened one to three times to the radio spots whilst 21% indicated that they had listened more than 10 times. Farmers prefer the spots broadcast in local languages such as Lango and Teso. Asked for the usefulness of the radio spots, the majority of farmers said it was educative, whilst only very few considered it to be entertaining. As for the benefits of the spots to groups, amongst other things farmers highlighted the following:

- Strengthening of existing groups;

- Better relationship between men and women;
- More transparency;
- Better leadership.

Production benefited from the radio spots mainly through improved planning and better enterprise selection, whilst marketing has benefited in the form of improved negotiating power and access to better markets. Improved quality standards and improved storage were also mentioned but to a lesser extent. When asked for the constraints to listening to the spots, flat batteries, bad timing, and competing programmes / stations were the most prominent answers given by the farmers (i.e. each receiving about 20%).

When asked about listenership of the Radio Lira Market News programme, the majority of farmers indicated either 'more than once a week' or 'once a week', each response drawing about 31% of the replies. Most farmers find this programme either very or moderately useful. Similarly to the radio spots the Market News Programme has helped the farmers mainly in terms of improved negotiating power or better access to markets. Lack of awareness of the programme was the only real constraint mentioned by the farmers.

About a quarter of the farmers interviewed had been trained by Foodnet on collective marketing, and most of them considered it as very useful in the sense that it has also helped them to improve negotiating power and access to markets. Timing, lack of incentives, and distance to the training centres were the main constraints indicated.

The majority of farmers said it is useful to combine in-the-field training with radio spots, preferring the latter to be broadcast once the training has taken place. If given a choice between either training or radio broadcasts, the majority of farmers would opt for training. At the same time, although the benefits are likely to be higher because of more direct exposure, it is also acknowledged that an approach focusing predominantly on training is much more expensive.

PRESENTATION

Findings of the Kasese Case Study; Ms Cecilia Agang, Lira

Ms Agang gave a brief background as to why Kasese District was considered for this case study – i.e. it is a district which had not a market information system until very recently and as a result it was considered as a trial point hoping to draw on the lessons learnt in Soroti and Lira districts.

As such, the purpose of the case study was to gain better understanding of farmers' livelihoods and their needs and sources of information in general terms and related to marketing. The research also focused on the Radio Grace Market News programme and provided guidance on how it could be improved.

In addition to the farmers survey, traders were interviewed in connection to their information needs and communication channels. Three sub-counties were chosen at a stakeholders' meeting in July 2004 to be as representative as possible of different variables affecting market access, including the growing of different crops and the varying distance to markets of different sizes, namely Mahango, Nyakiyumbu, and Kyabarungira.

The methodology used during the survey included key informants interviews, observations, group discussions and resource map. During the survey the following were expressed as important training needs: -

- Access and use of market information
- Modern agronomic practices
- Nutrition
- Family planning methods

In addition, the farmers expressed the following specific support requirements for marketing: -

- Need for Market Information to help them get profits.
- Organize seminars / workshops to equip them with more knowledge and skills.
- Support for good storage facility to keep their produce till the right time for selling.
- Training on Nutrition to be organized for the groups.
- Regular access to information on Production and Marketing.
- Local markets for organic products to be identified within the country since the groups may not produce enough quantity for export.
- Extension workers should be posted in all the sub counties.
- Need for access to credit facilities, e.g. loans.
- Regular visits by the marketing team to the farmers.
- Information on high yielding good quality improved variety of seeds to be availed to farmers.
- Brochures on market information, production and marketing in the local language to be availed to farmers.
- Demonstration plots to be at every sub county to allow farmers learn technical skills to plant crops.
- Grants to be given to support farmer's activities and needs.

According to the PRA, the most important source of information for the farmers include; - agents of private buyers, workshops, radios, visitors and extension agents of NGO / local government. The radio stations preferred by the people of Kasese are radio Rukungiri, radio Kinkinzi, radio Uganda, West, Voice of Toro radio Grace and radio Messiah. The last two have limited coverage in Kasese district. Good reception and good programmes are the main reason why certain radio stations are preferred. The preferred time for listening to the radio is between 3:00 pm- 6:00pm in Kyabarungira, in Mahango it is between 7:00pm – 9:00pm and Nyakiyumbu is between 4:00pm- 9:00pm.

