

## Appendix 5 Northern Province Millers

### *Mapate mill*

The owner of the only mill in Mapate is Mr J.M. Mukwevho, who started in 1960. Today his hammer mill is powered by electricity. He mills maize, three days a week (Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays) at a charge of R4 for a 20-litre bucket. The busy period is from April to May. Most farmers, however, take their maize to Duthuni mill, as the hammer mill has its limits and only mills to the samp stage (stamped or crushed maize).

### *Majosi mill*

Most Basani villagers in the Lowveld District mill their maize at the mill of Mr SG Nkuna at Majosi, 42 km from Giyani. The mill was started in 1997 as one of many ventures by the farmer/businessman. He also owns a brickyard, bottle stores and bar-lounges. The mill mills maize produced by small farmers (all stages to final fine milling) and there is no maize variety differentiation or quality check. Maize milled is for home-consumption and the mill does not buy maize, neither stores it. Maize is milled all year long, but there are more customers after pension pay-out day, and less from September to April. Competition is from other similar mills in the Northern District. The milling price includes transport for customers from and back to their respective villages and travels according to a fixed transport programme.

### *Duthuni mill*

Duthuni is a village 5 km from Mapate in the Northern District. The mill was started in 1958 and has since developed and outgrown the original building. It has two hammer mills and two roller mills. It provides a service to nine villages in the area, but experiences competition from other mills as well as the large NTK roller mill in Thohoyandou.

The miller's price is fixed for a year and on the date of the survey visit, was R6.50 for the 25-litre bucket (smallest unit) and R32.50 for an 80-kg bag of maize. The mill makes samp as well as fine flour, and the farmers do the maize washing by hand. Transport, according to a fixed programme, is included in the price. The only truck travels to Mapate on Thursdays. Those not using the transport pay R0.50 less per unit.

The miller experiences no problem with the quality of maize, but there was a drastic decrease in quantity and quality in 2000 following the autumn floods. In normal years, the April to June-July period is very busy, with January being very quiet. Farmers usually bring their maize in the small quantities required for home use. The mill does not otherwise buy or trade in maize.

### *NTK Venda roller mills Pty. Ltd.*

The NTK Venda roller mill, or NTK as referred to by the farmers, is situated on the main road (R524) in Thohoyandou. It mills only maize, mostly from commercial farms all over the Northern Province. The proportion from small-scale farmers varies from month to month but the total is never more than 500 tons. For July 2000, the small-scale farmer contribution was 300 tons from the total of 1900 tons milled during the month.

Assistant manager Patrick Madambiri stated that the quality of maize they receive from small-scale farmers is good, being both hybrid and traditional maize varieties. The hardness of

traditional maize varieties is not a problem, but it is sometimes rejected due to the dark colour (red, black and brown) of the kernels which affects the colour of the milled product. Customers prefer to buy "white" maize meal. A quality check is also done on the moisture content before milling.

The biggest problem NTK faces with small-scale farmers' maize is that farmers store their maize unprotected in granaries for too long. By the time these farmers bring the maize for milling, it is severely damaged by pests, which affects the quality and has to be rejected. NTK would prefer it if farmers brought their maize for milling immediately after harvesting.

NTK feel they have a good record and a healthy state of affairs with farmers. Representatives of the mill visit communities during the harvest period to inform farmers on the mill's services, the maize quality needed for milling and to improve relations. The prices for services have remained the same for the past three years. The mill also provides transport on request, to collect and return farmers with their maize. They do not follow a routine transport programme and have no contracts with farmers.

The services provided are:

Mill maize, farmer pays for service depending on final product.

Buy maize from farmers, cash sale or on account.

Trade: Exchange weighed bag of maize for maize meal.

Storage: Farmer deposits maize, opens an account with his particulars and the receipt entitles farmer to collect maize meal to the value deposited, when needed.

The NTK branches at Giyani and Tzaneen have closed down due to economic reasons. NTK also has sales points such as the "M-farms" community shops

## Appendix 6 The Traders

### *M-farms Community shops*

During the survey, a number of M-farms community shops were observed. Most of these shops showing the logo and billboard were around Thohoyandou in the Northern District, but were also present in the Central and Lowveld Districts.

An M-farms community shop near the village of Maswanganyi, 10 km from Giyani, was visited on 4 August 2000. The community shop is owned by NTK on a yard rented from NPDAE since 1999. The shop, with the logo of "M-farms", sells "Magnifisan" maize meal it receives from NTK at Thohoyandou. Two types of maize meal were sold, the "special" at R 110.00 per 80-kg bag and the "sieved" at R99.99 per 80-kg bag. Smaller units from 50-kg down to 0.5-kg bags are also sold. When buying in bulk, a discount may be calculated.

The shop does not buy or receive maize from farmers (only the NTK roller mill in Thohoyandou does), but apparently retailers at Steelpoort (Mpumalanga) trade maize meal for shelled maize.

The shop also sells farming input material such as implements, pesticides and seeds. It was stated that the most popular hybrid maize cultivar seed sold was the SNK 2147. This is due to its adaptation to the climate. It does well under dry-land cultivation and produces two or more cobs. Other brands (and cultivars) also sell but are not as popular as this cultivar and some farmers may leave if it is not in stock.

## **Appendix 7 Transport**

### *Majosi mill transport*

Basani villagers (Lowveld District) mill their maize at the mill of Mr SG Nkuna at Majosi, 42 km from Giyani. The milling price includes transport for customers from and back to their respective villages. The owner's son Nelson Nkuna is a salaried manager of the mill as well as the driver of the truck that transports customers from their homes to the mill and back again. He follows a transport programme with certain villages per day (Basani on Tuesdays and Thursdays). He averages 400 to 600 km a day and travels to villages as far as 75 km from Majosi. He checks on the truck's carrying capacity (suspension) and thus it happens that not all customers and their maize at a village can be transported. He does return to collect those that do wait. His morning starts at 03:00, and works six days a week except on Sundays (when he transports bricks from the brick-yard). As maize is milled all year long, the transport is also offered all year. There are more customers after pension pay-out day, and less from September to April. He has had complaints of maize meal bag theft by customers at the off-loading points and has spoken about it to his customers.