

SUCCESS STORY

Planting the Seeds of Prosperity

USAID sponsors training workshops and attendance at Zambia's Agritech Expo to improve yields and increase farmer incomes



- The Vice President of Zambia, Dr. Guy Scott, presided over Agritech Expo, opening the event and even taking a ride on one of the tractors during a field demonstration.
- USAID Deputy Mission Director Littleton Tazewell from USAID Southern Africa facilitated a discussion on the importance of supplier relationships in developing agricultural value chains at the Agribusiness Congress, a one-day conference that took place as part of the Expo. Panel sessions covered key issues including export and import regulations, crop diversification, innovative finance and supplier relationships, and offered designated networking opportunities for delegates and exhibitors.

In April 2014, USAID's Southern Africa Trade Hub supported Agritech Expo, Zambia's first outdoor agricultural event servicing the needs of the entire agricultural value chain. Over 8,000 participants—including suppliers, manufacturers, retailers, agents and service providers—attended the event at the GART Research Centre in Chisamba where the latest agricultural technology and farming solutions were showcased to farmers throughout the region in partnership with the Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU). Live crop trials, machinery demonstrations, professional consultation and vendor networking were all valuable aspects of the event. The support of the Trade Hub enabled Agritech Expo to expand its reach to serve a broader, regional audience and introduce needed technology and agricultural services to farmers to improve incomes and improve food security. The Trade Hub also sponsored a free technical workshop program training 500 farmers with case studies, business tips and best practices for soil quality, mechanization, increased yields and sustainability.

Zambia's booming agriculture sector accounts for 35% of the national GDP, USD\$4.5 billion. The expansion of small-scale farming and the development of emerging and commercial farms are the key contributors to the growth of the sector. Average crop yields across Zambia are 1.5-2 metric tons per hectare, but there is potential to achieve 8-10 metric tons per hectare in certain maize varieties. Crop demonstration plots at the Expo showed farmers the difference that quality seed and correct planting techniques can have on productivity, while seventy companies (including machinery, seed, financial services, grain handling, agricultural commodities, irrigation and livestock exhibitors) demonstrated their products over 24 hectares of expo space. Farmers were able to test-drive tractors, combine harvesters, bakkies and quads themselves in one of eleven working demonstration areas.

"Agritech Zambia 2014 was a dream come true for our farmers and our agricultural sector as a whole," explains Dr. Evelyn Nguleka, president of ZNFU. "Our partnership with the Southern Africa Trade Hub amplified the relevance of this groundbreaking event, especially for our emerging farmers who participated in the hosted workshops." The expo was such a success that a five-year contract with the event organizers has been signed.

USAID's Trade Hub sponsored fifty emerging small-scale farmers to attend the inaugural Agritech Expo. This support gave farmers access to the two-day show to help them grow their businesses, increase profits, network within the industry, test machinery and equipment, and see the latest in agricultural technologies and solutions to improve their farms. As part of the expo, the Trade Hub also sponsored a vendor subsidiary program to finance the participation of small-to-medium enterprises from within the SADC region. Eight SMEs were able to attend due to this support, which gave them the opportunity to benefit from direct exposure and business networking within the regional farming community.

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