

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT



## A BRIEF REPORT ON POTATO PRODUCTION IN NJOMBE REGION



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Regional Profile

The region is located in Southern Highlands Zone which comprises of Ruvuma, Iringa, Mbeya, Rukwa, Katavi and Njombe Regions. It borders Iringa Region in the north, Morogoro Region in the east and Ruvuma region in the south. The Republic of Malawi via Lake Nyasa and part of Mbeya Region borders Njombe Region in the south-west, while in the west the borders are shared with Mbeya Region again. The region lies between latitude 08° 50' and 10° 30' south of the equator and between longitude 33° 45' and 35° 45' east of Greenwich. Njombe region has an area of 24,994 km<sup>2</sup> and is divided into four Administrative Districts (Makete, Njombe, Ludewa and Wanging'ombe) and six Local Government Authorities (Njombe DC, Njombe TC, Makambako TC, Makete DC, Ludewa DC and Wanging'ombe DC).

### 1.2 Administration

**Table 1: Distribution of Administrative Units by Councils**

District	Division	Wards	Villages	Streets/sub villages
Njombe TC	2	13	44	26
Njombe DC	2	12	45	219
Ludewa DC	5	25	77	337
Makete DC	6	22	97	467
Wanging'ombe DC	3	21	108	446
Makambako TC	1	12	14	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>1,549</b>

### 1.3 Population

According to the census of 2012 the population of Njombe Region is 702,097 people (329, 593 males and 372,738 females).



## 2.0 POTATO PRODUCTION STATUS

All the district councils have potential land for potato production.

### 2.1 Land under potato cultivation

The total area for the season 2014/2015 which was used in potato production was 1298,15 hectares that produced 591,951.8 ton. Potato crop is the second after maize in terms of food and cash crop in the region.

### 2.2 Potato production status;

Production per each council in the growing season of 2014/2015 are shown in the table below;-

**Table 2**

<b>Na.</b>	<b>District Council</b>	<b>Area under production(ha)</b>	<b>Yield (MT)</b>
1.	Njombe TC	14,116	243,504
2.	Wanging'ombe DC	12,641.6	93,224.84
3.	Makete DC	12,757	118,370
4.	Njombe DC	840	12,600
5.	Ludewa DC	4,636	35,357
6.	Makambako TC	408	4,896
<b>Total</b>		<b>1298,15</b>	<b>591,951</b>

### 2.3 Seed Potato Variety Availability

In the Region there is only one common potato variety grown almost by every farmer. The common name of the variety called CIP, but actually it was recommended as KIKONDO potato variety. This was officially recommended as improved variety in 1987 by ARI Uyole. Since 1987 there was no new improved potato variety being recommended, up to 2012. Matanga Farm a private company in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture are the on released four new improved potato varieties. These varieties are named as Meru, Tengeru, Sherekea and Asante.

## **2.4 Seed Potato requirement in the region:**

Most of the farmers are using their own seeds (farmer saved seeds) which are being produced locally; few of them are using improved seeds after introduction, through different project including SAGCOT Potato partnership project which is an ongoing project. 0.4% of farmers are using improved seed potatoes, compared to the requirement of 127,102 tons per year. Currently; only 500 tons have been disseminated to farmers which are equivalent to 0.4%.

## **2.5 Farm implements utilization in potato cultivation**

The farm implements include;- Hand hoes, Ox ploughs and tractors for only land preparation.

## **2.6 Average potato Yield per hectare:**

The average production is 6 to 10 tons per hectare.

## **2.7 Potato seed storage**

Storage in potato businesses are a critical issue. Farmers and businessmen get loss due to lack of storage facilities. Both ware and seed potato storage facilities are of importance. Farmers normally store their seed potato locally, and this also contributes much loss and eventually low yield.

## **2.8 Packaging materials and measurements**

The common packaging materials used by farmers are gunny bags and plastic bags (Maroba) whereby the potatoes are being filled in until they protrude on the top of a bag. This system of packaging is commonly known as Lumbesa. The measuring tools which are used by farmers are;- Tins of 20 kg, bags of 7 tins and weighing scales especially in urban areas.

## **2.9 Potato Market**

### **2.9.1 The Internal market:**

This is mainly dominated by whole sale traders (big buyers) from big towns such as Dar-es-salaam, Tanga, Dodoma, Shinyanga, Mwanza and Zanzibar. Also there are local buyers who buy from the markets in Njombe and Makambako and also from the farmers.

### **2.9.2 The external market:**

The country which buys potatoes from Njombe includes: - Kenya, Zambia, Congo DRC, and Arab countries like Oman.

In this trade middle men and Brokers are involved whereby the produce is being bought in low price and sold in higher price to the big buyers.

### **2.10 Price:**

At farm level the potatoes are sold at 6,000 up to 8,000/= per 20 kilogram tin while at Town centers a tin is sold at 9,000 to 10,000/=. A bag of 7 tins is sold between 42,000.00 and 56,000.00 T.shs

**NB:** Normally the price keeps on fluctuating from time to time.

## **3.0 CHALLENGES/PROBLEMS**

1. Change of weather conditions eg. Drought (prolonged drought), too much rainfall, frost, etc affects potato production,
2. Outbreak of diseases/pests for example this is in the village of Ibumila, there was outbreaks of Insect pest known as White grubs. The pest is very dangerous, and the loss is estimated at 70% if not well controlled,
3. Unstable price,
4. Unstable market,
5. Lack of common measurements and standards (eg. the problem of Lumbesa),
6. Poor and lack of packaging materials and transportation system, (Cold Trucks etc.),
7. Insufficient of good potato seed to farmers,
8. Insufficient improved cultivars of farmers,

9. High prices of farm inputs e.g. fertilizers, Agrochemicals and sprayers,
10. Lack of capital to the potato stakeholders,
11. Lack of potato processing factories,
12. Lack of post-harvest technologies such as storage and grading facilities and skills,
13. Lack of value addition,
14. Lack of agribusiness skills and
15. Lack of access to credit.

#### **4. WAY FORWARD**

The region view potato farming as a product which can lift our farmers out of poverty if we plan it well. Therefore the region sees the following as the way forward:

- i. Value addition such as Cripps making,
- ii. Mechanization equipment such as Land preparation, planting, rigging, harvesting and post harvesting tools (sorting and grading) because at least half of the crop is left in the ground,
- iii. Market development that is looking for new markets which are well defined,
- iv. Potato packaging materials,
- v. More knowledge on good potato farming including the use of high quality seed varieties,
- vi. Seed availability as Mtanga farm produce 2,000 tons per year while demand for Njombe region only is 127,000 tons. So we need more investors to produce high quality seeds,
- vii. More varieties of potatoes as we are now concentrating on Meru, Tengeru, Asante and Sherekea, which were released in 2012. So we need more investors to breed more varieties,
- viii. Proper storage facilities in order to reduce post harvest losses and
- ix. Access to credit or soft loans.