

HLEKWENI FRIENDS RURAL SERVICE CENTRE

SURVEY ON GRAVITY FED DRIP KITS IN WARD 13 AND 14 IN GWANDA SOUTH May-June 06

A survey of drip kits in Gwanda South wards 13 and 14 was carried in May and June 2006. The purpose was to see whether farmers in these wards used the kits efficiently and effectively. They were distributed to farmers by 5 different organizations. The survey was carried out with the agreement of a stakeholders meeting of NGOs involved in the distribution of drip kits. The costs of the survey were borne by D.E.D. 150 farmers were visited in ward 13 and 14. The selection was random. They covered kits distribute by Forest Company, Lutheran Development Service, Saffire, World Vision and Hlekweni.

Unfortunately a number of potential interviewees refused because the interviewer (from Hlekweni) was not directly introduced by the kit distributor.

The survey questionnaires are held by Hlekweni and detailed results are available on request. The survey was not independently verified but the donor had visited a number of Hlekweni sites earlier in the year and has photographic records of several of them.

STAKEHOLDERS WORKSHOP

13 organizations attended the stakeholders meeting on drip irrigation revival on 9 May 2006 at Hlekweni Friends Rural Service Centre. The purpose of the meeting was to share positive and negative experiences on the distribution and use of 100sq.m. drip irrigation kits. The idea was to consider how best we could learn from each other, map the way forward and consider how best we could share the resources. The second meeting of a steering group was held at LEAD Trust Offices in Bulawayo on 24 May 2006, which was attended by six organizations. After the second meeting there were some positive suggestions put forward in relation to data collection on the use of drip kits. One of those suggestions was to obtain information from farmers who purchased kits, and see how they are performing and compare with those that were donated.

SURVEY ON DRIP KITS WARD 13 AND 14

The survey that was carried out by Hlekweni staff on the use of drip kits revealed that

- only 4 of the farmers were using their drip kits all year round.
- 74 of the farmers were using them seasonally and
- 72 of the farmers were not using the drip kits.

There were various reasons given by farmers as to why the drip kits were not used

1. 25 farmers said it was due to lack of proper training because time between the distribution of the kits and actual training and planting was not enough
2. 1 farmer said it was for security reasons, which were not fully explained but appeared to be political to the interviewers
3. 24 of the farmers took them because they saw other farmers taking kits because their reasons they gave were not enough to convince us to believe in what they said. For example, 'working in the fields and lack of water'. (Water is in short supply from August to November).
4. 16 were unused due lack of spare parts e.g. laterals, drippers and filters
5. 2 farmers when they took the kits did not appreciate the distance between their homesteads and source of water supply
6. 3 farmers got tired and stopped working
7. 5 farmers because of their HIV status stopped and could not continue because they were too weak
8. 74 of the farmers use their kits seasonally - that is in winter - and stop in summer to work in their fields. (10 of these had moved their kits close to a borehole)

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9. Some farmers (unspecified) gave lack of water as the reason due to competition between livestock and people.

During the survey one farmer was not prepared to give information because she wanted the organization that gave her the drip kits (Forest Co.) to come and inform her on what should be done with the kit. It was disturbing to see her using expensive lateral lines to tie goats while other farmers are in need of them for irrigating their crops.

OTHER PROBLEMS OBSERVED DURING THE SURVEY

- Some were new farmers in the production of vegetables
- Lack of support from extension workers
- Laziness on part of the farmer who expected children to do the job

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE WAY FORWARD

1. Develop a sustainable drip irrigation programme based on Hlekweni experience in Gwanda and in Bulawayo for other areas of Matabeleland with an emphasis on drip kit restoration and farmer training
2. Share the experiences at local and national level
3. Be prepared to train trainers (AREX or other NGO staff) so that the system can be adopted as widely and as quickly as possible

CONCLUSION

We are confident that if the recommendations above are implemented then farmers throughout Matabeleland will be equipped with knowledge and skills to be able to produce enough vegetables for their families for most of the year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all those who contributed during stakeholders meeting, the communities of ward 13 and 14 for giving information on their failures and successes which can be used to improve their farming methods. Thanks are due especially to D.E.D for financial support to enable the stakeholders meeting and the survey to take place and for other professional advice.

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