



# **THE ZIMBABWE LAND AND AGRARIAN NETWORK**

## **Farmers' Lived Experiences In Tobacco Marketing In Zimbabwe**

By: Abel Chemura, Freedom Mazwi, Walter Chambati, Blessing Mutoro



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Case Stories 2017

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Published By: Zimbabwe Land and Agrarian Network (ZiLAN) | 19 Bodle Avenue, Eastlea Harare

January 2018

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**NB:** All names of the respondents and their families referred to in this document are not their real names. Research work for the case stories was conducted by The Sam Moyo African Institute For Agrarian Studies (SMAIAS)

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## INTRODUCTION

From the colonial era to the present, tobacco has remained the most important agricultural crop in Zimbabwe, given its contribution to the national economy through export earnings and the number of households involved in the production of the crop (*Sakata, 2017*). In addition, because of its labour intensity nature, and the growing number of producers in the new agrarian structure, tobacco farming also provides employment opportunities and incomes for many people in rural areas in Zimbabwe. The most common type of tobacco produced in Zimbabwe is flue-cured tobacco, accounting for about 96% of all tobacco produced, and most of the production is concentrated in Agro ecological Regions II and III.

Generally, tobacco production thrives in areas with less risk of frost, without excessive rainfall, and with well drained soils that optimise root development and such areas are usually marginal for other crops such as maize and soybean. As a result, tobacco production is more profitable in Zimbabwe than in other countries. Zimbabwe has comparative advantages in tobacco because of favourable natural and socio-economic conditions. This has positioned the country as a major tobacco exporter in the world, being the largest producer in Africa, and fifth in the world after China, Brazil, India and the USA. Over ninety-nine percent of the tobacco produced in Zimbabwe is exported, accounting for major agricultural exports for the country, (*TIMB, 2016*).

The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) which began with the land occupation movement in 2000 transformed the agrarian structure in Zimbabwe, from a bi-modal to a tri-modal system which now consists of small-scale (*Communal Area and A1 farmers*), medium scale (A2) and large-scale farmers (*A2 growers*) (*Moyo, 2011b; Moyo & Chambati, 2013*). Within the new agrarian structure, there are now close to 100000 registered growers involved in tobacco farming in Zimbabwe (*TIMB, 2015*). The expansion of the agrarian structure to accommodate more small-scale farmers, as well as the withdrawal by private commercial banks due to the collapse of freehold tenure, has also given rise to contract farming as a financing model in the sector (*Moyo and Nyoni, 2013*). Contract farming has therefore emerged as one mechanism for the provision of agricultural credit, inputs, extension support, and guaranteed markets (*Sakata, 2017; Scoones et al., 2017*). However, there is need to understand lived experiences of tobacco farmers in the general marketing in order to provide evidence-based policy direction in the tobacco sector. This is largely so because tobacco has over the past two decades become an important crop for small-scale farmers, a development which makes it imperative for policy attention to be drawn towards the sector to ensure that farmers obtain better incomes.

This study thus presents a compilation of several specific case stories which reveal the lived realities of tobacco smallholder farmers around issues of access to inputs and the marketing of the commodity via various channels which include contractors and auction systems. A number of challenges are discerned which range from high input costs, inadequate inputs provided by contractors, lack of decentralisation in the marketing of the commodity which

forces many small-scale farmers to incur additional costs in transporting their produce to Harare, thereby hampering the profitability of the commodity. Another key challenge which is observed in the case stories is the amount of time spent at the auction floors as farmers await to sell their produce. Apart from presenting health and social challenges, farmers also tend to incur additional costs in Harare, thus further amplifying the need for decentralising selling points.



## CASE STORY 1:

### Mr Mhofu - Medium Scale Farmer (A2 Scheme)

Mr Mhofu is an A2 farmer at Curry Farm in Y District which is located in Mashonaland West Province. He has over 10 years experience in tobacco farming on over 100ha. Mr Mhofu states that he developed an interest in the production of tobacco due to his previous experience of working on a tobacco farm. Apart from tobacco, he also engages in maize and soya bean production on his farm. In the 2016/17 agricultural season, Mr Mhofu planted tobacco on 30ha utilising his own-finances as he is not engaged in any contract farming scheme. He states that he grows tobacco because of the profitability of the venture. Although he was able to purchase all the required inputs for tobacco through his own income, he highlights a number of challenges during the season, such as heavy and persistent rainfall during the tobacco curing period which resulted in mould development on some of his harvested tobacco crop. He further highlights that it was difficult to plan for the harvest due to the persistent rains. Another challenge he faced was that of securing firewood to cure tobacco due to the scarcity of wood in the area.