Information requirements expressed by traders during PRA are as follows:-

- Farmers should do proper drying and sorting of coffee as a way forward for better prices.
- Farmers to observe 90% quality produce to get highest prices.
- Factories around should join the campaign to sensitize the farmers of proper post harvest handling methodologies.
- Work hard to fight the sale of broken coffee which the processors carry back to sell to farmers at cheap price of only 700= and this at the end is mixed with good quality coffee spoiling the original quality of the good coffee.
- Market information to be given to farmers to boost production.
- Loans to be given to farmers to increase on their production.
- Trainings to be given to farmers on the proper and modern agronomic practices.
- Information on high quality seeds should be availed to farmers to improve on quality of their produce.

DAY TWO – 9 DECEMBER 2004

RECAP OF DAY ONE ACTIVITIES

Mr Kleih gave a recap of the previous day proceedings. The program followed with a presentation from Farmers from Lira followed by Mr Alex Rwego, Manager of the Uganda Commodity Exchange.

In the afternoon participants went into group discussions and came out with deliberations, which they presented to the plenary. Dr. Dan Kisauzi, Coordinator of the Regional CPHP Office, closed the workshop.

After the closure, participants had a cocktail party before they left to their respective residencies.

PRESENTATION

Market Information and Group Formation from the Farmers' Perspective

Farmers from Lira and Apac Districts reported that market information has helped 28 farmer groups in Lira sub-region by providing updated information on prices and market trends. This has helped them link to buyers such as Afrokai, Mukwano and Uganda Grain Traders Limited (UGT) in Kampala and other districts.

The crops marketed as a result of using market information include maize, simsim, beans, soya beans, dry cassava chips, rice and sweet potatoes. A new enterprise developing now in the area is based on pigeon peas, which are used for making *dahl* (Indian dish formerly imported from Tanzania).

Farmer groups have since been sensitized by MI and are now asking for extension advice on growing high value crops that are fetching more money in the markets. Also, farmers have started bulking commodities for sale, which they store and are now moving to value addition and proper storage management.

The beneficiaries mentioned in the presentation include farmers from Abongomola, Loro, Akalo, Atwero, Can mi diiro, Obanga twero, Adekokwok farmers' groups. They have received training from AT Uganda, FOODNET, UOSPA and DETREK amongst others. They said that this is due to their organization in groups as a result of training in group formation and through radio programmes. Radio spots on group marketing especially stimulated them to market together and manage group finances more effectively.

PRESENTATION

Uganda Commodity Exchange (UCE), by Mr Alex Rwego, Manager UCE

Mr Rwego gave a brief background to the UCE, which is to establish a market that brings value to its members and the trading public. In doing so it facilitates trade between buyers and sellers of any agricultural commodity in Uganda and the world at large.

He explained the operating system of UCE, the trading system and the disputes procedure when conflict arises between parties. He highlighted the information system and the role of market information, information out puts and the information delivery model of UCE.

Among the information categories identified as a result of inquiries from users, Mr. Rwego said that office desks, chairs, computers, internet connectivity, and printers will be given to farmer groups as project support. This should help them access immediate information regarding prices as part of the newly established Warehouse Receipts System (WRS) project.

He said that there are professional brokers who will let farmers know the market prices, quality required and any other advice that is rendered useful for parties to engage in the commodity exchange. Training in content management and database development are also elements in the project support category.

Mr. Rwego gave his contact address and that of his assistant to participants who wish to contact UCE on any information regarding warehouse receipts system and commodity exchange in general.

Comments and Questions Arising from Presentation

- Dr Janowski from NRI wondered why farmers would be given computers given that there are brokers who would advise them on the right prices.

- Ms Arayo from FOODNET wondered whether UCE has already put in place a plan to train farmer group members in using software given illiteracy levels and low attitude in adopting new technologies.
- Participants wondered if there are any certified warehouses in Uganda currently.

