



COMACO
Community Markets for Conservation



Jumbo Combo: new It's Wild! product hits the market

COMACO takes great pride that its products come from crops produced without chemical fertilizer or pesticides and by farmers incentivized to farm in ways that keep soils healthy and products rich with flavour. Our latest product, Jumbo Combo, is no exception. Made from soybeans and cowpeas together with maize, it is packed with protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber, and enjoyed as either a drink or porridge.

We recently launched this new product at the African Food Festival held on October 1st in Lusaka. Attendees at the event were able to stop by the COMACO stand to sample our new Jumbo Combo product while learning more about the extension work we do to help farmers care for their land. Visitors were also able to taste other new products under development like a healthy snack made from cowpeas. Terry Miti was the first customer to purchase Jumbo Combo and returned twice to buy more for her family. "I have never tasted something so smooth and delicious as Jumbo Combo. I am looking forward to taking it home for the rest of my family to enjoy." – Terry Miti.

We expect Jumbo Combo to be on shelves at all the retail stores in Zambia by the end of November when customers will discover such a tasty, nutritious treat that everyone can afford.

COMACO rolls out mission to plant 100 million trees



In the past planting season our farmer cooperatives were able to plant over 40 million *Gliricidia sepium* trees as part of COMACO's ongoing effort to scale the adoption of agroforestry by small-scale farmers. The objective is improve crop yields and transition farmers away from the costly dependence on chemical fertilizers. This year COMACO has set the ambitious goal of planting 100 million trees. Farmers have seen the benefits of agroforestry with this species and more farmers are demanding help to farm this way and avoid the need for chemical fertilizers.

Educational videos and posters have been created to help educate farmers on the correct planting methods and management practices. Our team will spend the next several weeks in the field visiting each of the cooperatives and their traditional leaders to launch this mission with the hope that agricultural landscapes will be a mixture of trees and more productive, chemical-free food crops in the future.

Some of you made donations to help us with this campaign and we thank you so much for your support!

Financial literacy trainings to give carbon revenues greater impact



Following the recent handover of 3.1 million USD to communities as payment for the carbon credits they earned under our carbon project, our team has been busy teaching cooperatives and community forestry management groups how to plan, budget, manage and account for these funds. A step-by-step guidebook was developed for community organizations to learn key accounting skills and will be subjected to periodic audits for them to attest their compliance to good accounting standards. In the upcoming weeks as communities complete their training, they will begin requesting funds to be used for developmental and conservation-support projects in their chiefdoms.

COMACO awarded Innovative Marketing Company of 2022



On September 23rd, COMACO was awarded the Agriculture and Cooperatives (Agri-Coop) Award under the Innovative Agriculture Marketing Company of the year award category.

The Agric-Coop awards are organized by Lumbani Chilenga Investments Ltd the publisher of the Agri-coop Newspaper with support from the Ministry of Agriculture. The award recognizes companies that promote farming innovations and good farming practices for enterprises that demonstrate commercial strength for help small-scale farmers. It was a great honor for COMACO to be recognized for its work.

Wildlife returns to Chikomeni Chiefdom

For over a generation wildlife was rarely seen in Chikomeni chiefdom due to rampant poaching and habitat loss caused by land-clearing to open up new farmland or to make charcoal for sale. Today, wildlife has returned because farmers now farm in ways that reduce pressure on wildlife habitat and produce enough food and income to abandon practices like charcoal-making and poaching. In fact, over 73 poachers have surrendered their guns in favor of the skills and markets that COMACO offers. Forests were also put aside as conservation areas to earn carbon credits with the community earning \$348,119.83 USD from three different verifications. All these efforts have given wildlife the chance to move back.

COMACO recently caught up with farmers in Chikomeni chiefdom to hear their stories and views about living with wildlife.

“As a community”, explains Mr. John Nyirongo from Diwa village, we are very happy to see the rise in wildlife numbers in our chiefdom. This year we've seen the most wildlife yet. Since early this year, elephants and buffaloes are becoming more regular visitors to our chiefdom, especially areas like Diwa, Ndaiwala and Yakobe. Just some two days ago, a herd of fourteen elephants came out of Kasungu National Park in Malawi and passed through our community conservation area as they crossed into Lukusuzi National Park to the west. On another occasion school children woke up to find buffalo grazing on their soccer field and were able to see this animal for their first time”

“We are proud to let such animals live in our area. We know they can be dangerous and we're engaging our transformed poachers to use such non-lethal techniques as chili-blasting to keep large animals at a safe distance as we educate our people how to avoid potential conflicts.”