Figure 1: Mr Mhofu's Tobacco Field

For tobacco production, the household hired 30 workers, and the majority of these (21) were women. Labour was hired to perform tasks such as planting, weeding, spraying, harvesting and the grading of tobacco. The workers were recruited from the nearby town and other surrounding farms within the district. Both males and females were allocated the same labour tasks on the farm. Mr Mhofu stated that the management of the farm was done by him alone since he has the expertise and experience in tobacco farming given his background of working on the farms. As a farmer, he believes that the grading of his tobacco at the auction floors was commensurate with the quality of the tobacco that he supplied, which was poor quality. This was largely so because the tobacco had moulding due to poor heat circulation during the curing phase. Resultantly, he made a loss when he calculates the investments made into the crop production processes and the returns obtained after the selling season. For the 2016/17 crop output, Mr Mhofu was able to market his tobacco early at the auction



floors in Harare, and he believes that the market for tobacco is readily available. During that season, he harvested 30 tonnes of tobacco for various grades which were mostly on the lower scale. He used his own transport to ferry the leaf to the market and thus did not suffer losses in the transportation of the commodity. Owing to losses he made in the 2016/17 agricultural season and the complicated technical requirements in tobacco, Mr Mhofu has decided to shift to maize production as he takes responsibility for the poor tobacco crop.

Apart from tobacco, the farmer also grows maize and vegetable on his farm. Due to his involvement in food crop production, Mr Mhofu states that his family is food secure as the maize usually lasts until the next agricultural season. In his opinion, farmers who engage in tobacco production have more food diversity because they have more money to buy different foods while those who grow food crops have larger quantities of food compared to those who buy, although in limited varieties. Thus, food consumption patterns change significantly for farmers engaged in tobacco production as they become more able to purchase food crops through incomes obtained from tobacco sales.

Over the years, Mr Mpofu has been able to acquire irrigation equipment, a tobacco grading shade, a tobacco barn and a car through tobacco farming. He believes that for him to be more successful in tobacco production, there is need to invest in the construction of tobacco curing barns. This is largely so because he was unable to cure all his tobacco as his small barn could not accommodate more tobacco during the harvesting time, which reduced the quality of his tobacco. Mr Mhofu believes that there is need to increase support for tobacco production and to invest in advanced curing barns that are more heat efficient. He states that it is difficult to get a commercial loan for tobacco production, although he would personally like to secure a loan. However, he stresses that there is need for insurance to safeguard the farmer from uncontrollable factors such as drought or other losses.





## CASE STORY 2:

### Mr Zuze - Small Scale Farmer (*A1 Scheme*)

Mr Zuze is an A1 farmer at Wembley Farm in Y District who has over 26 years' experience in the production of tobacco after having previously been employed as a farm worker by a former Large-Scale Tobacco Commercial Farmer. Mr Zuze is a beneficiary of the FTLRP and engages in tobacco production because he considers the venture to be more profitable when compared to other farming enterprises. Apart from tobacco, he also grows maize and groundnuts on 3.5ha of his farm, part of which is for consumption while the surplus maize is marketed at local markets. He believes that he is food secure as he has grain that can feed his family until the next agricultural season. In the 2016/17 agricultural season, the household planted tobacco on 2.5 ha using personal-finances. Mr Zuze acknowledges that even though he was able to provide most of the required inputs for his tobacco crop, he faced challenges in obtaining sufficient fertilizers.

For the tobacco crop, a total of 7 people provided labour in the fields, and of these, five were hired while the other two were household members. Of the five who were hired, only two were women. Mr Zuze believes that women are more suited to perform weeding in tobacco production. Hired labour was deployed to engage in tasks such as weeding and harvesting while family labour performed tasks such as planting, harvesting and grading.

