



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Feed the Future Helps Tanzanian Farmers Rally the Rice Industry



Megan Johnson, USAID/Tanzania

The Rice Council of Tanzania gives smallholder rice farmers a collective voice in increasing Tanzania's food security and making the country a regional rice powerhouse.

Long-term food security requires commitment and robust cooperation between the public and private sector. In Tanzania, that cooperation is becoming more comprehensive as the government and a coalition of private rice producers learn to work together to strengthen the country's rice industry.

Kilombero Plantation Limited is Tanzania's largest commercial rice farm. With the support of Feed the Future and working together with Rural Urban Development Initiatives, the largest Tanzanian non-governmental organization representing smallholder rice farmers, Kilombero led an effort to organize and establish the Rice Council of Tanzania, a registered body representing the country's rice producers.

This new body was formed in early 2014 to give private stakeholders working in the rice value chain a way to engage the government directly on policies and decisions affecting domestic producers. Better communication between the public and private sectors is expected to reduce uncertainty in the market and ensure the government has access to timely and accurate information about in-country rice production. This transparency can help prevent the kind of price volatility Tanzania encountered at the end of 2013 when duty-free importation of foreign rice was permitted in response to a perceived rice shortage, a policy that breached East African Community agreements to impose a common external tariff on imported rice and ultimately drove down the wholesale price of domestic rice.

Through a U.S. Agency for International Development project in Tanzania, Feed the Future supported the Rice Council in its initial stages by providing an executive director and technical adviser until it was able to employ its own staff. Since April 2014, the Council has grown to represent three large-scale commercial farms and approximately 100,000 smallholder rice farmers. It also represents a number of medium-size millers, traders and packagers of Tanzania rice. The country's largest fertilizer supplier and one of the largest agricultural banks are also affiliated. Ultimately, the Rice Council aims to represent an even greater proportion of Tanzania's 500,000 smallholder rice farmers, as well as other private sector actors in the country's rice value chain.

After a very short time, the Government of Tanzania now recognizes Rice Council as the official voice of the country's rice sector. Whereas government agencies were once reluctant to reply to letters from private companies or smallholder associations, the council has successfully engaged government agencies and has even elevated the concerns of its members to the Office of the President of Tanzania. In its first year, the Council has begun to build relationships with Tanzania's

Ministries of Agriculture, Finance, and East African Cooperation, as well as the Tanzania Revenue Authority, which has supplied the Council with information about imported rice and East African Community reports on the impacts government intervention has had in the rice sector.

Today, the relatively young Rice Council of Tanzania is starting to see an improved rice market and is looking forward to continued dialogue with the government in areas such as trade policies within the East African Community and regional alignment of agricultural markets. Through the Council, smallholder rice farmers can also expect to enjoy a greater collective voice in the process of increasing Tanzania's food security and making the country a regional rice powerhouse.