

FOOD SECURITY RESEARCH PROJECT

**IMPROVING THE TRANSFER AND
USE OF AGRICULTURAL MARKET
INFORMATION IN ZAMBIA:**

A USER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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ACRONYMS

ACE	Agricultural Commodity Exchange
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMIC	Agricultural Market Information Centre
AMIS	Agricultural Market Information System
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDT	Cotton Development Trust
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DMCO	District Marketing and Cooperative Officer
EBZ	Export Board of Zambia
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning System Network
FRA	Food Reserve Agency
FSRP	Food Security Research Project
GTZ	German Technical Assistance to Zambia
MACO	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
MCTI	Ministry of Commerce Trade and Industry
MENR	Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources
MSU	Michigan State University
NAIS	National Agricultural Information Services
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PAM	Programme Against Malnutrition
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SEMCO	Senior Marketing and Cooperative Officer
TAZ	Tobacco Association of Zambia
ZCCM	Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines
ZEGA	Zambia Export Growers Association
ZNBC	Zambia National Broadcasting Corporatio
ZNFU	Zambia National Farmers Union

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Marketing Information is crucial in agricultural production, in addition to labour, land and capital, and more so in a liberalised market situation, like in Zambia. The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives has since 1993, been providing marketing information to key stakeholders. However, due to the changing situations, it became imperative to conduct User Needs Assessment so as to review the current perception about the service MACO has been providing, and know to what extent the stakeholders were being provided with relevant information.

With the help of the Food Security Research Project, the Agricultural Marketing Information Centre (AMIC), undertook a User needs Assessment. The main objective of the Assessment was to review the current agricultural marketing information system and to establish felt marketing needs for agricultural marketing participants and other interested parties.

Specifically, the assessment aimed at achieving the following:

- i) Assess the marketing information needs among user groups.
- ii) Assess the current level of satisfaction and utilization of existing marketing support (information) services including AMIC; and
- iii) Make recommendations on the necessary improvements, or modifications to the current agricultural marketing information system.

To meet the above objectives, the assessment was undertaken in selected consumer and production areas. These are Lusaka, Central, Copperbelt and Southern Provinces. AMIC staff in collaboration with Agricultural Commodity Exchange (ACE) and Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU) conducted the study. The Southern and Central provinces were selected on the basis that they are among the high production areas of the country, whereas, the Copperbelt and Lusaka provinces were selected on the basis that they are among the high consumption provinces in the country.

Findings

Traders and Large Scale Farmers

According to traders and large-scale farmers, the main information required includes:

- Commodities selling in large volumes;
- Source of supply and prevailing prices;
- Prevailing selling prices at various markets,
- Markets available for large volumes and prices;
- Marketing costs relating to transport and storage;
- Exchange rates and conditions for exporting / importing are additional information needs for cross-border traders.

In addition, farmers and input traders are interested in knowing the source and prices of inputs in regional markets, especially South Africa. Indications of expected commodity production levels especially of Maize have also been of interest to this user group. The information gaps indicated by traders or large-farmers are:

- International trade conditions,
- Current stocks,
- Expected crop production,
- Prices of inputs at source of supply,
- Medium-term non-grant loans,
- Alternative large-volume buyers to millers,
- The prevailing prices and terms of transaction; and
- International commodity prices.

The most preferred modes of transmission for large scale farmers and traders are:

- Radio for traders;
- E-mail or phone for large-scale farmers.

This information should be disseminated weekly or monthly depending on nature of information required and the time of the season.

Processors and Millers

Though most millers enjoy a monopoly type of competition in seasons of surplus production as far as maize purchases are concerned, there were still indications that support services in terms of marketing information were required to enhance their already existing systems. The important role of the government through the Agricultural Marketing Information Centre was acknowledged and therefore should be revamped and improved. Most of the most reliable mode of diffusion of information was through their own networks. The use of the mass media as well as the AMIC products was highly recommended. Dissemination mechanisms preferred included using e-mail and/or fax, as most of these millers and processors do have these facilities.

Small Scale Farmers and CBOs

The small scale farmers need to have knowledge on the prevailing prices on the market for their decision making on choice of commodity. In addition to this, they would also require information on transportation costs to various main markets. Farmers also need to have knowledge on the costs of production, the understanding and use of market information, and the prevailing prices in areas near them and distant places to help them in decision making.

Small scale farmers believe that radio was a very efficient way of disseminating information, since they listen to the radio on a daily basis and mostly at particular times while waiting for a special programme or after the news broadcast. Some problems were identified as regards radio broadcast but the general impression was that it still is a very reliable method of dissemination. Boards are also one of the suggested ways of disseminating information, but it has to be mentioned that these boards need to be regularly and timely updated so as to present a good picture of the prevailing situation and to gain confidence from among the farmers.

Public Institutions and Non Governmental Organisations

In as far as the institutions are concerned, AMIC should view itself within the following framework:-

- To have a more forecast and updated database which should be reliable, and stand the test of time,
- To be the centre of agricultural inputs and outputs information for all stakeholders in Zambia,
- AMIC to endeavour to expand the coverage of agricultural inputs and outputs, on which information is provided,
- AMIC to form strategic linkages with the Export Board of Zambia, ZEGA and other public and private entities to ensure that both local and international agricultural commodity prices are covered in details,
- Need for effective collaboration between AMIC and NAIS,
- Need for decentralised AMIC,
- Explore possibility of using other existing capacity within MACO to collect and disseminate information,
- Need to publicise AMIC activities,
- Need to collaborate with other institutions such as Export Board of Zambia on dissemination of price and market information to end-users.

Given the above, though there seems to be a growing need for marketing information from AMIC, need to ensure that the information it provides is accurate and timely and is able to meet the needs of the institutions is more important. Where AMIC has no comparative advantage, other institutions better placed should be able to fill in the missing gaps.

Recommendations

- Timely and accurate information about the current commodity stocks, the expected marketing situation, alternative buyers and prevailing prices should be disseminated by radio preferably after the news bulletins or before the famous radio programmes.
- Radio programmes should be developed to educate marketing participants on the importance of marketing information, and how to use it. This will in the course of time stimulate great interest and demand for it. This demand-pull on information-providers will create pressure for efficiency and targeting.
- Crop forecasting information need to be provided as early as possible, with the use of the extension service in disseminating it. AMIC should further make strong linkages with the National Early Warning Unit of MACO and Food Reserve Agency (FRA) to obtain information on current stocks for dissemination.
- Weights and standards should be introduced to enable market participants, more especially the traders, determine the quantity from a given bag (package) before hand. This will lessen transaction costs of making physical confirmations with 'tins'.
- There is also need to strengthen relationships between AMIC and ZNFU field representatives in the process of disseminating marketing information. The large-scale

farmers and other farmers under ZNFU could be provided with information using the ZNFU representative offices based in various towns.

- AMIC should maintain its links in the FRA mealie meal prices information system as well as linking up with the ZNFU market information system for harmonisation.
- Community Radio stations should be used to disseminate marketing information. A number of community radio stations have been installed and agricultural information ranks highly.
- There should be more collaboration between AMIC and the Early Warning and Data Base Management Unit.
- AMIC data should mainly be disseminated through e-mail for the large and medium scale millers, traders, and farmers, while the radio programmes should be developed for small-scale farmers. Hard copies of Bulletins should be sent to all public institutions including government departments who have interest in agricultural marketing information.
- More resources should be put into AMIC so as to improve its operations. Strengthening of provincial/local level marketing information systems where the strength exists should be undertaken and supported.
- AMIC should concentrate in providing marketing information on all Cereals as well as Groundnuts, Fertilisers as well as other inputs such as seeds; and information packaged to meet the needs of different user groups.
- Livestock and fisheries information is needed, however, in the short-run, at a national level, the resources are limited. Given the local importance, district and provincial market information systems may be able to incorporate these sectors.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction and Justification

With the introduction of economic liberalization in the Zambian economy, a number of factors have changed. Entrepreneurs (farmers included) react differently to changes in the economic playing field. However, in Zambia, long years of centralized planning, implied that changes in farmer's attitudes were driven primarily by actions/decisions made by central government planners. For instance agricultural commodity prices were set by central government and were uniform throughout the country. The current phenomenon of market liberalisation has been new to most market players, both in rural areas as well as urban. It would be detrimental to assume that the same needs expressed or known then are still obtaining. It is therefore important that at such a stage as when liberalization is taking effect an assessment of what the current marketing information needs are, so that Government activities are tailored to meet such needs. Further, assessing the deficiencies in the system is very important if proper remedial steps have to be undertaken. In addition, AMIC has been providing marketing information through weekly bulletins. It is therefore important to also determine whether, the information provided has met the user's needs.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the assessment is to review the current agricultural marketing information system and to establish felt marketing needs for agricultural marketing participants and other interested parties.

Specifically, the study aimed at achieving the following: -

- i)** To assess the marketing information needs among user groups.
- ii)** To assess the current level of satisfaction and utilization of existing marketing support (information) services including AMIC.
- iii)** To identify other agricultural marketing information providers and the type of information they provide.
- iv)** Make recommendations on the necessary improvements, if any, to the current agricultural marketing information system.

1.3. Methodology

The study was conducted in selected consumer and production areas. These are Lusaka, Central, Copperbelt and Southern Provinces. AMIC staff in collaboration with Agricultural Commodity Exchange (ACE) and Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU) conducted the study. The Southern and Central provinces were selected on the basis that they are among the high production areas of the country, whereas, the Copperbelt and Lusaka provinces were selected on the basis that they are among the high consumption provinces in the country.

Different User Groups were identified in this study. These were large-scale farmers; small-scale farmers; traders; processors; and public institutions and NGOs. Individual farmers, both small and large, from major producer provinces, namely Southern and Central provinces,

were selected with the help of the ACE and ZNFU collaborators as well as Provincial and District Agricultural Co-ordinators.

Large Scale Farmers were selected with the help of the Agricultural Commodity Exchange as well as Zambia National Farmers Union. These farmers were selected from all the provinces visited during the study. One on one discussions were held using a semi-structured interview schedule to collect information from this user group (see Annex 4). This schedule was followed so as to allow the interviewer to probe further and not restrict the interview to the outline of the information required.

The traders were selected from the market areas from the provinces mentioned-above. In selecting traders, it was ensured that almost all commodities that AMIC covers were selected. Researchers did not use a randomised sample selection, but sought to interview sufficient numbers in various groups. . When conducting the interviews a user guide (see Annex 4) was followed to allow uniformity across the respondents. A less structured interview was followed so as to allow the interviewer to probe further and not restrict the interview to the outline of the information required.

Primary data were collected from the small-scale farmers who were grouped in Focus groups. These groups were selected based on information from Agricultural Officers as well as Zambia National Union representatives in the areas visited. These groups had members numbered between 6 and 10, and were mainly farmers who are under the Zambia National Farmers programme. Most notable in these groupings is that fisheries or exclusively livestock small scale farmers were not interviewed. There were no data collected from secondary sources for the purposes of this study. Data were further collected from some selected Cooperative societies and community based organisations such as CARE, OXFAM and World Vision.

The survey of Public Institutions and Non-governmental Organisations used a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. This is because some of the data, which came out of the quantitative approach, may need to be explored further through qualitative methods. The survey instrument used was a questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions. The close-ended questions provided the quantitative information while the open-ended questions provided qualitative information so as to allow the recipient to express new or different issues to be brought out.

A sample survey of selected individual Government Departments or Ministries, and NGOs was conducted. The sample was only in Lusaka. Since the results of this section of the survey would be used mainly for policy direction, only those institutions with functions aimed at providing support services as well as donor agencies and NGOs, which have played a major role in the agriculture sector in general, were selected. Selection was also done in such a manner that the resultant outcome would, to some degree, be generalised to other institutions in the same category. Of the selected institutions covered under the survey very few were recipients of the AMIC bulletin while the rest were non-recipients.

To collect information from this user group, a questionnaire was developed and used. Furthermore, questionnaires were again sent to institutions, which did not respond initially in order to improve on the response rate. A sample of the AMIC bulletin was enclosed to facilitate easy understanding and application of the questions posed in the questionnaire.