In making cropping decisions, the farmer is assisted by the local extension officer while other decisions at household level such as the allocation of tasks are made by him. His wife is not involved in the marketing of tobacco as the process is too cumbersome, entailing spending many nights at the auction floor in Harare. From the 2.5 hectareage placed under tobacco, the farmer harvested 4.5 tonnes of marketable tobacco which was sold at the auction floors in Harare a month and half after completing curing. In transporting tobacco to Harare, Mr Zuze was charged \$10/bale and he managed to pay a total of \$200 to have his tobacco reach the market. It took three days for his tobacco to be sold at the auction floors. He is, however happy with his market experience, especially with the services that are provided by his chosen auction floors for tobacco farmers.

Mr Zuze believes that most of his tobacco was of good quality because the leaves had reached the orange colour. He states that his grades varied, although most of his crop was of sufficient quality to warrant a good market price. The farmer acknowledges that he made profits from his tobacco crop even after factoring in the inputs and labour costs in comparison with the returns. As a result of the profitability of the venture, Mr Zuze is planning on increasing the area under tobacco for the next season. He, however, hopes that the floor prices of tobacco should go back to the level of previous years where they were much higher than they are now.

Apart from the food which he produces on his plot, the household also purchases some of the food utilising income obtained from tobacco production. For the household, there is a direct

link between tobacco production and food crop production. Mr Zuze attributes the increased amount of food he produces in his fields to the availability of inputs which are purchased through income obtained from tobacco production. He is also of the opinion that since tobacco pays well, his family has more food options and diversity as they are able to buy from the local markets. He, however, feels that it is not a great idea to convert his whole farming area to tobacco as he wants to produce some of his own food.

Mr Zuze uses firewood to cure his tobacco, and in the 2016/17 agricultural season, he used mainly 10 cords of the muzunga tree species. He reports that he used only dead trees from the forests and never cut down trees, and thus did not contribute to deforestation. He is aware that coal can be used in tobacco curing, but it is expensive and not locally available.

Through income realised from tobacco production, he has for the past 3 seasons been able to buy 3 herd of cattle, a scotch cart and a plough. He is a full-time farmer and believes that he can invest his tobacco proceeds by saving and buying livestock. He also prepares for the next season once he receives his money from tobacco sales. He is agreeable to obtaining a commercial bank loan to finance his tobacco production enterprise, although there are no such facilities readily available.



### **CASE STORY 3:**

#### **Mr Tiru - Small-Scale Farmer (*A1 Scheme*)**

Mr Tiru is a former farm worker at Westview Farm in Y District. He was allocated 6ha of land during the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) within the same district. He has over 20 years experience in tobacco farming that he accumulated working as a farm worker for a former white commercial farmer. He states that his interest in growing tobacco is derived from his vast experience in tobacco production and the fact that tobacco has previously been successfully produced on the farm. Mr Tiru is also convinced that tobacco is very profitable for small-scale farmers and that is one of the reasons why he got engaged in the production of the commodity. Apart from tobacco, he also produces maize and soya beans as commercial crops, and groundnuts and vegetables for household food consumption. During the 2016/17 agricultural season, he planted tobacco on 2ha through self-finance, with 1ha being early irrigated tobacco, while the other 1ha was dryland tobacco. Mr Tiru informs that he was not able to supply all the required amounts of fertilizer for his crop as he only managed to buy 5 bags out of the required 8 bags. Thus, access to finances remains a key issue for small-scale farmers, hindering maximum productivity. Put differently, costs were a major challenge for Mr Tiru.

Mr Tiru hires a total of 8 people to work on his tobacco field on an annual basis, and among those recruited this season, only one was female. The majority of the farm workers (6) were hired from surrounding farms and they performed tasks such as weeding and grading. Two family members provided labour when it came to fertilizer application and overall management of the tobacco production system. The grading, planting and weeding of tobacco was mainly done by women while men were involved in spraying and 'kudzika fodya'. Mr Tiru is largely responsible for overall decision making in agricultural production at his farm, while women are not involved in tobacco marketing because, in his view, it is not safe for them to perform such tasks.

