



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Improved Seed Sows Security And Profits For Tanzanian Rice Farmers



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Technology is expediting Chetu Omari's preparation of her plot for the growing season.

Tanzanian smallholder rice farmers often use seeds saved from past seasons to plant their fields. Since these indigenous seeds are typically recycled several times, most have reduced viability or have developed susceptibilities to disease. The reliance of farmers on weak and damaged seed results in low yields and constrains agricultural development. Access to improved seed can help solve these problems, leading to agricultural productivity and higher profits.

To increase the supply of improved seed—especially in rural areas—the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative, Feed the Future, provided training in good agricultural practices and facilitated the certification of 42 women and 49 men as rice seed producers. By selling improved rice seed varieties either directly to neighboring farmers or to companies for national distribution, these seed producers not only enhance their own economic opportunities, but also improve market access to this valuable commodity for Tanzanian farmers.

Chetu Omari is a 38-year-old rice farmer. She joined USAID's **NAFAKA** (Swahili for grain) seed program in March 2012 and, through the use of improved seed and good agricultural practices such as proper spacing and fertilizer application, saw a sixfold increase in rice yields on her farm. Based on this success, Omari decided to become a seed producer.

In her first year as a producer, Omari sold 2,300 kilograms of improved quality seed to 105 farmers in and around her village in central Tanzania. She subsequently qualified as a certified seed producer and entered into a contract to sell directly to a national seed company, TANSEED, in March 2013.

In the past year, Omari has tripled seed production and appreciates the security of a guaranteed market. "I can testify that there is a significant difference between farming in the improved way and farming in the old way," she says.

To date, the 91 farmers involved in the improved seed producers project have sold nearly 27,000 metric tons of high-quality seed, increasing both productivity and profitability for Tanzanian smallholder farmers. The project expands market access to improved seed for Tanzanian farmers in even the most remote areas while offering an alternative income for rice farmers. Countrywide, these successes have a dramatic effect on rice production and contribute to increased food security and economic growth for all Tanzanians.

As a result of the NAFKA program, which runs from 2011 to 2015, more than 80,000 smallholder farmers in Tanzania are

using new farming technologies for rice and maize, benefiting more than 100,000 households to date.

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