A total number of eighteen (18) questionnaires were sent to a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) Government and Donor offices. These were broken down into seven donor agencies, four NGOs and seven Government Departments/Statutory Boards. Selection was based on the roles these institutions were perceived to be playing in agricultural market information dissemination and utilisation. A total of eight institutions replied.

Table 1: Number of User Groups Interviewed by Type

USER GROUP	NUMBER INTERVIEWED	GEOGRAPHIC AREA (PROVINCE)
Large-scale Farmers	8	Southern, Lusaka, Central & Copperbelt
Large scale trader	1	Southern
Medium scale traders	5	Southern, Lusaka, Central & Copperbelt
Medium/large scale cross border traders	1	
Medium scale mobile traders	1	Southern, Lusaka, Central & Copperbelt
Small scale mobile traders	5	Southern, Lusaka, Central & Copperbelt
Small-scale cross-border traders	5	Southern, Lusaka, Central & Copperbelt
Medium scale input traders	2	Southern, Lusaka, Central & Copperbelt
Small scale input traders	2	Southern, Lusaka, Central & Copperbelt
Small scale localised traders	20	Southern, Lusaka, Central & Copperbelt
Millers and Processors	17	Southern, Lusaka, Central Copperbelt
Public Institutions/NGOs	8	Lusaka Province
Small-Scale Farmers	30	Lusaka, Southern, Central,
Farmer Groups	3	Southern , Central
Community Based Organisations	3	Copperbelt

II. INFORMATION NEEDS BY USER GROUP

2.1. Traders

The traders identified in the survey were localised traders, mobile traders, input traders and cross-border traders. The main characteristic of localised traders was that they had permanent stands on a public market and purchased their stocks within the same town, where as for mobile traders, the main one was that they moved into producer areas to procure their stocks.

2.1.1. Decision Making on what Commodity to Deal in and the Information Needs

The study attempted to identify the marketing information traders needed to choose the commodities to deal in. It was felt that there should be issues that traders consider before they choose a commodity. The commodities, therefore, are not arbitrarily chosen.

According to the discussions held with individual traders at public markets and markets by the road side, it was revealed that the decision on what commodity to deal in is dependent on a number of factors, among others, the funds available, the physical nature of the commodity - whether perishable or not- and the likelihood of a commodity to give high profits. Traders indicated that they at times conducted trial sales of selected commodities in order to determine their profitability. Other traders appear to tell the most profitable commodities by merely observing the commodities the majority of the traders are dealing in. Several of the traders who were asked about the way they choose what commodity to deal in simply said, "You just see what most of the people are selling and follow suit." Women traders by and large submitted such statements.

The information, therefore, required to make a decision as to which commodities to deal in are types of commodities the majority of the traders are dealing in, the places where they sell the commodities and the price, source of supply for the commodities and the price at which the commodity is procured, the minimum quantities at which they are sold, types and form of transport available, and transportation costs.

Traders regularly refer to this information, as they are generally not glued to one type of commodity. They move with the varying marketing situations and seasons. It was observed that most of the retail traders diversify in the type of commodities they handle, selling more than one commodity at a stand. However, assuming information is available, the ability to switch over entirely to other types of commodities is largely determined by the funds available and capacity to handle the commodities in question, especially the aspect of perishability.

The source and mode by which they obtain this information was indicated as from fellow traders, personal observation, relatives and friends, through informal conversations. Those intending to start trading as an occupation mostly utilize the latter source. It tends to be somehow difficult for someone to use the traders already in the system as most of them have a tendency to conceal information for fear of increasing the competition on the market. This was evident from one respondent in Monze who was called aside by his elder brother who whispered instructions. Thereafter, the respondent pretended not to know much about the trading operations. This, however, also depends on the type of commodity and form of trade about which someone is trying to get information. Decision-making information seemed

harder to extract from mobile traders, more especially the cross-border traders, than the localized traders.

Generally, medium to large-scale traders obtain information for decision-making over a period of time. For information to be meaningful, it has to be provided within the seasonal time frame. It has to be forecasting in nature, and instant in season. For instance, a fertiliser trader who wants to make a decision on whether to trade in fertiliser in a given year should know what quantity the government will bring into the country. The information about the quantities to be brought in by Government is needed before the planting season begins. The forecasting nature of the information, in this case is what the expected deficit in fertiliser supply is, and the likely implications for this. The information about the current fertiliser stocks has to be instant in season and will not be useful later.

For a trader considering dealing in groundnuts, the information about the supply level of groundnut in a producer area, how long high levels of supply would be sustained are issues of concern. The information about the latter is forecasting in nature.

The form of trade, whether to buy on the wholesale market for later re-sale within the same location (town) or to travel to locations of producers, largely depends on the available funds and the anticipated returns. Male traders largely dominate the form of trade involving travelling to source of supply, which in fact require some form of high investment in terms of funds and time—away from home. Female traders most often opt for the local type of trade, which requires minimal monetary investment and shorter absences from home. Transportation costs, prices of commodities at source of supply (which in turn determine the expected quantities to procure with a given amount), road levies, level of supply and other overheads are the main information requirements. Here the fellow traders are the main source of information. Only relatives and friends who have operated before could be of assistance in matters pertaining to such issues.

A few traders who were asked how they went about selling simply responded, "It is you who know better how we should go about it. If we are making a mistake you should correct us." It was apparent that even though most of the localized traders try to analyse how profitable a commodity is, the techniques they use do not enable them to gain a clear insight into the expected returns. A good number of them go into business with a 'let me try and see' situation. Besides, the majority consider order price and transport to the source of supply (they do not consider the transport costs from home to the market where they sell and back) as the only costs. When asked as to how they tell that a commodity would give profit the answers were generally vague. Some added on to say that they only tell their profits after the money they used to order the commodities has been recovered. Whatever is received after that is considered as profit.

2.1.2. How Traders Obtain Stocks for Sale

The marketing information needed, how it is being currently received and how best it should be received as traders obtain stocks for sale was looked at during the survey. The attempt yielded the following results:

Local Mobile Traders

The mobile traders who go into areas where the commodity is produced, in most cases, camp at one home in the village and use the owner of the house or the village headman to publicise their presence in the area. For instance, a groundnut trader from Lusaka may travel to one of the villages in Chipata of Eastern Province. Traders in most cases negotiate prices with farmers. However, if traders are many and each one would like to finish the transactions and get back quickly, they compete amongst themselves by bidding the highest.

Some traders revealed an understanding of circumstances that may lead a farmer to sell even at a lower price. They indicated that those who are in a hurry generally agree to sell even if the price is unattractive. What this seems to suggest is that as long as there are urgent issues to be solved farmers are likely to sell their produce even if they know that they are somehow losing out. The traders are aware of the possibility of such incidences and they try to look for them and take advantage of the situation.

The mobile traders indicated that the type of information required relates to supply areas where the needed commodity is available, the prevailing prices, terms of transaction - cash or barter, types and form of transport available, and transportation costs. They get their information about the availability of stocks and others, through their fellow traders, and truck drivers coming / returning from potential supply areas. With passage of time friendship has been created, which makes it easy for them to freely exchange information with transporters and their passengers. Travellers from potential producer areas are asked what the supply situation is like and the ruling prices. This information is obtained as often as they get in touch with people coming from supply areas.

Further, traders themselves, also act as their own source of information - on the basis of historical knowledge. They know from experience which places harvest earlier than others. When they exhaust the produce from the known early harvesting areas, they automatically move to the next likely places. It sometimes turns out, that the reality in that season is contrary to expectation. One groundnut trader confidently stated, "We know from experience which areas are traditional producers of the commodities we are looking for; we first target those but sometimes we are unlucky. We find that the area has performed poorly in that season. In such situations we are forced to move onto other areas." Evidently, this results in loss of time and money.

Cross-Border Traders

The cross-border traders indicated that they require information relating to prevailing prices of commodities in the external market, supply situation, transportation costs, official, market or unofficial exchange rates, conditions for importing and exporting commodities in respective countries within the region, marketing management-skills information to assist them to improve their operations. Most of the cross-border traders spoken to indicated that they physically move to places where the required commodities are available and get the required information. Others indicated that they obtain information by phoning fellow traders, who normally stay in the originating / receiving country.

They get the required information as often as they go to get fresh supplies. This ranges from fortnightly to monthly. The information about unofficial exchange rates, conditions for importing and exporting commodities in respective countries within the region, and marketing management-skills information to assist them to improve their operations is not easily accessible.

Localised Traders

The 'stationary' or localized traders purchase their stocks from farmers or mobile traders who bring the commodities on the wholesale market. The farmer / trader himself offers the price. The information required by this category of traders relates to availability of the required commodity, prevailing prices, the quality and quantity of the commodity and the level of supply. The traders themselves physically collect this information even before they think of replenishing their stocks. They also exchange information with their fellow traders through chatting. They make personal observation on those fellow traders who are replenishing their supplies.

It was apparent that traders are not in a position to tell whether the unit of measure, say a sack, which they are purchasing, contains the right quantity of a given commodity (i.e. the expected number of tins). Scales are not available on the market. They have to verify after they have purchased. There was an instance when one woman trader in Ndola divided her attention between answering questions during the interviews and counting the tins of rice from the bag she had procured. She stopped in the middle of her answering and declared, "I have two tins less!" On another instance, a 'kapenta' trader in Ndola mentioned that there were times when tins of kapenta from a bag were less than expected. She however, noted with happiness that the white seller was understanding and compensated them when they reported the matter. When asked about why the traders could not verify before buying, the reply was that the people who want to buy are so many that the sellers do not have time to give special attention to an individual trader. Any attempt to verify would receive from a trader responses like "if you don't want to buy just leave, there are others that want to buy". It was learnt that when a wholesaler arrives at the market with commodities on very high demand, the traders rush and each take hold of at least a bag or package and conclude transactions thereafter. The traders attempt to negotiate with the wholesalers about the prices of the commodities. There are however, some traders that are simply price takers. When asked why they do not ask the sellers to reduce they answered, "*Bushe umwine nga napingula umutengo, finshi wingacita?*" This is vernacular language in Zambia, which could literally be translated as, "If the owner has decided on the price, what can you do?"

Further, it was observed that some of the traders under this category seemed not to attach much importance to acquainting themselves with commodity wholesale prices in other markets within the same town. When probed further why there was a seeming little interest in wholesale prices from other markets within the same location, traders revealed that some markets did not have a wide range of commodities and the supply level was generally low.

Input traders

The input traders that were found operating could be put in two to three categories. One group of traders operate on public markets. They normally have very few stocks and in most cases than not, they sell fertiliser as repacks. The other category of traders own shops where they stock inputs. They are in most cases in the medium to large-scale category of traders. The third category is composed of rural shopkeepers who have been enlisted by projects to supply inputs to rural farmers. These, in a way, are also in the small-scale category of input traders.

Part of the input traders indicated that they got their stocks from established input suppliers whilst others indicated that they got their stocks from vendors. The information required is about alternative sources of seed and fertiliser inputs on the local market and the prevailing prices, local transportation costs, prices of the fertiliser inputs on the external market – especially prices of fertilisers at point of origin, current commodity stocks, information on time inputs would arrive into the country and at what price (including inputs procured through government effort), transportation costs from point of origin.

The demand for the information is seasonal and hence should be received before the planting season. For instance, traders indicated that the current commodity stocks in the country before the planting season would enable them to assess the likely number of hectares to be put under cultivation by farmers. Hence, they could determine what the likely demand for the inputs is going to be.

The traders indicated that they do not receive most of the information required. They only receive information about the suppliers available in the country and the prevailing prices. The suppliers themselves or the agents of input suppliers provide this information. The traders get their information through personal physical contacts or by phone. For the purpose of updating themselves, they get information once or twice a month.

Seed and fertiliser input traders expressed satisfaction with the manner they were receiving the current information. However, the information they receive is not sufficient. Information relating to prices of fertiliser on the external market – especially prices of fertilisers at point of origin, current fertiliser stocks, current commodity stocks, information on time inputs would arrive into the country and at what price (including inputs procured through government effort), transportation costs from point of origin is not provided or easy to get by.