The crop was marketed at the auction floors during the early phase of the marketing season in the 2016/17 agricultural season. In transporting the tobacco to the auction floors, Mr Tiru states that he was charged \$10/bale and he spent three days at the auction floor before his crop was purchased. To him, three days at the auction floor is now the norm. He is, however, not happy with the manner the pricing system is conducted, and he strongly feels that the grading of tobacco is subjective and open to manipulation as there are significant grade differentials which result in some farmers getting more money when compared to others for relatively similar tobacco grades. This, according to him, is because there is lack of transparency in the grading of most tobacco.

When it came to financial returns, Mr Tiru believes he managed to make some profits in the 2016/17 agricultural season when compared to previous agricultural seasons where he would struggle to break even. Partly influenced by the profits he managed to obtain in the 2016/17 agricultural season, Mr Tiru intends to increase the area under tobacco production

in the 2017/18 farming season. He emphasises that good grade tobacco should always be rewarded as a way of encouraging farmers to produce a better leaf, although he is quick to however point out that his failure to supply the required amounts of fertilizer might have contributed to lower prices.

Since he also produces maize, Mr Tiru sees his household as being food secure as his harvest in a normal rainy season lasts until the following agricultural season. He states that part of the income derived from tobacco production is channelled towards the purchase of food items for his household. He believes that food production at household level has been fluctuating, depending on the area he devotes to tobacco and maize and other factors such as droughts. Mr Tiru is convinced that farmers who produce tobacco are more food secure as they can buy more food. He is, however, not convinced that converting all his agricultural area to tobacco farming is a good idea because in cases of drought or failure of the tobacco crop, the entire family is exposed to food vulnerability.

Mr Tiru uses firewood to cure his tobacco, mainly the muzunga species, and in a single agricultural season he requires about 10 cords of firewood to cure his tobacco. Given the ongoing scale of cutting down trees, he expresses fear that if the current trend persists, then severe deforestation will occur very soon. For him, coal, which is supposed to be an alternative curing energy, is not readily available for farmers to use.

Through incomes obtained from the sale of tobacco, Mr Tiru has over the past 3 years managed to purchase an ox-drawn plough, a scotch cart, two herd of cattle and a vehicle. He further indicates that in the 2016/17 agricultural season, he will not be able to purchase anything meaningful from his tobacco sales. He is already busy with preparing seedlings for the next tobacco crop. The farmer is convinced that farmers should invest in implements and inputs once they receive their payments for tobacco so that they can keep making profits. Getting a loan for financing his tobacco crop is a welcome idea for him as it generally makes farmers to work hard so that they do not lose their assets in cases of failure.



## CASE STORY 4:

### Mrs Charwa - Small-Scale Farmer (*A1 Scheme*)

Mrs Charwa is a small scale A1 farmer at Westview Farm in Y District in Mashonaland West Province. She has 6 years' experience producing tobacco on an average of 1ha every year. She was first motivated to produce tobacco by the extension officer in her area, although she is quick to state that there were other factors as well which include the availability of output markets as well as instant payments which are made within the sector when compared to other agricultural commodities. Apart from tobacco, she also produces soybeans and maize, with maize and tobacco being her major cash crops. In the 2016/17 agricultural season, Mrs Charwa managed to grow tobacco on a 1ha piece of land under dryland farming, utilising her own-finances. She was not able to provide sufficient fertilizer for her tobacco crop, and she believes that a greater proportion of her top-dressing fertilizers was heavily leached due to the incessant rains which fell in the country.

Mrs Charwa hired a total of 5 casual workers on her tobacco fields, and most of these (3) were males while females constituted the minority (2). Labour in the field was also provided by 5 family members; of these, only two females worked on tobacco. The hired casual labour was drawn from neighbouring farms and performed tasks such as planting, harvesting and the grading of tobacco. Family members were mainly responsible for weeding the tobacco crop. When it comes to decision making regarding production and marketing, Mrs Charwa indicates that those are usually taken by her. In the 2016/17 agricultural season, she marketed a total of 964kg from her 1ha tobacco area which was sold during the early marketing phase. In transporting the leaf to Harare, she was charged \$10/bale and she highlighted that she spent two and a half days at the auction floors before her tobacco was subsequently sold.