Reactions

- There are warehouses that are certified in Uganda.
- On the issue of using computers UCE envisages that farmers may need some information not necessarily from Uganda but from elsewhere, which will be available on the internet. Besides, information is a demand driven commodity, as a result of which it is expected that farmers realize its value, and pay up the loan required as soon as possible.

GROUP WORK

Participants went into group discussions and the following topics were to be discussed in four groups

Working Group 1:

✚ Title: The role of Private-Public-Partnerships in Market Information Services that are financially and institutionally more sustainable.

✚ Tasks:

- Discuss which roles should be carried out by the private sector and which ones by the public sector;
- Identify the key elements of a Market Information Service that is financially and institutionally sustainable
- Identify how can market information services be better harmonised taking into account all stakeholders' needs

Working Group 2:

✚ Title: The choice of media in transmitting market information

✚ Tasks:

- Identify which media should be used for transmitting what information
- Identify combinations of media that are feasible and affordable in rural areas, and that effectively reach the maximum number of people

Working Group 3:

✚ Title: Prerequisites so that farmers can make effective use of market information

✚ Tasks:

- Identify what needs to be in place so that farmers can make effective use of market information
- Discuss how market information can be better integrated with other information including on production
- Discuss what media should be used in this context

Working Group 4:

✚ Title: Improved post-harvest quality standards and value addition

✚ Tasks:

- Discuss what kind of training is required to improve both post-harvest quality standards and value addition of crops
- Identify which institutional channels should be used to carry out this training
- Identify what farmers require to put this training into use

WORKING GROUP 1

Title: The role of Private-Public-Partnerships in Market Information Services that are financially and institutionally more sustainable.

Task (a): Discuss which roles should be carried out by the private sector and which ones by the public sector

Members of this group deliberated that specific roles should be carried out by the private sector that includes NGO's and any other business persons not engaged as agents of governments; and also by the public sector, which includes government controlled institutions, civil service, parastatals and government regulatory bodies. The following are to be carried out by both the private and public sectors:

- Service delivery to farmers
- Policy guidelines and regulation
- Information delivery

Data collection, data analysis, dissemination and monitoring were specifically categorised in relation to market information activities. The public sector should provide guiding policies for ease of information sourcing, fund data collection, avail formats and channels for dissemination of information with government policy to regulate the media to include information which is relevant and vital for use as a public good and it should also be vigilant in monitoring activities.

The private sector also funds data collection, collects data, analyses data, disseminates data and monitors data processes of development.

Task (b): Identify the key elements of a Market Information Service that is financially and institutionally sustainable

The following were identified as key elements of a market information service:

- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Dissemination of data
- Monitoring of data usage

Task (c): Identify how can market information services be better harmonised taking into account all stakeholders' needs

Members agreed that harmonization of market information taking into account all stakeholders' needs could be done in the following ways:

- All stakeholders get organized and redefine a central entry point with a coordination unit for both public and private sectors.
- Develop a standard manual of operation for specific activities and programs like market information, food security and storage among other topics.
- All stakeholders currently carrying out market information should redefine areas of operation to be kept in an operational database at the coordination unit.
- Quarterly review meetings by stakeholders should be carried out.

Other Comments from Plenary

Members resolved to forward issues on broadcasting charges of market information and any other agricultural information to the broadcasting council seeking free airtime on public good information.

WORKING GROUP 2

Title: The choice of media in transmitting market information

Task (a): Identify which media should be used for transmitting what information

Members of working group 2 deliberated that a combination of media to include training, radio, printed media, mobile telephones, video documentaries and notice boards should be used in disseminating market information.

Task (b): Identify combinations of media that are feasible and affordable in rural areas, and that effectively reach the maximum number of people

Members agreed that combinations that can reach the majority of the rural population in disseminating market information include:

- Radio price announcements, mobile telephone SMS media, notice boards could be used for instant, fast and quick market information like price bulletins.
- Newspapers, Radio feature programmes and talk shows, trainings and video documentary shows can be used to disseminate market information with more detailed information including grades and standards, value addition and any other agricultural related topics.
- Leaflets, radio announcements and notice boards can be used to announce trainings for farmers.
- Training was recommended as a media, which gives instant feedback and can be used along side recorded radio programmes, print materials and video documentaries. Besides market information, information on storage, value addition, grades and standards and group formation can be disseminated.