2.1.3. How Traders Go About Selling

Localized Traders

The traders that buy and sell within the same town sell their commodities on their permanent stands, which are in their trading territories. The information required, in most cases, is what the prevailing prices for the same commodity are within the same market and the order price

of a commodity. They get this information by individually passing through the stands on which the commodities of interest are displayed, and by making physical checks at the wholesale market. It is common to see prices posted on small pieces of cardboard. It is therefore easy in some markets to know competitors' prices without asking. The information obtained is used to determine whether they would be able to sell at a profit. The frequency of obtaining the required information varied from trader to trader. Some appeared to be very proactive by indicating that they collected information every day before commencing the day's business while others gave the impression that the frequency depended on the rate at which the stocks are being replenished. It appears that the latter traders are concerned with the prices at which they should sell their new stocks. Probably this could have to do with the distance to the wholesale market.

Here again it should be understood that pricing of commodities does not depend on how low one or two traders price their commodities compared to others. The neighbouring traders try to think about the implication of the price on their profit and recovering the principal amount. Those who do not want to follow suit 'suspend' selling until the ones with cheaper stuff clear their stocks or they buy from the cheaper traders as a way of clearing them out.

Mobile Traders of Agricultural Produce

Mobile traders seem to have varied points at which they offload their commodities. Some have, for example, a choice of whether to go to the Copperbelt Province or to go to Lusaka Province. The prevailing prices are the major determining factor of where to offload. They get information pertaining to the prevailing prices from their fellow traders whom they meet in producer areas or traders returning home from business. There are instances when traders rush to town markets upon learning from fellow traders that prices are very good but only to find that more stocks have been offloaded onto the market thereby depressing the prices. According to some traders, timely information on current commodity prices is required and this should be communicated by radio once or twice every week, in the evenings.

Mobile traders upon arrival at the market do some marketing intelligence where they inquire about prevailing prices. They obtain this information by getting in touch with those who are selling. In some situations where traders discover that the price fellow traders are asking for is lower than expected, they try to establish if the trader is selling his own produce. Such information helps them to gain insight into the market situation before they make a decision whether to follow suit or withhold the commodity until such a time when the market situation improves.

Information needs articulated by the mobile traders revealed that they would like to know location of greatest potential buying or concentration of buyers and / or buyers purchasing commodities in large quantities and the prices prevailing. The traders would not like to spend long periods of time at the market, as it tends to be expensive in terms of time and money, which is used for feeding and storage where such facilities are available for renting. The traders indicated that they would like to get such information some few days before they are about to sell. Considering that selling is an on-going operation among traders, it would be helpful to them if weekly information about potential buyers were provided. The traders mainly indicated the radio as the best mode of communication.

Input Traders

Most of the input traders sell their supplies by simply adding a mark-up as recommended by the agents. It is only the traders that procure from vendors who put a mark-up as it befits them. However, they do not fix the prices arbitrarily without any reference to what is prevailing on the market. They get information relating to the supply level on the local market and the prevailing prices. They personally pass through the major outlets to determine this.

The marketing situation faced by input traders in terms of prices does not alter over short periods. It may be before another growing season before changes are effected. Most of them, therefore, appeared to be satisfied with the marketing information relating to their selling activities.

Apparently no input trader spoken to talked or asked about the FRA activities. Neither did any mention about government programmes related to fertiliser selling and pricing.

Cross-border Traders

The cross-border traders, with whom interviews were conducted, largely deal in fruits, in which mobile traders being discussed in this study do not normally deal. For some commodities such as fruits, the market is not completely different. However, for commodities like chicks, premix, feed ingredients and other livestock products, the market is completely different.

The traders in this category indicated that they require information on buyers for the commodities they are handling, the prevailing prices, and the terms of transaction; they would like to know if buyers would purchase and pay cash immediately or if they have to be paid in instalments or if payment has to be made some days after delivery. They get the required information by making individual efforts to survey supermarkets, public markets and other outlets.

A number of them further indicated that they would like to receive information about regional conditions for one to trade, foreign exchange rates (market, official and unofficial), marketing skills-sharpening information. They indicated that they are not currently getting this information easily.

All the traders spoken to indicated that they did not require any alternative information source for the information they are currently receiving, at least for now. For the information they are not receiving, they need new sources.

2.1.4. Perception on Marketing Information Services from MACO

Almost all the traders interviewed expressed ignorance of the marketing information services rendered by the Ministry. Very few of the localized traders still even saw the relevance of such services despite making efforts to explain to them. All of the other types of traders did identify needs.

2.1.5. Information Gaps and Proposed Mode of Diffusion

The information traders need, which they are not currently receiving is highlighted below. Refer to the marketing information needs matrix on Annex 4.5 for more details.

- Terms of transaction – Some of them would like to know if it is cash-on-spot, whether they could exchange the produce with the inputs
- Prices on the external market – especially prices of inputs at point of origin
- Information on time inputs would arrive into the country and at what price
- Information on stocks of maize in the country
- Transportation costs
- Supply situation - The information should possibly even indicate how many sellers are dealing in given commodity so as to determine the level of competition.
- Exchange rates not only official and market rates but also unofficial rates
- Conditions for importing and exporting commodities in respective countries within the region
- Marketing management information to assist them to improve their operations

The proposed mode of diffusion was by radio, newsletter of which some were ready to be subscribers, and through the DMCO's office. It became evident that to catch the attention of this target group, the timing for radio programmes is very crucial. Evenings were indicated as the best time to get to the traders by radio.

2.2. Large Scale Farmers

2.2.1. Information for Decision-Making

The large-scale farmers indicated that information needed for decision making include gross margins for a given commodity, potential market (determined by the current crop stocks), volatility of the commodity market, availability and price of inputs, and expected transportation costs for inputs.

The information is currently received from fellow farmers by phoning or through meetings, newspapers, companies involved in outgrower schemes, commodity associations such as the Tobacco Association of Zambia (TAZ), ZNFU newsletters, and other public media such as radios and television.

Farmers indicated that the following information is not easy to obtain: current stocks of maize in the country, the expected time of delivery of inputs - fertilizer - in the country. This information should be provided sometime before the growing season (starting around June). This information could be provided through a newsletter, which could be accessed by e-mail. However, farmers have developed links with other information providers for information relating to commodities such as milk, soybeans, maize seed and pork.

With regard to maize, farmers indicated that their major markets are milling companies. They would like to have an expanded market so that competition in the market may be enhanced. The situation as it is currently does not completely remove the possibility of formation of cartels by millers. Farmers further observed that whilst the price of maize drops tremendously the prices for mealie-meal and stock feeds seem not to follow the same pattern. It somehow

remains static. However, when the maize grain gets expensive, the responsiveness of milled products is very high.

2.2.2. Marketing Information Currently Being Received and Source

The information required in order to sell or make selling-decision, relates to expected production, current stocks, regional prices, level of expected imports, the landing prices, time imports would arrive in the country (mood of the people and Government), who the buyers are and the prevailing prices, terms of transaction - cash-on-spot, payments in instalments or payments after some days, distance to the market and transportation costs, prices of maize in the region. They would like to get information relating to prices and the mood of the people on the market on the weekly basis, especially for maize.

Most of the information is obtained through the ZNFU Newsletter, ACE, fellow farmers and individual contacts with buyers themselves (e.g. Millers for maize, TAZ for tobacco and butcheries for beef). The general mood of the people is obtained through the print media and the electronic media and business talks with fellow farmers. The expected production of ZNFU members is received from the ZNFU.

The means of communication is generally by phone, and through ZNFU group representatives. Some get in touch with potential buyers once in a fortnight whilst others do so as often as they get into town. The farmers indicated that to confirm the validity of information received from certain sources require phoning several places. From experience some tend to give information on a lower side as opposed to the facts obtaining on the ground. They, therefore, felt that information-providers such as MACO could be impartial and of great service to them. They further expressed their preference for commodity prices to be given as a range instead of a single observation or an average price.

2.2.3. Critical Information Gaps and Proposed Mode of Diffusion

The following were the main information gaps indicated by the respondents: -

i) Medium to Long-term Non-grant Loans

The farmers indicated that it is very difficult to expand without borrowing. However, with the current interest rates it is very prohibitive to borrow. They were of the strong view that they could benefit from medium to long term non-grant loans such as the Japanese non-grant loans. When such financial services are available, the farmers learn about them when it is too late to act. They would therefore, like to receive this information by phone or e-mail where available, as soon as such financial services are available.

ii) Crop Forecasts

Crop forecast information around March/April could put the farmers in focus of what to expect the following marketing season. Crop forecasts should be for the whole country as well as for the sub-region. The farmers expressed concern regarding the crop forecast information relating to the small-scale farmers. Central Statistical Office (CSO) does not produce this on time.

It is not enough for farmers to have crop forecast figures, they would like to be enlightened on what the effect of the commodity supply situation on prices is going to be.

Further, the crop production situation in the country and region around May/June should again be provided so as to show the difference between the preliminary figures and the final figures. Such information would enable the farmers to realign their efforts in accordance to the obtaining situation.

The information relating to this could be sent to them by e-mail or could be shared with ZNFU, for circulation to members.

iii) Current Commodity Stocks

The commodity of interest specified here was maize. Farmers indicated that if they had information about the expected production and the stocks available, they would be in a position to make rational marketing decisions. This should come out in newsletter form from MACO on a monthly basis. This information could be shared with ZNFU.

iv) Time of Input Delivery

The expected time of delivery of fertilizer in the country is not given resolutely. This information should be provided sometime before the growing season (starting around June). This information could be provided through a newsletter, which could be accessed by e-mail.

v) Cost of Inputs in Durban and Lusaka

The price for fertilizer per metric tonne in Durban as the point of origin and the landing cost in Lusaka should be provided for comparative analysis. This information should be provided on a monthly basis from about April / May and then once a fortnight as the planting season is approached. In whatever form this information is provided, the most preferred mode of communication indicated was by E-Mail or by phone.

vi) Prices for Maize in Argentina and Chicago

The major producer areas / markets for white maize are Argentina and Chicago. This affect in most cases the maize prices on the international market. Farmers, would therefore, like to know what the prevailing prices are so that they may be in a position to make strategies. This information is generally required just before the marketing season starts and more so as the season proceeds. This should be provided weekly and transmitted by mail, in whatever form is convenient.

2.3. General Observations and Analysis

In the view of traders and large-scale farmers, information about what is generally going on at the end of the line of input transformation is not much of a problem. What is a problem, however, is the size of the market for the products (output). It is not enough to know the prevailing prices; the issue is whether the available market is able to get substantial quantities of the commodity on sale at reasonable prices. Provision of market price information by other players is rendered to some degree valueless if the market is limited, and sellers, themselves, can easily access marketing information directly from the markets available.

Information for decision-making appeared to be difficult to prescribe by most of the large-scale farmers. It appears that it is very difficult to decide what to grow, when the market is very unstable. Farmers may have a good price in one year but the other year may be another thing. They always seem to be kept guessing what to grow. It would be very beneficial to farmers if the output market were talked about at the time of procuring inputs. There should be some kind of projected information as opposed to seasonal information, that is to say information providers should not be talking about marketing when it is marketing season and talking about inputs when it is time to plant. Such issues should be talked about far before the respective seasons come.

Large-scale farmers seem to have a direct link with the buyers for most of their commodities. This is especially true for such produce like cotton, beef and milk. The very limited output market they have satisfies their information needs.

Even if input traders referred to current commodity stocks as a determining factor in the number of hectares that farmers put under cultivation, it is doubtful whether small-scale farmers refer to current commodity stocks in the country to decide the hectares to put under cultivation for a given commodity. May be at household level farmers take into considerations the stocks they still hold as unsold. Even then it is here felt that farmers decide how much to plant based on difficulties they encountered during the current marketing season.

In this study it is felt that information on how traders should cost their business operations and forecast returns could enhance their entrepreneurship decision-making skills on what commodity to invest in. This could possibly be accessed from Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industries.

For now they may not be in a position to express the need. This does not imply that there is no problem and there is no need to address it. The general requests by some of the traders to be taught how to go about selling, is enough indication that they are not confident in themselves.

