

VISIT REPORT

PERI-URBAN INDIGENOUS VEGETABLES PROJECT A0892

Visit to Zimbabwe from 18 to 27 June 2002

By Rudy Schippers

Visit objectives

The main objectives of this visit were:

- Discuss Langton Mukwereza's plan of work on a survey of market opportunities for processed traditional vegetables;
- Establish links with organisations that have experience with processing of vegetables;
- Visit Rosalia Madamba and discuss her plan of work for dissemination of new cowpea varieties;
- Discuss with Ben Mvere and with East-West Seed Company on their continued involvement in and potential collaboration with the indigenous vegetables project;
- Meet Fabeon Chigumira about the continuous role of the Horticultural Research Centre in the project;
- Brief Tafadzwa Sibanda on the latest developments and the approach that the project is now taking.

Langton Mukwereza

Langton will be able to start with the marketing survey within the next two weeks and expects to have everything ready by August. He also mentioned that since the US dollar is now trading at 550 Zim to 1 US as opposed to the rate of 320, all expenses in Zimbabwe have gone up dramatically. He therefore requested whether his original budget, which at the time was equivalent to US\$ 1300 could be kept at that US dollar rate. The above survey will depend on transport, which will need to be provided by HRC Marondera.

University of Zimbabwe

Discussions were held at the Development Technology Centre of the University of Zimbabwe with its Director, Tungamirai Rukini, and with Norman Mhazo and Raymond Nezare.

DTC has been working on a dryer for leafy vegetables and their prototype was found to be both cheap and efficient. They will compare this with the dryer that was developed by NRI/HRC, which is currently kept at Marondera. After discussing various means of collaboration, DTC would like to address

- issues related to drying techniques and equipment for leafy vegetables;
- further processing into soups and sauces, thereby utilising non-traditional vegetables such as onions and tomatoes. This will incorporate food safety and sensory evaluation;
- development of packaging techniques and appropriate storage management methods.

The outputs could be a number of extension guidelines on pre-processing and drying techniques together with a design of the equipment needed and guidelines on packaging techniques and storage methods.

Norman Mhazo mhazo@agric.uz.ac.zw is waiting for a response and mentioned that the budget required will be minimal because most of the activities are already covered under budgets from other projects. The main expense will be in the development of leaflets.

Rosalia Madamba

Rosalia was pleased with the deposit of US\$ 500 and this has meanwhile been handed over to her accounts department. The original plan was based upon a dissemination of seed through Commutech, whereby she was expecting that CTDT would then multiply those seeds further and give them to the farmers. This is clearly not the intention since that would require further funding whereas also CTDT's role would not be appreciated by HRC. The original plan would mean planting at Panmure Experiment Station in Shamva, about 150 km north of Harare. Since the target communities are farmers residing in the peri-urban region

around Bulawayo, production at Matopos Research Station was found to be more realistic especially because this would allow for a field day where farmers can see the new varieties. The field day is planned for around November and at that time the farmers could register for seeds which could be made available during December which is the planting time.

The new budget will require an additional Z\$ 227 960 when compared with the old budget.

However, US\$ costs when expressed at the parallel market rate have not gone up. The original budget of Z\$ 371943 at the rate of 320 to the US dollar would have cost US\$ 1162 whereas the new budget at the present parallel market rate of 550 will cost only US\$ 1092. A deposit of US\$ 500 (equivalent to Z\$ 275 000) has been made so that the additional budget requested will be Z\$ 325 514.

Rosalia handed me the final version of her report, which includes data from the biochemistry department. Please see attachments: evaluating leafyfield.... and Rosalia's seed production proposal.

Ben Mvere

Ben Mvere would be pleased to keep contacts with NRI in good spirits. His boss, Marietta van der Werff fully agrees with the two days per month until 31st March 2003 that Ben could spend on the project.