Other comments from plenary

- Newspapers give stale news and therefore should not be used to disseminate market prices although they can be used to disseminate other information on marketing;
- Location of posters should be central so that all people have access;
- Categories of regular and periodical information should be channelled through various media;

- There is need to carry out a survey on all radio stations for air time allocations and costing and further discussions with broadcasting council on issues of considering free airtime for agriculture related radio programs;
- There is need to establish which journalists and in which media houses promote agricultural stories and have them send parallel information to the public;
- The NAADS Coordinator Lira said that farmers in Lira are not paid to attend trainings and that all districts should emulate that.

WORKING GROUP 3

Title: Prerequisites so that farmers can make effective use of market information

Tasks:

Task (a) Identify what needs to be in place so that farmers can make effective use of market information

Members of group 3 established what needs to be in place for farmers to use market information as follows:

- Information should be generated prior to planting and after harvesting
- Price availability
- Actual demand of commodities
- Integrate market information with crop forecast and weather forecast.
- Self motivated and demand driven groups
- Development partners like NGO's, churches, CBO's and government agencies operating in districts like NAADS, NUSAF.
- Infrastructure like roads, electricity and stores should be in place.
- Value addition facilities should be in place
- Security should be favourable
- There should be basic education to enable comprehension of activities
- Financial institutions should be in place.

Task (b) Discuss how market information can be better integrated with other information including on production

- **They agreed that market information could best be integrated with other information through the following:**
- Through partnerships and intermediaries engaged in agricultural production
- Public sector extension and commercial officers
- NGOs, CBOs, FM radio stations, telecommunication

Task (c): Discuss what media should be used in this context

Members agreed that the media used should be the following:

- Radio
- NGOs and CBOs

- Extension workers through trainings and field visit demonstrations
- Telephones
- Print media (posters, bill boards and notice boards)

Other comments from plenary

1. As a result of market dynamics listeners should regularly listen to market information not only during planting and harvesting time.
2. Village telephones should be made more available to the rural population
3. There is need to improve the quality of information so that it becomes more saleable to the public.
4. When sourcing sponsors, use evidence to show that market information can be used to attract listeners.

WORKING GROUP 4

Title: Improved post-harvest quality standards and value addition

Tasks (a): Discuss what kind of training is required to improve both post-harvest quality standards and value addition of crops

Group members recommended production techniques as follows:

- Seed selection
- Site selection and preparation
- Timely planting

Harvesting techniques were recommended as follows:

- Timely harvesting
- Tools and methods of harvesting
- Transportation of produce
- Containers for carrying produce

Post harvest handling was recommended as follows:

- Drying techniques
- Threshing and shelling
- Cleaning and sorting
- Grading and classification

Storage techniques were recommended as follows:

- Packing and packaging
- Pest control
- Improved storage facilities

Processing techniques were recommended as follows:

- Train in technologies available
- Packaging and branding
- Product development
- Product utilization

Quality standards agreed upon to include:

- Quality parameters
- Technologies involved
- Quality control

Task (b): Identify which institutional channels should be used to carry out this training

Members of Group 4 identified institutional channels that will carry out the above tasks as follows:

- Agricultural Research Institutions, such as Kawanda Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) and Namulonge Agricultural Research Institute (NARI)
- Government extension system through the Local government agricultural system and the National Agricultural Advisory Services NAADS.
- Non Governmental Organizations like Appropriate Technology (Uganda)
- The private sector
- Government parastatals like Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UBOS), Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA).
- Local councils
- Farmer groups, associations, organizations, co-operatives

Task (c): Identify what farmers require to put this training into use

Members identified the following as requirements for farmers:

- Farmers need to be organized and committed to their work.
- There should be physical infrastructure in place like stores, roads, telephones to enable them produce good produce.
- There should be agro-processing equipment
- There should be an effective extension service
- There should be good policies to enable proper running of systems
- Finances through micro-financing institutions should be available
- Production and marketing bylaws should be in place
- There should be enough capacity building through artisans at local level, demonstration units, leadership trainings and market information.