Small-scale traders seem not to know the importance of marketing information and how to use it. They are simply concerned with selling modalities, how to have enough people flock to their stand and realize some returns. Their negotiation position with the wholesalers could definitely be enhanced if they had information about the prevailing prices for the commodities at the point of source.

Most of the localized traders seem to attach little attention to prices prevailing in other regions because of limited financial resources to take advantage of other opportunities. They cannot travel, anyway, even if they knew that terms were very favourable in other markets out of their locality. It should be borne in mind here that even if traders would not utilise the knowledge of prices in other local markets to choose where to buy, they could use it to negotiate prices with wholesalers at the market. They could refer to prevailing situations in other markets just as a 'dummy' threat.

2.4. Processors and Millers

2.4.1. *Decisions Required to be Made*

Interviewees in this category were large-scale millers and processors of agricultural commodities. These processors, especially those dealing in cotton, such as Amaka Holdings in the Central Province, also operate out-grower schemes.

Large scale millers, in this category enjoy a local monopsony type of competition in seasons of surplus production as far as maize purchases are concerned. Large scale millers manage to maintain a monopsony because they are very few of them as compared to number of producers or farmers country wide. Most producers (farmers) prefer to sell their maize and wheat in large quantities. Large scale millers provide such a market to farmers. In addition most large millers are financial strong to honour their financial obligations to farmers or producers, unlike other grain dealers who have been swindling farmers out of their produce. *(for other miller categories see Processors and Millers Matrix Table in the annex.)

The decisions that need to be made by processors and millers

Nearly all the millers and processors interviewed indicated the determining factor of their commodity procurement plans was the need to minimise costs while ensuring adequate supplies to last up to the next harvest season.

2.4.2. *Market Information Needs*

All the large scale millers, and to a larger extent medium scale ones, do have adequate capacity and resources to finance own market information needs. However, it was notable from the results of the interviews that a number of interviewees in this category had some information needs that they were unable to satisfy through their own systems. For example nearly all the medium and small millers indicated that they are interested in timely market information on retail market prices for competing established large-scale millers. They felt their survival in the market place depended on a pricing strategy of under pricing well known brands marketed by well established large scale milling companies. Information on the stocks available particularly for maize and accessibility of maize producing areas is important. This information may be required by the on set of the marketing season. Information especially that on commodity producer prices in other towns and other Provinces was also important and required. Also found necessary was the timely and detailed final crop forecasting data by the months of March to May each year.

Also indicated important was information on maize prices in the country, and regional and world prices at Safex, Zimbabwe commodity exchange, and Chicago Board of Trade respectively. Also indicated as important by one large scale miller from the Copper-Belt were prevailing maize meal prices in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Swaziland

For cotton processors such as Amaka Cotton Ginneries, the most important information required is seed cotton prices from producers. In addition, it was indicated that lint import parity prices were important in the firm's price setting decisions. Edible oil processors also sought market information on the prices of other cooking oil brands on a monthly basis.

Other millers such as Antelope Milling on the Copperbelt need market information on prevailing retail and wholesale prices offered by other large-scale millers along the line of rail cities and towns. All millers, with the exception of service providers, indicated the need for information of the final crop forecasts by district, exchange rates, and information about sources of investment finance.

The service providing miller segment does not procure any stocks for processing and later for sell to the public. The segment only provides grinding services to customers who come with all types of grains and cereals. This category has visible presence in urban shanty compounds where the urban poor majority reside. In all provinces visited, service oriented millers indicated the need for information on grinding service charges charged by other millers per 15kg standard tin. Prevailing market prices for maize grain, bran, and meal sump were needed to assist them make competitive service charge decisions. Information on intra provincial market prices was needed and was currently not being adequately provided.

2.4.3. Current Sources of Marketing Information

The main sources of market information among millers and other processors are:

- Daily papers,
- Farmers with produce to sell,
- Local millers associations,
- The Food Reserve Agency (FRA),
- ZNFU periodicals and radio broadcasts,
- Own market research through sales personnel, delivery truck drivers and retailers.

From the discussions held, it was obvious that these sources were not adequate enough for the sector to make timely economic decisions. According to all the large scale millers visited, the most dependable source of market information is own market research and clients such as farmers and retailers marketing maize products and brands produced by various millers.

2.4.4. Preferable Diffusion Channels

For the millers, the best way of disseminating the information needed is through e-mail for the large and medium scale millers. All large-scale millers and most medium scale ones are on e-mail and have weekly market information sent to them. However, small-scale hammer millers on one hand have neither phone lines nor e-mail and can only be serviced through local MACO offices bulletin deliveries as well as radio broadcasts. A number of local community radio stations have been installed and agricultural information ranks highly on their programs. Marketing information could be disseminated through these stations.

2.5. Small Scale Farmers and Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

2.5.1. Small Scale Farmers

By definition, small-scale farmers are those farmers that have less than 2 hectares of land under agriculture. The small-scale farmers interviewed in this study are those who are mainly along the line of rail, and predominantly grow maize for their subsistence. Livestock

farmers were not interviewed, however, the commodity may be significant for regional information systems, particularly in areas where livestock is prevalent.

2.5.1.1. Information Needs for Choice of Commodity Production

The small-scale farmers mentioned that in order to make decisions on the type of commodities to produce it was necessary to have information on;

- The costs of producing the various types of crops suited for the particular area.
- The availability of inputs, especially fertiliser, and the prices of these inputs.
- The available markets for the selected commodities and their prices
- The marketing costs that traders incur.
- The knowledge on general agricultural policy.

There was very little diversity on the information needs in all the districts visited as regards the small-scale farmers information needs. Small-scale farmers generally agreed on the critical information needs on the crop choice and the prevailing crop prices for the various crops and the availability of markets for the produce.

2.5.1.2. Small Scale Farmers' Pricing and Selling of Their Commodities

All the groups of small-scale farmers talked with have been having enormous problems in pricing their produce. They mentioned that knowledge on costs of production would be of help as they make decisions on pricing. It was observed that farmers have a good idea of the costs they incur in their production process. The gross margins can be obtained from MACO-farm management section. Farmers indicated that because of the pricing problems, they have requested that government must set a floor price even if we are in a liberalised environment. It was noted that even with the information of the costs of production farmers still had problems negotiating for a good price with the traders mostly because of the problems farmers may be facing at the particular moment. Traders determine the price at which the farmers sell their produce and not the farmers.

The selling is usually done to traders who travel to the farmers and collect the produce claiming that the transportation costs are high and that the prices they also get from the millers are too low. It is suspected that millers and traders may form cartels so as to influence the price. Few farmers have the ability to take their produce to the markets in town because of the transportation costs involved and therefore, just rely on traders going to them.

2.5.1.3. Sources of Market Information

The sources of information were generally from government, through agricultural extension and marketing officers. Some information is obtained from Z.N.F.U centres. In Southern Province, it came the most reliable means of information dissemination is the radio. However, in the Copperbelt, though some farmers preferred the radio, as a means of dissemination, the cost of batteries was out of reach of most small scale farmers who had radios, hence the use of extension workers was preferred. Farmers insisted on the timeliness of the agricultural marketing information if it was to be of any use to them. Also mentioned was information on the availability of the inputs, especially fertiliser, on time if their decisions were to be of any help.

The small-scale farmers preferred receiving marketing information on a weekly basis, especially prevailing price information on commodities. It was suggested that provision of information should be tailored to the prevailing conditions in a particular area. Southern province came out as one area where provision of agricultural marketing information would best be done through use of the radios and MACO extension officers. The use of Extension workers, bulletins and billboards proved to be a good way of providing information to the Copperbelt small-scale farmers.

Small-scale farmers rarely receive information from many other sources other than the government, which is the main provider. It was however, noted that Z.N.F.U, OXFAM and PAM were the other prominent providers of information on agricultural production and marketing. They are also other localised sources of information such as Africare in Eastern province

2.5.1.4. Critical Information Gaps and Methods of Diffusion

The critical agriculture marketing information gaps that were identified by the small-scale farmers were, the costs of production, marketing costs, prices of new commodities being encouraged in the diversification programme.

The farmers observed that it was very critical to have knowledge on the methods to use in calculating their costs of labour and other costs involved in the production process on the various commodities for planning purposes. This kind of information can be obtained from the Farm Management Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture. The unit prepares gross margins for all areas in the country and can specifically address concerns in identified areas of the country.

The other gap identified was the marketing margins, which must be calculated by AMIC, but presently the information is not being provided. The method of diffusion to use for this kind of information as suggested by the farmers is the use of extension workers, as this gives room for clarifications.

Farmers also requested that they receive information on the prevailing prices of commodities that are being encouraged for diversification. Farmers in Southern and Central and Copperbelt provinces strongly suggested the use of radios for the dissemination of this information. This will enable farmers make a comparison and make a decision that will profit them in the long run.

Below is a table giving a summary of the identified information, user groups, frequency and the mode of transmission. For detailed information please refer to the tables in the annex 4.5.

Table 2: Information Type Required by Small-Scale Farmers

Type of information	Description	User Group and purpose	Frequency	Mode of Transmission
Costs of production	All costs involved in commodities production	Small scale farmers for planning	Before production periods	Radio, Extension officers and Bulletins
Marketing costs	Costs such as, handling, transport, storage, processing etc	Small scale farmers for planning	Before the marketing season	Radio, Extension officers and Bulletins
Prices of other commodities	Prevailing prices of other commodities	Small scale farmers for planning	Bimonthly	Radio, Extension officers and Bulletins
Quantities and time for fertiliser delivery	Quantities Govt. expects to bring in and the time fertiliser is expected	Small Scale farmers to plan for fertiliser acquisition	In good time before the planting starts	Radio, Extension officers and Bulletins

2.5.1.5. Perception of Agricultural Marketing Information Centre

Farmers who were familiar with the Agricultural Marketing Information Centre expressed satisfaction at the quality of information received from AMIC to a large extent but had reservations on the frequency of the bulletin production and the inability to extend the coverage of commodity information to other crops they are considering in their diversification programme. However, pricing boards erected in some centres has proved to be popular among some small scale farmers, especially those affiliated to Zambia National Farmers Union who provides valuable information on the boards that are not only located at the offices but even in areas very close to the farmers.

Most small-scale farmers, however, indicated that they had no idea on the existence of information from AMIC, and mostly relied on chatting with fellow farmers and taking risky selling trips.

2.5.2. Community Based Organisations (CBOs)

All the Community Based Organisations interviewed were operating from Southern and Copperbelt Provinces. These are OXFAM, CARE, PAM, Africare and World Vision. All these CBOs do have food security programmes with small-scale farmers and have from time to time requested for marketing information from AMIC. In addition, AMIC has also requested for information from these organisations.

2.5.2.1. Type of Information and Source

The community-based organisations indicated that the type of information required relates to:

- Latest conditions of fertiliser loans repayments,
- New inputs on the market,
- Development projects,
- Prevailing prices of various commodities,
- Information about markets for traditional commodities,
- Where to sell non-traditional products,
- Information on farmers and traders.

CBOs provide information on traditional and to some extent non-traditional commodities to farmers and traders.

CBOs themselves are a source of information on the basis of their experience, but they also rely on other information providers. One of the major sources of information for the CBOs is the Ministry of Agriculture, through the extension officers and the District Marketing and Cooperatives officers (DMCO). CBOs would like to receive information from AMIC on a weekly basis using the E-mail and fax machines where appropriate. This does not leave out other government Ministries. CBOs organise workshops through which information is shared. Information is obtained from suppliers for the benefit of the farmers. Some CBOs organise market days.

2.5.2.2. Mode of Information Diffusion

To disseminate information, community based organisations usually use extension officers, who include the District Marketing and Cooperative officers (DMCOs), and leaflets or written literature. This has been found to be a satisfactory way of getting and communicating information. Contracting officers from the Ministry of Agriculture, to impart some marketing skills on farmers, also disseminate CBOs information. Information is also disseminated through demonstrations and field days.

The Radio has also been described as a good method of information dissemination. The best time for farmers to listen to the information is immediately after the 20:00hrs News bulletin. This has been seen to be effective, especially in Copperbelt Province where information has been disseminated by Radio. Radio communication also is currently being done in Southern province. Information is also disseminated through demonstrations and field days held.