Mrs Charwa also observes that there is a proliferation of agents and middlemen whom she witnessed at the auction floors, a situation which she decries as "very sad and unfortunate". In her opinion, there is need to promote transparency at the auction floors to ensure that farmers are not duped. The state of the roads also need to be improved as the pot holes affected the quality of their tobacco and resulted in thieves climbing on trucks to steal their bales as the trucks slowed down to negotiate potholes and humps. However, on her part, she is happy with the marketing experience at the tobacco auction floors, particularly the grades and the prices that her tobacco fetched. She believes that she failed to reach the highest tobacco grade because of challenges she faced during curing, although she however made a profit of about 50 percent from her tobacco crop.

With regards to food security, Mrs Charwa indicated that her household is food secure as she produces adequate maize on the farm. For the past 3 years, she has produced cotton, soya beans and maize. Apart from the food she produces, her household also relies on purchases to meet household food requirements through incomes realised from the tobacco sells. In her view, tobacco production is important in ensuring food diversity as she does not produce

all the food crops required to meet the nutritional needs at household level. She does not encourage people to grow tobacco on all their land. The amount of food she has produced over the past years has relatively remained the same because she has not increased the area under tobacco at the expense of maize production.

To cure her tobacco, Mrs Charwa uses firewood (*muzunga tree*), and in her view, since the tree grows fast, she does not think this is likely to affect tree species diversity and forest resources. She is open to using coal as an alternative to firewood, but unfortunately this alternative is not readily available. With regards to investments, Mrs Charwa has over the past three years been able to build a house on the plot, purchased a plough and many household equipment through income obtained from tobacco sells. She intends to renovate her tobacco barn and purchase agricultural inputs for the next season, utilising incomes obtained from the previous season. Her wish is to invest in a more comfortable house through proceeds of tobacco farming. Mrs Charwa is open to getting an agricultural loan to finance her farming, but has no idea where to find it. The farmer, however recommends that tobacco auction floors should be decentralised to smaller towns so as to reduce transport costs, road losses and thievery of farmers' produce. She also believes that farmers should be supported to build independent barns as this is a critical resource which limits the success of tobacco production by small scale farmers.



## CASE STORY 5:

### Mr Mutiti - Small-Scale Farmer (*A1 Scheme*)

Mr Mutiti is a small-scale tobacco farmer at H Farm in Y District who has been producing tobacco, maize and groundnuts on his 6ha farm since 2005. He says that he is interested in tobacco production mainly because it enables him to send children to school and augment the purchase of food for household consumption. Also, key in motivating him to grow tobacco is the speedy payment of his output when compared to other commodities such as maize, whose payment is often delayed. In the 2016/17 agricultural season, he produced tobacco on a 1ha piece of land which is commensurate with the capacity of his curing barn. Mr Mutiti relies on proceeds obtained from agriculture for the purchase of inputs and other agricultural machinery and recently joined the contract farming scheme without necessarily being supported in terms of inputs. Such contract arrangements are referred to as marketing contracts. He indicates that he started marketing his tobacco through the contract system after learning that the marketing of tobacco under contract was smoother and more lucrative than open marketing.

With regards to labour, the household utilised 12 labourers in the 2016/17 agricultural season, and of these, 5 were females and 7 were males. Labour was hired from the local compound for planting, (*kutsindira*), weeding, harvesting and grading tobacco. He believes that women are suited to perform tasks such as weeding, harvesting and grading, while men should do ridging and the curing of tobacco.

The farmer produced 1000kg of marketable tobacco from his farm which he sold under contract to the auction floors in Harare. He was charged the market rate of \$10/bale to send the produce to the market and this for him was costly. Mr Mutiti indicated that he usually spends a week and a half at the market selling his tobacco due to the proliferation of farmers who will also be selling their tobacco at the floors. He believes that the time which he spends at the auction floor is too lengthy, and he is not happy spending such time at the floors.

Regarding the output price, Mr Mutiti was impressed by the prices, and he partly attributes this to the contract sells prices which are remarked higher when compared to auction floors prices. According to him, he was satisfied with the grades his crop received and also attributes this to the contract marketing arrangement. He also attributes the good tobacco grade to the ownership of a barn which enabled him to manage the quality and timing of the curing process. He is not planning to increase the area under tobacco production because his current area is commensurate with the capacity of his barn.