Other comments from plenary

- There should be a set standard for Ugandan commodities to compete favorably with other commodities in the region and internationally.

- There should be bylaws to enforce standards of produce in Uganda.
- The warehouse receipt system should be reinforced to attain quality of produce.
- Buyers should enforce quality since the role of the consumer is vital in determining what to purchase.

WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

Participants deliberated on the following issues as a way forward for sustainable market information services:

- There should be a strong pact between the private and public institutions in developing market information in Uganda.
- FOODNET should seek for funds to produce more radio programmes from institutions like Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) and NAADS.
- Farmer training should involve stakeholders familiar with market information
- The use of a multi-media approach to disseminate market information should be encouraged.
- A survey on Radio stations should be carried out to establish how much time is relegated to agricultural information before lobbying the Broadcasting Council.
- More support should be given to FOODNET in support of market information.

CLOSING REMARKS

Four participants gave closing remarks before Dr Kisauzi closed the workshop.

1. Mr Ulrich Kleih from Natural Resources Institute.

He said that on behalf of NRI, he was grateful to the team that worked with him and all the stakeholders who were involved in the project work.

2. Mr Okoboi Geoffrey from FOODNET.

He was grateful on behalf of FOODNET, the traders and farmers for the support, especially from the funders of market information especially ACIDI VOCA, NAADS and PMA and to NRI for undertaking the action research. He thanked DFID, which provided the funding and hoped that more projects will be considered for funding by this organisation.

3. Dr Monica Janowsky from NRI.

She thanked all the FM radio stations which she worked with and the communities in Rakai, Masindi, Lira and Soroti for their support during the production the radio spots. She also thanked Ms Emily Arayo, the media liaison officer for IITA/FOODNET, for the hard work she did in the production of more spots in the various language versions. She asked stakeholders to support FOODNET in producing more radio programs.

4. On behalf of Dr. Willie Odwongo of the PMA, Mr. Tom Kitembo Mugisa thanked the team that carried out the studies for their time and efforts in translating the findings and sharing the lessons they learnt during the project. He promised to follow up any additions to the workshop to scale up to other areas apart from Lira and Kasese.

5. Dr. Kisauzi from the Crop Post Harvest Program was grateful on behalf of his institution whose intention is to generate technologies to be used in national systems. He said the PMA embeds policies of national systems within its pillars and the key user of the project is the farmer. He said the project has left for the PMA an unraveled knowledge on the importance of agricultural marketing information. Also, it has

given farmers opportunities to form groups, and increased their awareness of the importance of market information to produce more outputs. With these remarks he closed the workshop.

APPENDIX 1

Workshop Programme

Wednesday, 8 December 2004	
09.00 - 10.00	Official opening and Presentation of the PMA Marketing Strategy, Dr Willie Odwongo, Director, PMA Secretariat
10.00 - 10.45	Overview of the Project “Decentralised Market Information Services in Lira District”, Mr Ulrich Kleih, Natural Resources Institute
10.45 - 11.15	Coffee / Tea break
11.15 – 12.00	FOODNET’s Role in Uganda’s Agricultural Market Information System, Mr Geoffrey Okoboi, IITA / Foodnet
12.00 – 12.45	Production of Radio Series ‘Together to Market’ and Listeners’ Reactions, Dr Monica Janowski, Natural Resources Institute
12.45 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 14.45	Results of Monitoring Survey; Dr Otim Bernard Ogong, NAADS Coordinator Lira, and Mr Benson Taiwo, Foodnet / Radio Lira
14.45 – 15.30	In-the-field Training of Farmer Groups, Mr Fred Bikande, CEDO, and Mr Godfrey Omony, AT (U)
15.30 – 16.00	Coffee / Tea Break
16.00 – 16.45	Results of Evaluation Survey, Mr Ulrich Kleih, Natural Resources Institute
16.45 – 17.30	Findings of the Kasese Case Study, Ms Cecilia Agang
Thursday, 9 December 2004	
9.00 – 9.15	Re-cap of Day 1; Dr Willie Odwongo, Director, PMA Secretariat
09.15 - 10.00	Market Information and Group Formation from the Farmers’ Perspective; Representatives of Farmer Groups in Lira District.
10.00 – 10.45	The Uganda Commodity Exchange and the Role of Market Information, Mr Alex Rwego, Manager, Uganda Commodity Exchange
10.45 – 11.15	Coffee / Tea Break
11.15 – 13 .00	Group Discussions on “Way Forward on Market Information Services in Uganda”
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.00	Presentations of Group Discussions on “Way Forward on Market Information Services in Uganda”
15.00 – 15.45	Discussions and deliberations
15.45 – 16.00	Official Workshop Closure; Dr Dan Kisauzi, DFID Crop Post-Harvest Programme, Director, Regional Office
16.00 – 18.00	Cocktail