To improve on the provision of information it has also been suggested by CBOs that community information centres be set up as is been done by ZNFU in certain districts. It is being proposed to share experiences among the information providers so that we learn from each other and avoid duplication of the same information provided to the users.

2.6. Public Institutions and Non Governmental Organizations

2.6.1. Uses of Marketing Information

The Agricultural Marketing Information is generally used in a number ways. Particularly for this user group, the information is mainly required to make policy decisions (for public institutions and government departments); to monitor changes in the economy; and to assess the food security situation in the country. Marketing information is also vital for relief agents as it provides indications of sources of surplus food and the prices prevailing. Non-governmental Organisations also require marketing information to advise the farmers on possible income prospects for each farming activity, as well as promotion of different cropping patterns as supported by price trends, etc.

2.6.2. Marketing Information Needs

As indicated above, based on the uses of information, a number of critical information needs were identified by both public institutions as well as Non governmental Organisations. Of particular commonality was the need for price trends in agricultural commodities both at

local level as well as at a Regional Level. Though, it was identified that institutions such as COMESA, FEWSNET, ZNFU/ACE, as well as Export Board of Zambia, have been providing some aspects of this information, gaps / inadequacies still existed. Other providers of information included Ministry of Commerce and Industry; PALESA, as well as GTZ.

Other information required by stakeholders in this category included area under cultivation per agricultural commodity; food availability by location as well as trade information. Government institutions showed preference for crop production, number of farmers, mealie-meal production, employment, pricing and number of processors by province.

2.6.3. Critical Information Gaps

As indicated, though there have been some efforts in providing marketing information, there exists some need which has not been met by any marketing information provider. These information gaps are summarised in the table below:-

Table 3: Information Gaps Identified by Public Institutions and NGOs

Type of Information	Description	Frequency	Mode of Transmission
Fertiliser Prices	Prices per 50kg bag of all types	As often as possible	Radio, TV, Bulletin, E-mail
Cost of production by commodity	Information for crops such as maize, beans, maize-meal	As often as possible	Radio, TV, Bulletin, E-mail
Quality of commodities	Standards and quality information	As often as possible	Radio, TV, Bulletin, E-mail
Commodity price trends	Price Trend analysis over time	As often as possible	Radio, TV, Bulletin, E-mail
Regional Market Analysis	Price analysis at a sub-regional level	As often as possible	Radio, TV, Bulletin, E-mail
Commodity Producers	Contact details and quantities	Daily	Radio, TV, Bulletin, E-mail

2.6.4. Perceptions on Marketing Information Services from MACO/AMIC

Most of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with AMIC in terms of its current performance in providing marketing information particularly to institutions. Most of the interviewees indicated that very little information had been received from AMIC, particularly after 1999 and that there was need to improve the situation as AMIC was best placed to collect analyse and disseminate marketing information to the general public, as it was government's responsibility in the current liberalised environment. Currently information received from AMIC was not useful as it might be accurate inaccurate, untimely and outdated and needed more regional market analysis. However most respondents indicated willingness to subscribe for information as long as there were indications that the concerns have been addressed.

All most all institutions indicated that AMIC should continue providing information, but there were sentiments that it was not providing the required information and hence the Food Reserve Agency was better placed to fill the gap for food grain. However, it was emphasised that there was need to ensure that the information currently produced by AMIC should be

diffused through the National Agricultural Information Services (NAIS), particularly, radio programmes in both vernacular and English on daily basis. This was particularly recommended for local producers.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. Conclusions

3.1.1. Traders and Large Scale Farmers

The main information required by traders relate to commodities selling in large volumes, source of supply and prevailing prices, prevailing selling prices at various markets, markets available for large volumes and prices, marketing costs relating to transport and storage. Exchange rates and conditions for exporting / importing are additional information needs for cross-border traders.

In addition, farmers and input traders are interested in knowing the source and prices of inputs, prices of inputs at source of supply in South Africa, market situation relating to the expected production (expected supply), the current stocks, the buyers and the prices prevailing on the market.

The information gaps indicated by traders or large-farmers are international trade conditions, current stocks, expected crop production, prices of inputs at source of supply, medium-term non-grant loans, alternative large-volume buyers to millers, the prevailing prices and terms of transaction, and international commodity prices. The most preferred mode of transmission of the required information should be by radio for traders, e-mail or phone for large-scale farmers. This should be disseminated weekly or monthly depending on nature of information required and the time of the season.

The user category under study is not aware of the marketing information MACO-AMIS is providing. Most of the localized traders, which happened to be one specific group of traders, seemed not to be clear with the usefulness of AMIS. All the other types of traders, and most of the large-scale farmers, indicated their readiness to use the required information generated by the system as long as it was timely and accurate. It should, however, be mentioned that it still remains, for now, a challenge to provide prevailing prices in areas where mobile traders reach to procure their stocks. As for unofficial exchange rate, it is very doubtful if any formal information-provider could furnish such information.

3.1.2. Processors and Millers

Though most millers enjoy a monopsony type of competition in seasons of surplus production as far as maize purchases are concerned, there were still indications that support services in terms of marketing information were required to enhance their already existing systems. The important role of the government through the Agricultural Marketing Information Centre was acknowledged and therefore should be revamped and improved. The most reliable mode of diffusion of information was through their own networks. However, most supported the use of the mass media as well as the AMIC information Bulletin, which could be disseminated through e-mail and/or fax, as most of these millers and processors do have these facilities.

3.1.3. Small Scale Farmers and CBOs

The small scale farmers need to have knowledge on the prevailing prices on the market for their decision making on choice of commodity, whether or not to put up for sale, should they continue with the same commodity or not or do they have to store. It must be noted that this is not sufficient as it is necessary to know the availability of the market for their commodities. Small scale farmers usually do not have transport to take their commodities to the markets, thus they need to know the marketing costs so that as they negotiate with the traders, they have a very good idea of the likely costs the traders could have incurred. To supplement the knowledge on the marketing costs it is essential to impart the farmers with knowledge on the costs of production for the commodities. Farmers believe that the idea that liberalisation is being done at a very fast pace such that it has become very difficult for them to cope and as such, farmers are suggesting the re-introduction of the floor price to guide them especially with the staple food crop of the country.

The study has found it important to train farmers in skills of understanding and using market and marketing information. The Ministry of Agriculture must have a deliberate goal of training farmers in agricultural marketing skills so that farmers can make informed decisions on when to sell, where what quantities and so on. Farmers need to have knowledge on the costs of production, the understanding and use of market information, and the prevailing prices in areas near them and distant places to help them in decision making, farmers need to have an idea on marketing costs the traders may incur. This kind of information has to be provided by the Ministry of Agriculture.

There is need to encourage farmers to form farmer groups /cooperatives so as to strengthen their bargaining power. With provision of marketing information, they will negotiate better with the traders. MACO has started encouraging small-scale farmers to form groups and this has to be supported and allowed to continue.

It was found that radio was a very efficient way of disseminating information to the farmers, since it was established that farmers listen to the radio on a daily basis and mostly at particular times while waiting for a particular programme or after the news broadcast. Some problems were identified as regards radio broadcast but the general impression was that it still is a very reliable method of dissemination. The study found that pricing was a major problem among farmers, thus the suggestions of the re-introduction of the floor prices but it is the recommendation of the study that farmers actually need the identified agriculture marketing information if they are to survive in the present competitive environment. This must be a task for the MACO-AMIC, as farmers believe that information from government is very impartial and helpful provided it is timely and accurate. AMIC is presently working on the aspect of improving the quality of information being presented to the different users of information. Marketing Information boards are one of the ways suggested of disseminating information, but it has to be mentioned that these boards need to be regularly and timely updated so as to present a good picture of the prevailing situation and to gain confidence from among the farmers.

It must be recommended that future study be conducted which will include Fish farmers and a deliberate choice of livestock farmers so as to establish their information needs. This should also help design and strengthen locally based information systems.

The study observed that other information providers are actually not addressing the identified critical needs of farmers and as such it is necessary for AMIC to ensure that the identified critical information needs are addressed in a timely and accurate manner.

Farmers and CBOs alike are aware of the existence of AMIC and the agricultural marketing information that is provided however, this information rarely reaches the farmers. With this in mind and considering the importance of the information being provided the study recommends that AMIC be strengthened at district and camp level by making use of agricultural camp officers more than is being done now.

3.1.4. Public Institutions and Non Governmental Organisations

In as far as the institutions are concerned, AMIC should view itself within the following framework:

- To have a more forecast and updated database which should be reliable, and stand the test of time,
- To be the centre of agricultural inputs and outputs information for all stakeholders in Zambia,
- AMIC to see endeavour to expand the coverage of agricultural inputs and outputs, on which information is provided,
- AMIC to form strategic linkages with the Export Board of Zambia, ZEGA and other public and private entities to ensure that both local and international agricultural commodity prices are covered in details,
- Need for effective collaboration between AMIC and NAIS,
- Need for decentralised AMIC,
- Explore possibility of using other existing capacity within MACO to collect and disseminate information,
- Need to publicise AMIC activities,
- Need to collaborate with other institutions such as Export Board of Zambia on dissemination of price and market information to end-users.

Given the above, though there seems to be a growing need for marketing information from AMIC, need to ensure that the information it provides is accurate and timely and is able to meet the needs of the institutions. Where AMIC has no comparative advantage, other institutions better placed should be able to fill in the missing gaps.

3.2. Recommendations

1. Timely and accurate information about the current commodity stocks, the expected marketing situation, alternative buyers and prevailing prices should be disseminated by radio preferably after the news bulletins or before the famous radio dramas. This implies that the radio as a channel of communication should be revamped. Weekly coverage of information in all local languages broadcast by ZNBC radio should be done.
2. Radio programmes should be run to educate marketing participants on the importance of marketing information, and how to use it. This will in the course of time stimulate great interest and demand for it. This demand-pull on information- providers will create pressure for efficiency and targeting. Eventually, the primary objective of integrating markets through marketing information will be well-nigh in sight.

3. A system should be devised to get crop forecasting very early from MACO extension officers for dissemination to marketing information stakeholders by AMIC. AMIC should further make strong linkages with the National Early Warning Unit of MACO and Food Reserve Agency (FRA) to obtain information on current stocks for dissemination.
4. The extension service of the MACO should be in the forefront to provide crop-forecasting information relating to small-scale farmers even before Central Statistical Office (CSO) comes in. They are better positioned to supply timely crop forecasting information, which could be put to good use by all stakeholders. The extension officers should also take an active role in disseminating marketing information to traders. This means that AMIC must be able to get the information to the extension officers on a timely basis.
5. There is need to introduce weights and standards to enable market participants, more especially the traders, determine the quantity from a given bag (package) before hand. This will lessen transaction costs of making physical confirmations with 'tins'.
6. The large-scale farmers and other farmers under ZNFU could be provided with information using the ZNFU representative offices based in various towns. This would be more cost effective for information providers like AMIC than to get in touch with individual farmers by phones
7. Information that is aimed at stimulating demand for some commodities, which apparently are facing a constricted market, is needed so that there could be market development for them.
8. MACO-AMIC must disseminate information on the time fertiliser is expected so that farmers can prepare adequately for the planting season and to plan what commodities to consider for production.
9. On linkages, it is important that AMIC should maintain its links in the FRA mealie meal prices information system as well as linking up with the ZNFU market information system for harmonisation. In addition AMIC should begin to be capturing the crop forecasting date as it is made available by CSO and early warning.
10. For millers category the best way of outputting the AMIC data would be through Email for the large and medium scale millers. All large-scale millers and most medium scale ones are on e-mail and have weekly market information to them. Small-scale hammer millers on one hand have neither phone lines nor e-mail and can only be serviced through local MACO offices bulletin deliveries. The other option to this category is through local community radio stations. A number of community radio stations have been installed and agricultural information ranks highly on their programs such that the radio channel should be exploited to the full.
11. AMIC should work to improve the collaboration and links with the Early Warning and Data Base Management Unit.
12. AMIC data should mainly be disseminated through e-mail for the large and medium scale millers, traders, and farmers, while the radio programmes should be developed

for small-scale farmers. Hard copies of Bulletins should be sent to all public institutions including government departments who have interest in agricultural marketing information.