Apart from tobacco, Mr Mutiti also produces sugar beans and maize for food consumption which takes up two thirds of his arable land. He posts that the food he produced is sufficient to last him for two more agricultural seasons, and that he is planning to send part of the surplus to his relatives in urban areas. Like other tobacco growers, Mr Mutiti has channelled part of the resources obtained from the sale of tobacco for food purchases, and strongly believes



that tobacco does not affect food production. He further states that these two crops can also complement each other as they are marketed at different times, which helps in cashflow management. He thinks it is not a good idea to plant tobacco on all the agricultural land as it is risky, especially in years of drought or tobacco market collapse.

To cure his tobacco, Mr Mutiti utilised gum trees obtained from a nearby gum tree plantation. He expressed concern that the continued felling down of trees by growers for purposes of curing tobacco will result in deforestation. For the cure of tobacco, he used 14 carts of wood and states that he is aware that coal can be used in tobacco curing, but the key challenge is that it is not readily available for the farmers to use. He is also of the view that the use of coal will significantly reduce farmers' profits as it is obtained from distant places, thus incurring transport and time costs thereby increasing the overall cost of production. His suggestion is that for the improvement of tobacco production by small-scale farmers, companies should give farmers coal.

Over the past 3 seasons, Mr Mutiti has been able to buy a scotch cart, build a house on the farm, build a tobacco barn and pay school fees for his children mainly from farming activities. Tobacco and maize proceeds significantly contributed to these achievements. He is already preparing seedbeds for the next tobacco season. His wish is to be able to buy a house in the urban areas from his farming proceeds. He is open to acquiring a loan for financing his agricultural enterprise. The current liquidity crunch affecting the whole country has also affected him as he is unable to pay his farm workers.



## COMMON ISSUES ARISING FROM TOBACCO FARMING CASE STORIES

### → Marketing (Grading & Quality Issues)

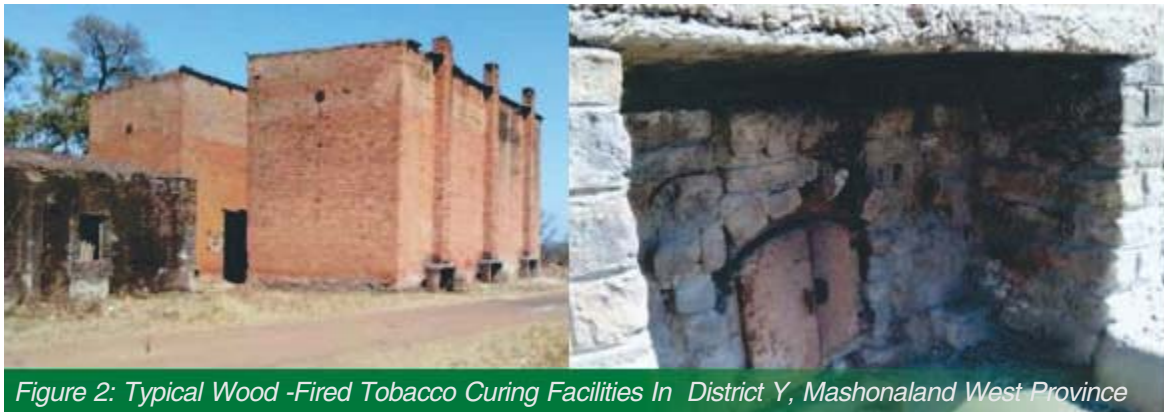
Many of the small-scale farmers complain about the marketing of their tobacco, even under contract. Contract farming entails that farmers must meet specific production targets that exceed the value of the support that has been provided to them. Thus, in tobacco farming, it is not only the yield levels that are important in ensuring that farmers are able to cover their debt by the assigned quality of their leaf. Small-scale farmers indicated that they were not able to meet their expected returns because their produce was deemed low quality, meaning that they were somehow short-changed by the quality assessment process at the auction floors. The quality assessment process is subjective and thus prone to manipulation. Related to this is the issue of middlemen who offer to buy tobacco directly from farmers for further selling at the auction floors. This increases the risk of farmers losing their crop to fraudsters who operate at the auction floors. On average, it took three days for farmers to be able to sell their crops at the auction floors. While farmers have now accepted this as normal, they are not happy with the waiting areas, especially the congestion and ablution facilities.