APPENDIX 2
List of Workshop Participants

1. Dr Willie Odwongo, Director, PMA Secretariat
2. Mr Tom Mugisa, Programme Officer, PMA Secretariat
3. Ms Caroline S. Asimo, PMA Secretariat
4. Mr Geoffrey Okoboi, IITA / Foodnet
5. Ms Jovia Manzi, Linking Project, Kampala
6. Mr John Jagwe, IITA / Foodnet
7. Ms Emily Arayo, IITA / Foodnet
8. Mr Dennis Bisase, IITA / Foodnet
9. Mr Victor Ogwang, Principal Assistant Agric. Officer, Apac District LG
10. Mr Kasozi, Frederick, Marketing Officer, Masindi District LG
11. Mr Isabirye Abu Azed, Chairman, Lira Produce Traders Association
12. Dr Otim Bernard Ogong, NAADS Coordinator, Lira District
13. Mr Benson Taiwo, Marketing Technician, Foodnet
14. Ms Cecilia Agang, Researcher, Lira
15. Mr Anyach Geoffrey, Researcher, DETREC Lira
16. Ms Kezia E. Oteng, Researcher, Lira
17. Mr Emmanuel Odongo, Researcher, Lira
18. Mr Afai Sylvano, Researcher, DETREC, Lira
19. Ms Namagembe Mariam, Member, Lira Produce Association
20. Mr Tom Okello, Farmer, Lira District
21. Ms Margaret Axo, Chairperson, Farmer Group
22. Ms Filda Okello, Chairperson, Farmer Group
23. Mr Davies Alachu, Production Manager, Voice of Teso
24. Dr Rita Laker, Director, AT (U)
25. Mr Godfrey Omony, AT (U)
26. Ms Julian Nyachwo, Technical Advisor, AT (U)
27. Mr Oremo M Opio, Agricultural Officer, Lira District LG
28. Mr Niwagaba Justinian, AAMP, District Commercial Officer, Mbarara LG
29. Dr Dan Kisauzi, DFID CPHP, Regional Office, Director
30. Ms Eunice Otile, IITA / Foodnet
31. Mr Kajubi Elyah, Project Coordinator, UCA – LIFE Project
32. Mr Emmet Murphy, ACDI / VOCA
33. Mr Mukalezi, PMA Secretariat
34. Mr Adoli Peter, Farmer, Apac District
35. Mr Hugh Bagnall-Oakley, Adviser, NAADS
36. Mr Ntabyo Chris, Project Manager, Uganda Co-operative Alliance
37. Mr David Lumandagga, IITA / Foodnet
38. Mr Alex Rwego, Manager, Uganda Commodity Exchange
39. Mr Sinani Mbabazi, Journalist, Radio One
40. Mr Alex Rwego, Manager, Uganda Commodity Exchange
41. Mr Kelly Wanda, IITA / Foodnet
42. Ms Ruth Butterworth, Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich
43. Dr Monica Janowski, Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich
44. Mr Ulrich Kleih, Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich

APPENDIX 3

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

Overview of the project “Decentralized market information service in Lira District”; Mr Ulrich Kleih, Natural Resources Institute

Production of Radio Series “Together-to-Market”; Dr Monica Janowski, Natural Resources Institute

In-the-field Training of Farmer Groups, Mr Godfrey Omony, Appropriate Technology (Uganda)

Results of Evaluation Survey; by Mr Ulrich Kleih, Natural Resources Institute

Uganda Commodity Exchange (UCE), by Mr Alex Rwego, Manager UCE