13. More resources should be put into AMIC so as to improve its operations. Strengthening of provincial/local level marketing information systems where the strength exists should be undertaken and supported.
14. AMIC should concentrate in providing marketing information on all Cereals as well as Groundnuts, Fertilisers as well as other inputs such as seeds and information packaged to meet the needs of different user groups.
15. Livestock and fisheries information is needed, however, in the short-run, at a national level, the resources are limited. Given the local importance, district and provincial market information systems may be able to incorporate these sectors.

(Large Scale Farmers/Traders)

The following was used to guide the interviews conducted with the traders:

- The trader was asked how he/she goes about buying the commodities for sale. The information needed for the buying process was noted down. This was an attempt to determine how the trader decides what commodity to deal with, how he establishes the supply areas, how he gets his information, how the people buying from get to know his where about and the price the price is determined etc.

- The trader was asked how he goes about selling his commodity.

This was aimed at establish how he determines where to offload his commodities and how the price is determined. The source for the information needs was also established.

- The trader was asked about information gaps. This was an attempt to establish the information needs that are not currently being received by the trader, which otherwise are critical to his/her operations. Any change in the way information is received and how else the trader would like to receive it was delved into.
- The perceptions of the trader on the MACO marketing information services were to be looked at.
- This was an attempt to assess the trader satisfaction from the AMIS operated by MACO.

The following was used to guide the interviews conducted with the large-scale farmers:

The farmer to be asked what marketing information he/she needed to determine what enterprise to undertake, to manage it and what information was required to sell the produce.

This is aimed to determine the types of information required, how it is received and when.

- The trader was asked about information gaps

This was an attempt to establish the information needs that are not currently being received by the farmer, which otherwise are critical to his/her operations. Any change in the way information is received and how else the trader would like to receive it was delved into.

- The perceptions of the farmer on the MACO marketing information services were to be looked at.
- This was an attempt to assess the farmer satisfaction from the AMIS operated by MACO.

Small Scale Farmers and CBOs.

The following was used as a guide to the interviews conducted with the Small scale Farmers:

- The farmers were asked how he/she makes decisions on what commodities to plant/keep. What information needs are required and what is the source of the information.

Here the idea was to find out the information needs of the farmer and where this information is obtained.

- The farmer was asked how he/she goes about the selling of the commodities?

Here the interest was in knowing how the farmer determines the costs of production and ultimately the selling prices of their commodities.

- The farmer was asked about the sources of information and the frequency of the information
- Farmer was asked about the information gaps identified.

Here the idea was to find out what information is relevant to the operations of the farmer but are currently not being addressed by any information provider, AMIC specifically.

- The Farmer perceptions of MACO-AMIC information services provided and the satisfaction levels

To find out if AMIC has been satisfying the information requirements of the farmers in the past and what the trend has been. What is the present situation on AMIC information supposedly being provided by AMIC?

The following was used as a guide to interviews conducted with Community Based Organisations (CBOs):

- How information is obtained and used?
- Methods used in disseminating information and who are the users?
- Identified information gaps and linkages with other information providers?
- The perceptions of the Community Based Organisations on the MACO marketing information services
- The level of satisfaction about the agricultural marketing information provided by the Agricultural Marketing Information Centre (AMIC).

Terms of Reference for the Agricultural Marketing Information User Needs Assessment.

1. Background

Farmers and Traders alike are key participants in marketing. The Ministry fully recognizes the role they play in this liberalized marketing economy. In as much as they are able by themselves to make an impact in marketing and market development, there is a limit to which they can go without a complimentary effort from the Government. The latter has to play a cardinal role of providing an enabling environment through the provision of market support services, infrastructure development, and a policy framework.

The marketing activities of both the farmers and the traders have been going on since 1993. Support Services and a Policy Framework have equally been provided. With passage of time, however, a number of changes have taken place in the agricultural marketing sub sector and the economy as a whole. The changes in the scenario have, undoubtedly, led to some shifts and adjustments in the needs of the various market information user target groups.

AMIC started providing market support services in terms of marketing information in 1993 when, in earnest, marketing liberalization gained momentum. A Weekly Agricultural Marketing Bulletin was being published until mid 1999 when, based on the recommendation of the stakeholders' review meeting, the publication was changed to a bi-monthly bulletin. The publication was being distributed to key stakeholders such as the traders, millers, extension workers, government institutions, donors, interested individuals, researchers, institutions related to food security and early warning, and farmers. AMIC, at its initial inception, had about 90 subscribers. The number drastically declined to about 10 subscribers by the end of 2000.

The above scenario has been of concern not only to AMIC and the Ministry, but to our collaborating partners as well. It has been, therefore, thought imperative to gain insight into the possible causative factors that have led into this state of affairs.

2. Overall Objective

The overall objective of the assessment is to review the current agricultural marketing information system and to establish felt marketing needs for agricultural marketing participants and other interested parties.

Specifically, study will seek to achieve the following specific objectives:

- i)** To assess the marketing information needs among user groups.
- ii)** To assess the current level of satisfaction and utilization of existing marketing support (information) services including AMIC.
- iii)** To identify other agricultural marketing information providers and the type of information they provide.

iv) Make recommendations on the necessary improvements, if any, to the current agricultural marketing information system.

3. Justification

With the introduction of economic liberalization in the Zambian economy, a number of factors have changed. Farmers as well as entrepreneurs react differently to changes in the economic playing field. However, the Zambian scenario is quite different. With long years of centralized planning, the current phenomenon has been new to most market players, both in rural areas as well as urban. It would be detrimental to assume that the same needs expressed or known then are still obtaining. It is therefore important that at such a stage as when liberalization is taking effect to assess what the current needs are, so that the Government activities are tailored to meet such needs. Further, assessing the deficiencies in the system is very important if proper remedial steps have to be undertaken.

4. Expected Output

The study intends to produce the following outputs:

- Database of information providers and type of information being provided.
- Information needs that are critical to user's operations.
- Information gaps for users.
- Linkages of AMIC with other information providers.
- Recommendations on MACO-AMIS system design and output.

5. Scope of the Study

The study will be conducted in key selected consumer and production areas. These are Lusaka, Central, Copperbelt and Southern Provinces, including, Sesheke district. This district has been included in order to incorporate issues of livestock marketing in Western Province. Principally, AMIC Staff in collaboration with ACE and ZNFU will conduct the study. Four (4) User groups have been identified. These are:

- Farmers (Small Scale; Farmer Organisations, CBOs);
- Traders (Large Scale Farmers; Large/ Small Scale Traders);
- Millers and Processors; and
- Public Institutions and NGOs (including Donors).

6. Duration of Study

The study will be conducted over a period of one month, a week after which a draft report will be produced. A workshop will be held to discuss individual draft reports, which will later on be consolidated by the ZNFU/ACE.

7. Implementation Arrangements

i) Provinces

- Copperbelt Province (Ndola, Luanshya, Chingola and Kitwe Districts).
- Southern Province (Choma, Livingstone, Mazabuka Districts).
- Western Province (Sesheke District).
- Lusaka Province (Lusaka Urban, Chongwe Districts).
- Central Province (Kabwe, Chibombo Districts).

ii) User Groups Identified.

- Farmers (Small Scale; Farmer Organisations, CBOs);
- Traders (Large Scale Farmers; Large/ Small Scale Traders);
- Millers and Processors; and
- Public Institutions and NGOs (including Donors).

Annex 3. List of Persons Interviewed

NAME	CATEGORY	LOCATION
Mr. Macboyd	Large Scale Farmer	Mpongwe
Mr. Tembo	Large Scale Farmer	Mpongwe
C. Chilala	Large Scale Farmer	Mkushi
Mr. Drummond	Large Scale Farmer	Kabwe
Mr. Gordon	Large Scale Farmer	Chisamba
G. Robinson	Large Scale Farmer	Mazabuka
T. Savory	Large Scale Farmer	Monze
G. Mulders	Large Scale Farmer	Kalomo
Joseph Hangandu	Small-scale localised trader	Monze
Herald Sichiko	Small-scale localised trader	Monze
Arupee Agent	Medium-scale trader	Namwala
Mr. Mainza	Small-scale mobile trader	Choma
Mrs Lungu	Small-scale localised trader	Choma
Mr. Assan	Large-scale trader (Maize)	Choma/Lusaka
Peter Chazanga	Small-scale mobile trader	Lusaka-Mandevu
Davy Singabwe	Small-scale mobile trader	Lusaka-Mandevu
E. Makanda	Small-scale localised trader	Lusaka-Soweto
C. Makanda	Small-scale localised trader	Lusaka-Soweto
Y. Phiri	Small-scale localised trader	Lusaka-Soweto
Mr. Simpamba	Small-scale localised trader	Lusaka-Soweto
A. Malenga	Medium-scale trader	Kabwe
S. Bhama	Medium scale input trader	Kabwe
J. Simuchimba	Medium scale trader	Kabwe
D. Hachingala	Medium scale trader	Kabwe
P.B. Hachoole	Medium scale trader	Kabwe
Davy	Small-scale localised trader	Kabwe
M. Sichula	Small-scale mobile trader	Kabwe
M. Sikasote	Small-scale mobile trader	Kabwe
G. Chibanda	Small-scale localised trader	Ndola-Masala
Mrs. Mukule	Small-scale localised trader	Ndola-Masala
Mrs. Nampungwe	Small-scale localised trader	Ndola-Masala
C. Singa	Small-scale localised trader	Ndola-Masala
Mrs. Simutanda	Small-scale localised trader	Ndola-Masala
G. Banda	Small-scale localised trader	Ndola-Masala
Lembani	Small-scale input trader	Mpongwe
R. Tuteja	Medium scale input trader	Kitwe
L. Nachembe	Small-scale localised trader	Kitwe
Mr. Chipelela	Medium scale mobile trader	Kitwe
R. Ngalabantu	Cross-border trader	Lusaka
C. Phiri	Cross-border trader	Siavonga
V. Chisanga	Cross-border trader	Lusaka
Mrs. Mulenga	Cross-border trader	Ndola
M. Mulenga	Cross-border trader	Lusaka

List of Persons Interviewed (Continued)

NAME	CATEGORY	LOCATION
D. Musonda	CBO	Ndola
D. Mwasi	CBO	Ndola
M. Muleba	CBO	Ndola
Mrs. Namanzala	CBO	Kitwe
Mrs. Kandagwe	CBO	Namwala
L. Malala	CBO	Mazabuka
R. Hambulo	CBO	Mazabuka
.Ms.Doris Musonda	CBO	Kitwe
.Mr.D.Mwasi	CBO	Kitwe
.Ms.R.Manzala	CBO	Kitwe
Laktronics Milling	Miller/Processor	Mazabuka
Choma Milling	Miller/Processor	Choma
Mutapa Processing Ltd	Miller/Processor	Choma
Singani Milling	Miller/Processor	Choma
Fetita Milling	Miller/Processor	Kabwe/Natuseko
Amaka Cotton Ginneries	Miller/Processor	Kabwe
Glance Milling	Miller/Processor	Kabwe
Mkushi Millers	Miller/Processor	Mkushi
Chakwenda Chapeta Mill	Miller/Processor	KapiriMposhi
Pankocon Mwanje Mill	Miller/Processor	KapiriMposhi
Aubrey Mwanza Mill	Miller/Processor	KapriMposhi
Kabele Peter Mill	Miller/Processor	KapiriMposhi
Chimangachanga Limited	Miller/Processor	Ndola,
Bhakta Engineering	Miller/Processor	Ndola
Antelope Milling Co Ltd	Miller/Processor	Luanshya
Jamas Milling Ltd	Miller/Processor	Kitwe
Olympic Milling Co Ltd	Miller/Processor	Mufurila
.Mr.E.Chanda	Small-Scale Farmer	Kabwe
.Mr.A.Malenga	Small-Scale Farmer	Kabwe
.Mr.J.N.Mbewe	Small-Scale Farmer	Kabwe
.Mr.J.Simuchimba	Small-Scale Farmer	Kabwe
.Mr.J.Bana	Small-Scale Farmer	Kabwe
.Mr.J.Zulu	Small-Scale Farmer	Kabwe
.Mr.D.Chikungu	Small-Scale Farmer	Kabwe
.Mr.M.Matamwechani	Small-Scale Farmer	Kabwe
.Mr.D.Musole	Small-Scale Farmer	Kabwe
.Mr.D.Hachingala	Small-Scale Farmer	Kabwe
.Mr.P.B.Hachoole	Small-Scale Farmer	Kabwe
. Mr.W.Kamangula	Small-Scale Farmer	Kabwe
.Mr. P.C.Muyembe	Small-Scale Farmer	Kitwe
.Mr.E.Chabala	Small-Scale Farmer	Kitwe
.Mr.P.Mulenga	Small-Scale Farmer	Kitwe
.Mr.F.Lengwe	Small-Scale Farmer	Kitwe
.Mr.S.Mulenga	Small-Scale Farmer	Kitwe
.Mr.F.Mansa	Small-Scale Farmer	Kitwe
.Mr.M.Homukwala	Small-Scale Farmer	Kitwe
.Mr.J.S.Mwale	Small-Scale Farmer	Kitwe
.Mr.F.M.Ngandwe	Small-Scale Farmer	Kitwe
.Mr.E.Chitundi	Small-Scale Farmer	Kitwe
.Mr.H.Kabwe	Small-Scale Farmer	Kitwe
.Mr.S.Mwinde	Small-Scale Farmer	Kitwe
.Mr.A.C.Lengwe	Small-Scale Farmer	Kitwe
.Mrs.S.Chila	Small-Scale Farmer	Kafue MCCP