### → Transport (Need For Decentralisation Of The Auction Floors)

The transport costs to the tobacco auction floors was another serious issue raised by tobacco farmers. Farmers reported that they paid \$10/bale to ferry their tobacco to the market in Harare. This cost does not only erode the profit of farmers, but some farmers reported that long and bad state of the roads reduces the quality of their tobacco as the leaves break in pot holes. This further reduces the competitive advantage of those farmers that are far away from the markets. In addition, cases of some tobacco bales being stolen along the way have been raised. This reduces income and profit and is serious for contracted farmers who are expected to pay back the value of the support that they received. Increasing risk to farmers through costs, quality loss and theft of tobacco bales are factors beyond production that can lead to farmers defaulting or just breaking-even.

### → Curing Energy Sources (Cutting Down Of Trees)

All the farmers interviewed indicated that they use a staggering number of up to 10 cords (1.5 tonnes per season) firewood for curing their tobacco. Interestingly, the farmers indicated that they are aware of the environmental impacts of using firewood in tobacco curing, but they have no easy options available. The general trend by the farmers that they use a specific tree, muzunga, compounds the problem as there is selective logging for tobacco curing. While this is understandable from an energy efficiency perspective, it increases the risk of that specific species being over exploited, which can result in extensive ecosystem



problems. With curing as a challenge already for some farmers who use community tobacco curing barns, the prospects of moving towards heat efficient and alternative energy barns seems far. This challenge is, however, serious and thus requires attention to reduce the environmental footprint of tobacco production in Zimbabwe. This is important in view of the many pathways tobacco contributes to climate forcing, such as carbon release in logging firewood, in curing, transportation and in industrial processing.

### → Inputs (Inadequate Inputs)

As has been highlighted in several case stories, the issue of inadequate inputs for the tobacco crops remains a serious matter which significantly hinders maximum productivity. Tobacco growers reported that they faced challenges in obtaining fertiliser for their land and this was largely as a result of high input prices.

### → Gender and Division of Labour

As show in these different case stories, gender has played a significant role in explaining the farmers' lived experiences in tobacco marketing. Majority (4) of the farmers are male compared to the minority (1) who is female, thus showing that tobacco production is mainly undertaken by males. this may be due to the fact that the work is too complex. In addition to that, the distribution of labour used in the production of tobacco is not consistent. Some farmers for example Case 1, hired more women (21 females) for labour compared to (9 males), whereas its a different case for Case 3 where by only one woman provided labour compared to seven men. On average women provided more labour compared to men.



## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is need for external civil society review of tobacco farming contracts to ensure that they protect both the contractor and the farmer. This is important in dealing with cases of default or factors beyond the farmers control that can reduce or deplete the ability of the farmer to pay back or break even from their tobacco sales.
- There is need for contractors to provide farmers with sufficient and adequate inputs on time. It is important to ensure that farmers get their expected inputs, especially fertilizers, while also guarding against over-supply of inputs beyond farmers requirements.
- The TIMB should ensure that they facilitate alternative energy sources for tobacco curing to lessen the environmental burden of tobacco curing. Transporting wood from producing areas like Eastern Highlands as part of the contracting scheme can be an immediate solution to this serious challenge.
- The tobacco grading process should be as transparent and objective as possible. Double sampling can be promoted so that there is fairness in the prices offered to the farmers for the quality of their crop. The TIMB need also to assign watchdogs and/or anti-corruption officials during the selling season of tobacco at the auction floors, so that the farmers receive the same price for the same grade of tobacco, so that there is no favouritism in serving.
- The TIMB should also ensure that there is adequate staff to work at the auction floors so that farmers do not spend a lot of their precious time in queues waiting for their produce to be bought. That time spent can be put to alternative uses. In addition to that the farmers end up going off budget and sometimes their crops are stolen awaiting the chance to sell.



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