



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

## Focus: Agroforestry

Agroforestry is a practice of combining trees and agriculture to enhance production of food while protecting the soil and water. It's also a way of diversifying & expanding local incomes, providing wildlife habitat and ensuring a more pleasing and healthy place to work and live.

This practice provides for both crop and animal production to be integrated intentionally with trees. The benefits go beyond increase production as trees also provide other environmental benefits on the farm.

In Zambia, the Ministry of Agriculture, through local and international research institutes have been promoting different types of agroforestry systems.

The most well-known research institute is the Golden Agriculture Research Center in Chisamba.

# The Weekly

## Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

### Problem: Lack of Adoption of Agroforestry

The poor adoption rate of agroforestry practices and continued poor agricultural productivity in Zambia still remain a problem for the government.

In Zambia more than a million people that grew maize in 2014/2015, according to central statistics, still use chemical fertilizers for soil nutrition.

The reason -- government has continued to invest heavily in fertilizer support programmes -- amounting to more than 30% of the Ministry of Agriculture's total annual budget.

However this investment does not translate into increased productivity and

less poverty. This problem is enhanced with the impact of climate change effects -- such as increased frequencies of droughts and flood and also unpredictable rainfall.

Agroforestry opens up new opportunities to create prosperity by small scale farmers who are producing less than 50% of their food production capacities and it also provides vital protection to natural resources for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The challenge in Zambia now is promoting the Agroforestry practices -- to increase crop yields and help reduce poverty.

## Solutions: Activities for Journalists

By adopting agroforestry techniques, farmers get **long-term** results – however, the problem is small-scale farmers want quick solutions to food problems.

Use your community radio station to help small-scale farmers invest in medium to long term benefits of agroforestry. This becomes very critical as the effects of climate change affects food production.

Discuss different methods of integrated high value crops with agroforestry plants.

Most agroforestry plants will form a good canopy within three to four years. During this time, high value crops must be integrated with trees. First small livestock should be used in the areas left fallow to help enrich the soil.

For instance, livestock folder can be planted under the trees to provide feed for the small livestock. After three or four years thinning of the agroforestry trees can be performed to allow crop production as soil will have had time to improve.

Ask farmers if they have tried to inter-crop trees with their plants.

Use your community radio to promote more use of integrated forest and farm practices. Perhaps your reporter can visit Golden Valley Agricultural Research Center in Chisamba and do a see for themselves the results of agroforestry.

The conservational farming unit of the Zambia National Farmers Union has also establish quite a number of demonstration sites of Musangu trees (*feidebia Albida*), but very low adoption

rates have been seen for most small-scale farmers.

Discuss with the listeners how shifting cultivation – which is commonly used in the Northern Province, has meant the destruction of forests and contributed to the changing climate and severe weather such as floods and droughts.

Agroforestry, on the other hand, has improved on the traditional slash and burn system of shifting cultivation and has more benefits after three or four years.

Use the power of community radio to assist the Agriculture Extension Officers in getting across the message about the benefits of Agroforestry. Chemical fertilizers have been known to damage soils in the long-term – whereas agroforestry enriches the soil.

Are any farmers in your community using agroforestry practices? Talk to your local extension officer about benefits of agroforestry. Visit a nearby research institute to observe agroforestry practices.

### Useful Links

Information about farming and the environment: Makweti Sishekanu, National Farmers Union Zambia: +260-211-252-649 or +260-965-098-360. Email: [makwetiskanu@yahoo.com](mailto:makwetiskanu@yahoo.com)

Good source of information: Vincent Ziba, National Coordinator, Community-based National Resource Management Forum, Zambia; Email: [vinceziba@yahoo.com](mailto:vinceziba@yahoo.com). Phone: 0966-246-924

Good source of information; Mwape Sichilongo, WWF Conservation Manager. Email: [msichilongo@wfwzam.org](mailto:msichilongo@wfwzam.org). Phone: +260 966442540