List of Persons Interviewed (Continued)

NAME	CATEGORY	LOCATION
.Mr.B.Lipa	Small-Scale Farmer	Kafue MCCP
.Mr.Simwemba	Small-Scale Farmer	Kafue MCCP
.Mr.H.Musonda	Small-Scale Farmer	Kafue MCCP
.Mr.Minange	Small-Scale Farmer	Kafue MCCP
.Mrs.Phiri	Small-Scale Farmer	Kafue MCCP
.Mrs. Minanga	Small-Scale Farmer	Kafue MCCP
.Mrs.Lita Mwachaba	Small-Scale Farmer	Kafue MCCP
.Mr.Sinyangwe Green	Small-Scale Farmer	Kakolo Settlement Society
.Mr.W.Katongo	Small-Scale Farmer	Kakolo Settlement Society
.Mr.J.Mumbi	Small-Scale Farmer	Kakolo Settlement Society
.Mr.E.Simpasa	Small-Scale Farmer	Kakolo Settlement Society
.Mr.V.F.Sichone	Small-Scale Farmer	Kakolo Settlement Society
.Mr.S.Mulenga	Small-Scale Farmer	Kakolo Settlement Society
.Mr.C.Kameya	Small-Scale Farmer	Kakolo Settlement Society
. Mr.J.Katongo	Small-Scale Farmer	Kakolo Settlement Society
.Mr.T.Mwale	Small-Scale Farmer	Monze
.Mr.R.Hangoma	Small-Scale Farmer	Monze
.Mr.V.Chingamba	Small-Scale Farmer	Monze
.Mrs.M.Halwindi	Small-Scale Farmer	Monze
.Mr.P.Kamunika	Small-Scale Farmer	Monze
.Mr.F. Hamaando	Small-Scale Farmer	Monze
.Mr.Butts Kelvin	Small-Scale Farmer	Monze
.Mr.H.Mainza	Small-Scale Farmer	Monze

Annex 4. Summary of Information Needs By User Group

USER GROUP	COMMODITY	TYPE OF MARKET INFORMATION REQUESTED	LOCATION	PURPOSE	FREQUENCY	BEST DISSEMINATION CHANNEL	GEOGRAPHICAL LEVEL OR POINT OF DATA COLLATION AND DISSEMINATION	MARKET INFORMATION ALREADY COVERED BY OTHER INSTITUTION, IF ANY
Trader	Agricultural	Types of commodities majority of traders dealing with	Within country	Decision making (what to deal in)	Fortnight to monthly	Friends / Fellow traders	District / province	Fellow traders / friends
Trader	Agricultural	Source of supply and price – Kwacha/unit, Dollar/unit	Internal (mostly), external	Decision making (what to deal in)	Fortnight to monthly	Friends / Fellow traders	District / province	Fellow traders / friends
Trader	Agricultural	Terms of transaction – Barter or cash	Internal market	Decision making (what to deal in)	Fortnight to monthly	Friends / Fellow traders	District / province	Fellow traders / friends
Trader	Agricultural	Minimum quantity expected to buy i.e. 51 tin, 50Kg bag	Internal / external	Decision making (what to deal in)	Fortnight to monthly	Friends / Fellow traders	District / province	Fellow traders / friends
Trader	Agricultural	Types and form of transport to supply source	Internal / external	Decision making (what to deal in)	Fortnight to monthly	Friends / Fellow traders	District / province	Fellow traders / friends
Trader		Transportation costs to supply source	Internal / external	Decision making (what to deal in)	Fortnight to monthly	Friends / Fellow traders	District / province	Fellow traders / friends
Trader		Incidental expenses i.e. road levies, duties	Internal / external	Decision making (what to deal in)	Fortnight to monthly	Friends / Fellow traders	District / province	Fellow traders / friends
Trader	Agricultural	Place & Prevailing selling prices	Internal (majority), external	Decision making (what to deal in)	Fortnight to monthly	Friends / Fellow traders	District / province	Fellow traders / friends
Input traders	Fertiliser	Prices at source of supply (US \$/MT); Transportation costs (US \$/MT)	R.S.A – Durban	Decision making	Weekly / monthly – before planting season	Bulletin, radio	National / prov.	
Input traders	Fertiliser	Quantity & delivery time by Government into country		Decision making	Once in a while	Bulletin, radio	National / prov.	
Input traders	Maize	Current stocks (Bags, MT)	Country-wide	Decision making	Monthly	Bulletin, radio	National / prov.	
Cross-border traders	Agricultural commodities	Import and export procedures / conditions	Region	Decision making	Periodically unless conditions change	Newsletter, DMCO	HQ, Provincial level	Fellow traders
Cross-border traders	N/A	Market & unofficial exchange rates	Region	Decision making	Weekly	Newsletter, DMCO	HQ, Provincial level	Fellow traders (not easily accessed)
„	Agricultural commodities e.g. fruits, flour etc.	Prevailing prices (Country's specific currency)	Regional market	Decision making	Weekly	Fellow traders		Fellow traders

USER GROUP	COMMODITY	TYPE OF MARKET INFORMATION REQUESTED	LOCATION	PURPOSE	FREQUENCY	BEST DISSEMINATION CHANNEL	GEOGRAPHICAL LEVEL OR POINT OF DATA COLLATION AND DISSEMINATION	MARKET INFORMATION ALREADY COVERED BY OTHER INSTITUTION, IF ANY
Localised traders		Availability of required commodity & volumes, prices	Public market	To know where to buy	Ranging from bi-weekly to weekly	Fellow traders		Fellow traders
Localised traders		Quality & quantity in a bag / package	Public market	Buying decision				
Mobile Traders	Maize, Beans, Groundnuts	Production levels / stocks	Production areas	Buying decisions	Weekly	Fellow traders, Extension staff	Districts, provincial level	
Mobile Traders	Maize, Beans, Groundnuts	Prevailing prices & terms of transaction - cash or barter	Production areas	Buying decisions	Weekly	Fellow traders	District level	Fellow traders, truck drivers, travellers
Mobile Traders	Maize / Beans	Buyers for large volumes, Terms of transaction	Towns	Selling decisions	Weekly	Radio, Bulletins	Provincial / National levels	
Mobile/ Cross-border / Input traders		Wholesale and retail prices of various commodities dealing with e.g. beans, fruits, kapenta, etc.	Potential markets i.e. public markets, supermarkets	Selling decisions	Weekly	Fellow traders / Radios	National / Provincial level	Fellow traders
Mobile traders	N/A	Ware house storage costs for goods on sale (ZMK/bag)	Public markets	Selling decisions	Occasionally except there be change	Fellow traders	Provincial level	Fellow traders
Large Scale Farmers	Crops / livestock	Gross margins per Ha	Province / District	Decision making what to deal in	Once in a while	E-mail, phone	District/provincial	Coffee Growing Ass.
„	Crops / livestock	Potential market	National	Decision making what to deal in	Monthly	E-mail, phone		
„	Maize	Volatility of markets.	National	Decision making what to deal in		E-mail, phone		Fellow farmers
„	Inputs - mainly fertiliser, seeds	Availability and prices	National / Lusaka /RSA	Decision making what to deal in	Weekly / monthly	E-mail, phone		Fellow farmers
„	Inputs - fertiliser	Expected transportation costs	National	Decision making what to deal in	Monthly	E-mail, phone		
„	Various, especially maize	Expected production	National	Selling decisions	Once in a while March / June	E-mail, phone	National / provincial level	Partially ZNFU
„	Maize	Current stock	National	Selling decisions	Monthly	E-mail, phone		
„	Maize	Regional prices (US \$/MT)	Regional market	Selling decisions	Weekly / monthly	E-mail, phone		
„	Maize	Level of expected imports	National	Selling decisions		E-mail, phone	National	

