

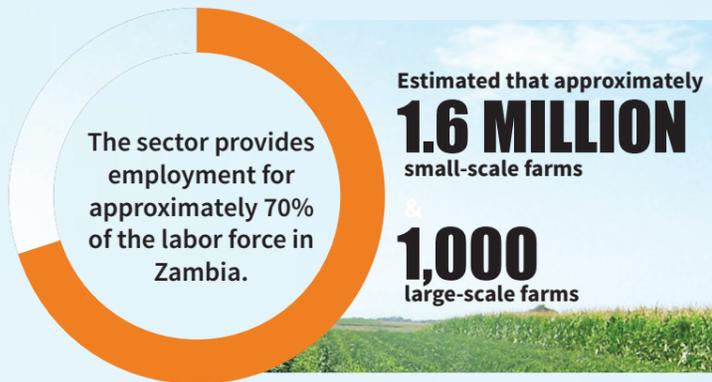


FARMER INPUT SUPPORT PROGRAMME

INFOGRAPHIC

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays an important role in the lives of many Zambians. The sector provides employment for approximately 70% of the labor force in Zambia. It is estimated that approximately 1.6 million small-scale farms and about 1,000 large-scale farms characterize the sector.



Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP): This was first introduced in 2001 as the Fertilizer Support Programme (FSP). It was later revised and renamed in 2009, to Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP). Under FISP the input pack size given to farmers was reduced from eight (8) 50 kilogram (50kg) bags of fertilizer and 20 kilograms (20kg) bags of maize seed to four (4) 50 kilogram bags (50kg) of fertilizer and 10 kilogram (10kg) bags of maize seed. This was done in order to increase the efficiency of input use by farmers and increase the number of beneficiaries.



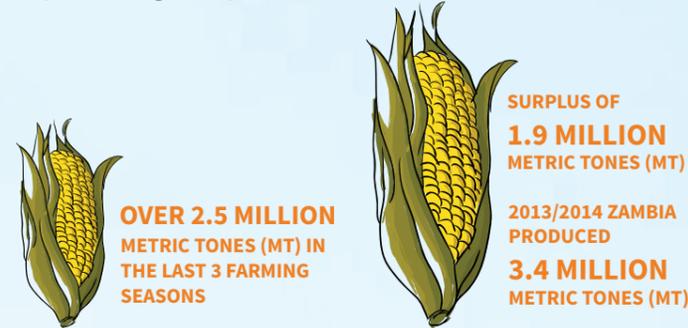
BUDGET ALLOCATION | BUMPER HARVEST

In 2015 Government allocated 1.1 Billion Kwacha to FISP, which amounted to 55% of the Agriculture budget.



Despite the increase in allocation to FISP, the intended target groups of the program are not benefiting from it; in contrast only 56% of small-scale farmers are receiving FISP fertilizer. In 2011 78% of the total amount of maize bought by the Food Reserve Agency was from large-scale farmers whose cultivated land ranged from 2 to 20 hectares. This reveals that the Agriculture Poverty Reduction Program (PRP) is benefiting households that are well off at the expense of the poor.

Zambia has continued to record bumper harvests in maize production with national production averaging at just over 2.5 million metric tonnes in the last 3 farming seasons. As the nation also scored success in the 2013/2014 farming season as Zambia produced 3.4 million metric tonnes (MT) representing a surplus of 1.9 million MT.



E-VOUCHER SYSTEM

E- Voucher: The E- voucher system will be piloted during the 2015/2016 farming season. This is meant to operate with the FISP in an effort to improve its efficiency. The E-voucher system uses a mobile delivery and tracking system to distribute subsidized products through private-sector suppliers to targeted farmers. This involves a web-based system that can be accessed on mobile phones. This allows for real time registration of beneficiaries and electronic payment to the agro dealer and retail agents who distribute the products.



Research Coverage Area



MAIZE PURCHASES

In September 2015, Government announced through the Food Reserve Agency (FRA) that it would increase maize purchases from the initially planned 500,000 metric tonnes (MT) to 800,000 MT to ensure national food security. This has been coupled by efforts to improve the storage facilities as well to properly secure purchased grain to avoid wastage through pest infection. Efforts to increase the amount of grain purchased in order to ensure food security are timely as Zambia experienced poor rainfall in the last farming season and this is expected have an impact of crop yield. Rainfall is expected to be erratic as a result of the impact of climate change.



RECOMMENDATIONS

PMRC urges the Government to enhance the effectiveness of FISP through monitoring and evaluation as well as supervision during the utilization of the distributed inputs. This will assist the government to assess the program's effectiveness as well as identify the optimal inputs required for farmers to graduate from the program.

PMRC urges the Government to expedite the implementation of the e-voucher system, as this will significantly reduce delays in delivery of inputs and allow for diversification in the inputs received. This will further improve the accessibility to inputs as farmers can access them from local dealers.

PMRC encourages Government to enhance efforts to provide technical support through improved extension services and equip cooperatives with skills to train farmers so as to improve input utilization.

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