



Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program

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Trip Report: Zambia

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Purpose of Trip: Perform economic assessment of COMACO project. Contribute to host nation capacity building by offering training in best practices in those areas where research and observation suggest the greatest need.

Sites Visited: Lusaka, Lundazi, Chipata, and farms and trading centers around the Luangwa Valley

Names of Travelers: Sarah Katt, Johnson School of Business, and John Fay, Cornell University

Description of activities:

I traveled to COMACO's main community trading center (CTC) in Lundazi. There I observed the collection and production of peanut butter, honey and rice, which are staple value-added products in the COMACO enterprise. While at the Lundazi trading center I investigated the possibility of COMACO manufacturing high energy protein supplement (HEPS) for the African health care industry market. I traveled with the business manager of the Lundazi CTC to Chipata to visit a regional hospital and the district health board to investigate the market potential for a HEPS product. HEPS is a particular need in regions suffering from high infection rates of HIV/AIDS.

From Lundazi, I traveled to multiple regional trading centers and farms where the COMACO project was being implemented. From these locations we were able to assess the effectiveness of COMACO's outreach into the community and see the conservation farming and land management techniques being implemented by the local farmers.

I was also asked to provide input into the marketing of COMACO's bush camps to tourists who might be interested in traveling to the Laungwa Valley. This was done in conjunction with John Fay. The Bush Camps are community owned and run. By encouraging tourists to visit the camps, COMACO is hoping to offer another means of income generation to the communities the camps are in. I visited two of the Bush camps; one in Chikwa, and the other in Chifunda. At the Bush Camps I researched possible unique attributes of the camps, which might be used in



marketing programs to appeal to foreign tourists. When I returned to Lusaka I helped WCS/COMACO staff prepare some basic marketing materials that could be used to attract international tourists.

Suggestions and Recommendations:

We made several recommendations to COMACO concerning the marketing of the “It’s Wild!” Bush camps. The first was to prepare marketing materials that could be distributed to the expatriate community in Zambia. The second was to reach out to tour operators who could assist in attracting groups who were already planning to tour the region.

For the CTC’s we were very encouraged by our initial research into the idea of manufacturing HEPS. We offered some specific recommendation concerning the purchase of a small-scale soy extruder and left COMACO with a list of vendors and possible equipment options. Since my return, I have been pleased to find that COMACO has followed our research-based recommendation and will soon have purchased an extruder.