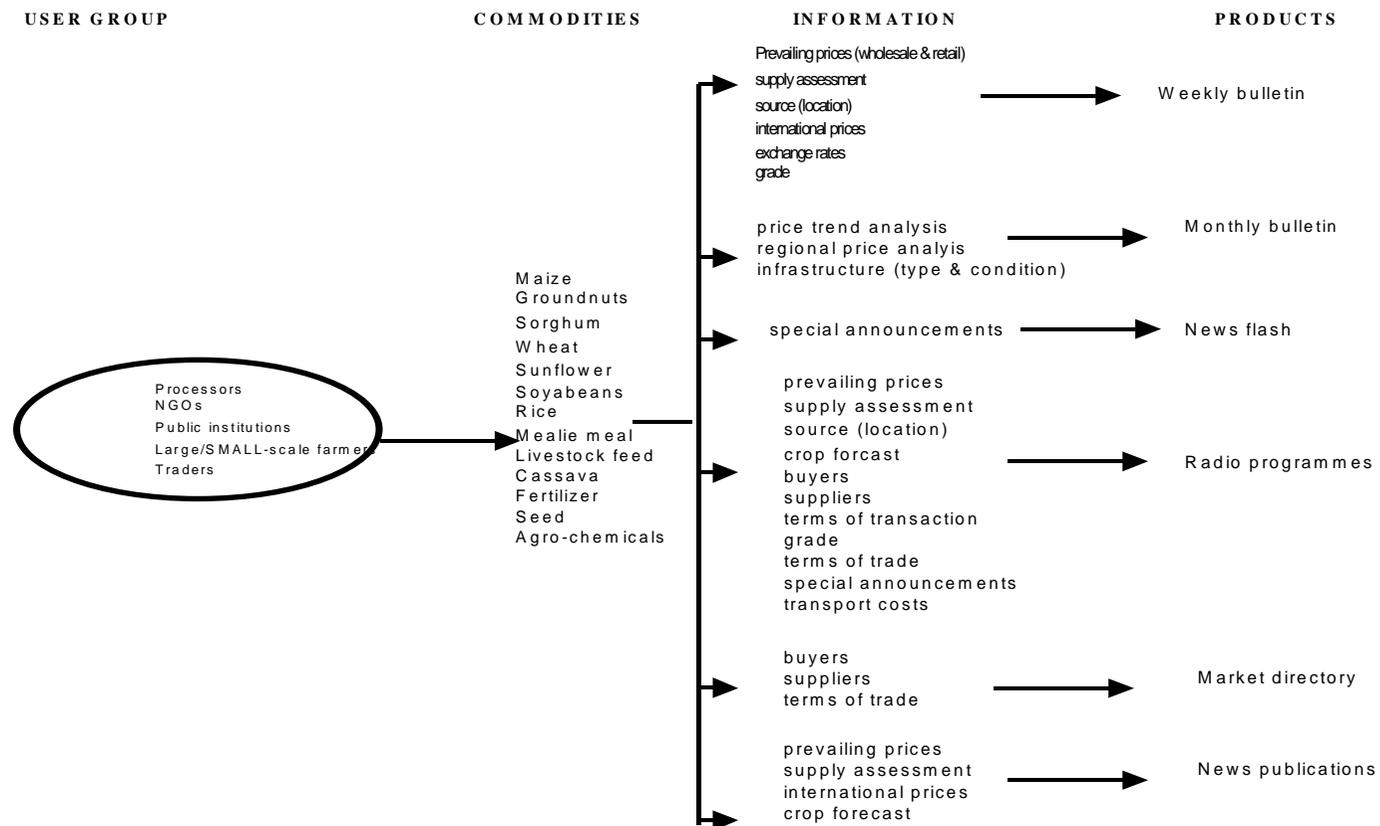
USER GROUP	COMMODITY	TYPE OF MARKET INFORMATION REQUESTED	LOCATION	PURPOSE	FREQUENCY	BEST DISSEMINATION CHANNEL	GEOGRAPHICAL LEVEL OR POINT OF DATA COLLATION AND DISSEMINATION	MARKET INFORMATION ALREADY COVERED BY OTHER INSTITUTION, IF ANY
Small scale farmers	Maize	Prices of inputs in K/50kg bag	Public markets, suppliers	Bimonthly Before planting season	Radios, extension officers, newsletters	AMIC (HQ), provincial bulletins, billboards	Maize Production planning	
		Costs of maize production in the area K/50kg	Farmers, public markets, input suppliers	Before planting season	Radios, extension officers, newsletters	AMIC (HQ), provincial bulletins	Maize Production planning	
		Marketing costs to the farm gate K/50kg	Transporters, public markets, input suppliers	Before marketing season	Radios, extension officers, newsletters	AMIC (HQ), provincial bulletins	Strengthen negotiations position with traders	
		Availability of Fertiliser	Government, Input Suppliers	Before planting season	Radios, extension officers, newsletters, Billboards	AMIC (HQ), Provincial Bulletins, District office	Decisions on quantities to produce	
		Prices of fertiliser in other areas	Public markets, input suppliers	Bimonthly between October and February	Radios, extension officers, newsletters,	AMIC (HQ), Provincial Bulletins, District office	Decisions on where to buy from	
		Gross margins of other crops suitable in the area (K/kg)		Before planting season	Radio,Bulletins,Extension Officers	District level	Decisions on whether or not to diversify or change from maize	
		Best markets for maize and the prevailing prices	Public markets, traders, millers	Bimonthly during marketing season	Radios, Bulletins, Extension Officers	AMIC (HQ)		
	Fertiliser	Prices of fertiliser(K/kg)	Public markets, Fertiliser suppliers	Weekly Before planting season	Radio,Bulletins,Extension Officers, Billboards, Newsletters	Provincial and District Levels	Where to buy from and affordability	
		Time of fertiliser delivery		Before planting season	Radio,Bulletins,Extension Officers, Billboards, Newsletters	Provincial and District Levels	Production planning	
		Quantities of fertiliser expected		Before planting season	Radio,Bulletins,Extension Officers, Billboards, Newsletters	Provincial and District Levels	Production planning	
	Other Commodities	Costs of production for commodities suitable in the area	Farmers, Public markets, Input suppliers	Before the planting season	Radio,Bulletins,Extension Officers, Billboards, Newsletters	AMIC (HQ), Provincial and District Levels	Comparison with the production costs of maize	

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Large Scale Millers	Maize, Wheat	Final crop forecasting data by May in Metric Tons (MTs)	SADC Countries	Stock Imports Procurement Plans in Case of Local Shortfall	Once around May	E-mail and Fax	AMIC Head Quarters	
Large Scale Millers	Maize, Wheat	Detailed & Timely Final crop forecasting data by March in MTs or 90kg bags	Within Zambia Provincial, District level & Farming Blocks	Stock procurement Planning & Decisions of where to procure from	Bi-Weekly from March to May	E-mail and Fax	AMIC Head Quarters Provincial Bulletin	
Large Scale Millers	Maize, Wheat	Chicago Board, Safex, Commodity (CIF & CF Lusaka) Market Prices per MTs, in US\$	Chicago Board -USA, Safex RSA.	Choices on where to import from Should the need arise	Bi-Weekly	E-mail and Fax	AMIC Head Quarters	
Large Scale Millers	Maize, Wheat	Market producer prices per MT, and per 50kg or per kg in ZK and US\$	Farm gate, Public Markets, ACE-Lusaka	Choices on where to purchase from	Bi-Weekly	E-mail and Fax	AMIC Head Quarters and Provincial bulletins	Daily News Papers once in a while
Large Scale Millers	Break Fast Mealie meal	Retail prices per 25kg bags and per kilogram by Miller/ Brand	Main retailers & Public Markets in Cities and Provincial HQ Towns	To facilitate brand pricing strategies	Bi-Weekly	E-mail or Fax or/ and Provincial bulletins depending on each customers' preference	AMIC Head Quarters and Provincial bulletins	Daily News Papers once in a while and FRA
Large Scale Millers	Roller Meal	Retail prices per 25kg bags and per kilogram by Miller/ Brand	Main retailers & Public Markets in Cities and Provincial HQ Towns Retailers	To facilitate brand pricing strategies	Bi-Weekly	E-mail or Fax or /and Provincial bulletins depending on each customers' preference	AMIC Head Quarters and Provincial bulletins	Daily News Papers once in a while and FRA

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Large Scale Millers	Bread Flour	Retail prices per kilogram	Main retailers & Public Markets in Cities and Provincial HQ Towns Retailers	To facilitate brand pricing strategies	Bi-Weekly	E-mail or Fax or /and Provincial bulletins depending on each customers' preference	AMIC Head Quarters and Provincial bulletins	
Large Scale Millers	Stock Feeds	Retail Prices per 50kg bags by Processor/Brand in Zambian Kwacha (ZK)	Main Suppliers or Dealers	To facilitate brand pricing strategies	Bi-Weekly	E-mail or Fax or /and Provincial bulletins depending on each customers' preference	AMIC Head Quarters and Provincial bulletins	
Medium to Small Scale Millers	Maize	Market producer prices per MT, and per 50kg or per kg in ZK	Provincial Farm gate, Public Markets, ACE-Lusaka	Choices on where to purchase from	Bi-Weekly	E-mail and Fax for those with the facility otherwise Provincial & District bulletin and Local radio station	Provincial and District bulletins and AMIC e-mail upon special request	Daily News Papers once in a while
Medium to Small Scale Millers	Breakfast Mealie Meal	Retail prices per 25kg bags and per kilogram by Miller/ Brand in ZK	Main retailers & Public Markets in Cities and Provincial HQ Towns, local town	To facilitate brand pricing strategies	Bi-Weekly	E-mail or by Fax for those with the facility, otherwise, Provincial & District bulletin and local radio station if any	Provincial and District bulletins and AMIC e-mail upon special request	Daily News Papers once in a while and FRA
Medium to Small Scale Millers	Roller Meal	Retail prices per 25kg bags and per kilogram by Miller/ Brand in Zambian Kwacha (ZK)	Main retailers & Public Markets in Cities and Provincial HQ Towns, & local town	To facilitate brand pricing strategies	Bi-Weekly	E-mail or Fax for those with the facility, otherwise Provincial bulletins	Provincial and District bulletins and AMIC e-mail upon special request	Daily News Papers once in a while and FRA
Medium to Small Scale Millers	Maize bran	Retail price per 90kg bag by other millers in ZK	At mill premises	To facilitate brand pricing strategies	Bi-Weekly	E-mail or Fax for those with the facility, otherwise Provincial bulletins	Provincial and District bulletins	

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Service Providing Grinders	All Kinds of Grains (Maize, Sorghum, Rice, Wheat, Millet)	Service charges by other local grinders per Tin (BP) (+/- 15kgs) in ZK	At Mill Plant Premises	Decision of service charges/ pricing strategies	Bi-Monthly	Hand delivered Provincial or District Bulletins, Local Bill Boards where they exist	Mill Plant premises and Provincial or District level bulletins	
Service Providing Grinders	Other	Sources and prices of Mill fast running spare parts	Dealers within Province, and Major Cities	Awareness of dependable stockists and purchase decisions	Bi- Monthly	Hand delivered provincial or District bulletins, and local radio station if any	Hard ware Shops and Dealers of Hammer mills	
Other Large Scale Processors	Seed Cotton	Liverpool index per mt/kg, RSA into- Ginnery per mt/kg in US \$	Liver pool, RSA	Knowledge of World Market indicative market prices for own producer prices determination	During cotton harvest season (March to June)	E-mail, Fax	AMIC HQ	Commodity related journals/bulletins
Other Large Scale Processors	Seed Cotton	Producer prices in US\$ and ZK per MT and kg offered by local out-grower schemes	Easter, Southern, Lusaka & Central provinces	To be aware of the producer prices offered by competitors and Private buyers in the Cotton growing provinces in Zambia	Bi- Weekly from March to July	E-mail, Fax or Provincial bulletins	Cotton growing Provinces and Districts by DMCOS and SEMCOS	
Other Large Scale Processors	Fuzzy Cotton	Quantities Available for sell prices per MT in US\$ by ginners	Direct enquiries from Ginners	To secure orders on time as suppliers are very limited	At the beginning of the season (March to July)	E-mail, Fax	At Ginnery Plant premises country wide (Only upon special request otherwise the exercise does not warrant AMIC involvement)	

Annex 5. Proposed Information to be Provided by AMIC



Annex 6. Summary of Proposed Information to be Provided by MACO-AMIC

USER GROUP	COMMODITY	TYPE OF MARKET INFORMATION REQUESTED FOR	LOCATION	PURPOSE	FREQUENCY	BEST DISSEMINATION CHANNEL	GEOGRAPHICAL LEVEL OR POINT OF DATA COLLATION AND DISSEMINATION
Localised Traders	Maize, groundnuts, Beans	Wholesale prices (ZMK/50Kg or ZMK/100Kg)	Public markets within town	Buying decision	Weekly	Leaflets	Districts
Mobile Traders	Maize, Groundnuts, Beans	Wholesale, Retail prices (ZMK/50Kg or ZMK/100Kg)	Public markets, Millers	Selling decisions	Weekly	Bulletin, Radio	Province, HQ (AMIC)
Mobile Traders	Maize, Groundnuts, Beans	Buyers for large volumes	Any within country	Selling decisions	Weekly (April to October)	Bulletin, Radio	Province
Input Traders	Maize	Current Stocks (MT)	National	Procurement decisions	Monthly (June to October)	Bulletin	AMIC
Input Traders	Fertiliser	Manufacturers' Prices (\$/MT)	RSA	Procurement decisions	Monthly (June to October)	Bulletin	AMIC
Input Traders	Inputs (fertiliser, seeds)	Retail prices - 10Kg & 50Kg, respectively.	Towns	Selling decisions	Fortnightly, Monthly	Bulletin	AMIC / Province
Cross-Border Traders	N/A	Import & Export procedures / conditions	Region	Buying & selling decisions	When changes occur	Bulletin	HQ (Import & Export Section)
All Traders	N/A	Marketing Skills	N/A	To enable traders use marketing info. effectively	Monthly	Radio	HQ (AMIC & Entrepreneurship Devpt. Section)
L.Scale Farmers	Maize	Current Stocks (MT)	National	Selling Decisions	Monthly	Bulletin, E-mail	AMIC
L.Scale Farmers	Maize	Regional prices (US\$ / MT)	SADC	Selling decisions	Monthly	Bulletin, E-mail	AMIC
L.Scale Farmers	Maize	Expected level of imports	National	Selling decisions	When applicable	Bulletin, E-mail	AMIC
L.Scale Farmers	Maize	Price (Futures)	Chicago, Argentina	Planning purpose	Weekly/monthly	E-mail	National
L.Scale Farmers	N/A	Non-Grant Loans	National	Investment	When available	E-mail, phone	National