His final report has been attached whereby he suggested some follow-up activities. The main bottleneck, seed dormancy of the two main target species has not been dealt with by the project and might not be achieved in the limited time remaining. He agreed with the idea about collecting information on open-pollinated vegetable seeds and the need to have a workshop or something similar on this topic. He mentioned that there are several initiatives with regards to small seeded cereals but not on veges. Even though his time will be paid for by East West, I felt that his request to pay his additional expenses such as transport and telephone expenses should be paid for by NRI and accordingly paid for his limited expenses made during my visit.

Horticultural Research Centre Marondera

Fabeon sent us several documents by post and these arrived whilst I was in Zimbabwe. Electronic copies were made available which have been annexed under the titles: budget 2003-2003, Fabeon's report.

Accession list and summary HRC report 2000-2001. There was also a report on his pumpkins work that he carried out for East west seed company which has not been attached. He did not have Ngoni Nenguwo's papers in electronic format but mentioned that he sent Ngoni's report to NRI. Even though Ngoni has asked for an extended leave and rumours have it that he has joined his wife in Rwanda, Fabeon expects him to return to work at the end of July.

Fabeon urgently requires new funding and was hoping that I had some money for him, which was not the case. His main funding needs are for his staff member Edwin Marongwe who is not employed by the government but by the project. Meanwhile, despite the new posts that are available to HRC Marondera, he has not been able to find new staff members to replace his former work and that of Ben Mvere. Now that he is director of all horticultural research stations in the country (including Chiredzi etc), he spends most of his time on admionistration and won't have much time to do work for the project until he gets new staff.

Fabeon experienced major problems with HRC's email and set up his own where we could reach him when needed. He usually checks his email once a week on chigumirawangwerume@yahoo.com

Meanwhile HRC experiences a strong demand for the seeds produced by the project and is hardly able to cope. There is an especially strong demand for okra seed because okra does not require oil for cooking and there is no oil in the country. In the end HRC agreed with East West Seed company to let them produce seeds of the local rape crop, *Brassica juncea*, for which there is a good local market. Also demand for the project's specialities, spiderplant and jute mallow is greater than the supply. The dissemination of seeds thereby appears to have been taken care of.

Fabeon agreed with the idea of having a marketing survey on processed traditional vegetables in Mutare and Bulawayo and is prepared to make the project Landrover available for that purpose. He does however insist that upon completion of the work, the landrover dealer should first service the vehicle and the bill for that

should be paid by the project. He does not have a budget for maintenance and repairs from the Ministry and upon checking his funding request from NRI, he also did not include that item on his list of expected expenditure for the project. From what I understand, this landrover has been serviced only recently and is in good condition. Therefore, Fabeon's request is not unreasonable in my opinion.

Fabeon would like to see a series of leaflets on the vegetables that the project has been working on so that he could hand these out to farmers. He mentioned leaflets on spiderplant, jute mallow, cowpeas, okra, pumpkins, rape and Ethiopian kale.

Elias Mutimutema

Elias Mutimutema from Mutare handed me his report and I paid him the Z\$ 42,000 outstanding because there were insufficient funds left at HRC to pay him for the work done. He mentioned that there is a lot of interest at ADA, his new workplace, to produce indigenous vegetables out of season and he may work on that in the future. Elias handed many seed samples of the spiderplants collected from Mutare and these represented both seeds from individual plants and seeds from a series of selected plants. These were handed over to Ben Mvere who will hand them over to HRC Marondera.

Tafadzwa Sibanda

Tafadzwa agreed with the new approach taken and mentioned that she is not in a position to give any instructions to participants so that she cannot tell Fabeon to for instance allow Mukwereza to use the project vehicle. Fortunately, this issue has now been resolved but since the vehicle has been donated to HRC, the programme has no control over it any longer. She fully agreed with the approach to involve a range of other people and organisations and asked to be kept updated about developments. She further asked to get the final version of the socio-economic surveys in 3 cities. I was under the impression that these were handed over to her quite a long time ago but she mentioned that these were drafts and people had made amendments to that. I am not aware of such changes and also Fabeon when contacted about this, knew nothing. She would like to see the final version of the workshop proceedings with the logos of all participating organisations including DR&SS.