

ACTESA focus areas approved



The Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA), a Specialized Agency of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) participated in the just ended Fourth Joint Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources held in Mbabane, Swaziland.

At the meeting, COMESA/ACTESA presented a summary of its 10 year strategic plan outlining three main focus areas, which, the Ministers approved.

The key areas will focus on improved competitiveness of staple foods market in COMESA member States through

improved micro and macroeconomic policies.

Other areas include improved and expanded market facilities and services for staple foods commercialization and increased commercial integration of staple foods producers into national and regional markets.

The focus areas and approach adopted by COMESA/ACTESA will achieve better development, effectiveness and results towards its vision of realising a robust, modern and a prosperous agricultural sector in the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region.

In addition, COMESA/ACTESA's commitment to realizing the market expansion, food and nutrition security objectives of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) will be reinforced.

COMESA Regional Agro-inputs Programme (COMRAP) extended

The COMESA Regional Agro-inputs Programme (COMRAP) has been extended till December 2011.

COMRAP, funded by the European Commission and implemented by ACTESA, was scheduled to wrap up operations in August 2011. COMRAP responds to the objectives of the EC food facility which are: to encourage food producers to

increase supply; to deal directly with the effects of volatile food prices on local populations; and to increase food production capacity.

The programme has three components, Nature and delivery of financial services; strengthening the agro-dealer network; and supporting the seed and plant material commodity chain.

The overall objective of COMRAP is thus to contribute to improving rural food security and livelihoods in the COMESA region through training and capacity building of national and regional input providers.

It is expected that through COMRAP, 3,000,000 smallholder farmers will have improved and sustainable access to agro-inputs and services in the COMESA region.

More agro-dealers trained under COMRAP



The COMESA Regional Agro-inputs Programme (COMRAP) has continued to train agro-dealers and agents in order to strengthen the agro-dealer network in the region.

COMRAP, implemented by ACTESA and funded by the European Commission (EC) Food

Facility, this week, began the 19 training session for agro-dealers in North Western Province, Zambia.

Opening the training, North Western Provincial Agricultural Officer, Charles Sondashi, said the training would lead agro-dealers to great achievements in

their sector as they would offer better services to farmers.

Mr. Sondashi said through COMRAP, farmers would have access to improved agricultural services and inputs.

The opening was also attended by representatives from COMESA/ACTESA, IFDC, ZNFU and COMESA SME Tool Kit.

So far, 1 153 agro-dealers and agents have been trained in Zambia and of the number, 450 are women.

From the eight COMRAP pilot countries of Burundi, Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, so far, a total of 6 500 agro-dealers and agents have been trained of which, 2 200 are women.

The overall objective of the COMRAP project is to contribute to improving rural food security and livelihoods in the COMESA region through training and capacity building of national and regional input providers.

The strengthening of the agro-dealer component of COMRAP aims to increase agricultural productivity through enhanced access and trade in agro inputs. It therefore supports the establishment, expansion and strengthening.

COMESA Regional Agro-inputs Programme (COMRAP) Mid-Term Review

PriceWater House Coopers have been engaged to undertake a Mid-term review from July 25 to September 1 2011. The review will be conducted in the 8 pilot countries, Malawi, Zambia, Burundi, Uganda, Swaziland, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Zimbabwe.

The overall objective is to get a clear understanding

on COMRAP activities. The consultants will further schedule a meeting with the implementing partners, African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) and International Fertilizer Development Centre (AFSTA) on October 7 in Nairobi, Kenya to discuss with the beneficiaries and implementing partners on the activities and challenges faced during the implementation period.

