#### Dcfrn-~1Developing Countries Farm Radio Network

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High Quality Crops Improve Income and Reduce Poverty

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**Notes to Broadcaster**

Growing high quality food is becoming increasingly important for farmers who want to sell their food locally, nationally, and especially internationally. Quality is a critical pre-requisite for receiving a good price!

Quality food is grown and processed with careful attention to all components of production and processing. This includes the kind and the amount of inputs a farmer uses, the practices which are followed for harvesting and storage, and, especially for export crops, how crops are packaged and transported.

Individual farmers often need assistance to grow high quality foods. One way they can receive this help is through farmers’ unions and marketing cooperatives. These organizations try to stay in touch with what the market wants, including current prices for crops and where the best opportunities are.

This script profiles a successful organic paprika grower in Zambia, Mrs. Nancy Kondolo. In her case, the Zambian National Farmers Union provided training and information which helped her meet the high quality standards required to export her paprika to Europe.

Broadcasters can help local farmers grow high quality crops by publicizing success stories such as this one. They can also help by interviewing representatives from farmers’ unions and growing cooperatives that are active in the local area, and asking questions about which crops might present the best opportunities for local, national and international markets.

*Cue in signature tune and fade under presenter.*

**Presenter:** Hi, and welcome to today’s presentation of *Voice of the Farmer*, brought to you with the compliments of the Zambia National Farmers’ Union. I am your presenter, Alice Lungu Banda. Stay tuned.

*Fade up signature tune and out.*

**Presenter**: Farmers in Zambia have succeeded in diversifying their crops and producing bumper harvests in an effort to reduce poverty. But they still face a big challenge - marketing their products!

You’ll be happy to know that there’s good news! All farmers can provide products with high nutritional value. And nutritious products give farmers access to international markets.

Farmers! Allow me to remind you that it is not what the supplier wants, but what the consumer wants that really matters. Success in competitive markets depends on using good crop management practices from planting to harvesting. For instance, paprika grown with organic methods can earn a farmer a lot of money in both local and international markets, helping the fight against poverty.

On our programme today we feature Mrs. Nancy Kondolo, a 59-year-old farmer from Mwanamwemba Village in the Southern province of Zambia. Mrs Kondolo grows paprika on a commercial basis and sells to both local and international markets. Join me as I speak with her.

**Alice:** Good morning, Mrs. Kondolo. When did you start growing paprika?

**Mrs. Kondolo:** I became a paprika grower way back in 1997 when I had just retired from government where I worked as a secretary. I took up paprika growing because I had an opportunity to travel to Europe. I saw that paprika and most of the crops we grow here in Zambia are treasured in Europe and sell like hot cakes.

**Alice:** What do you mean by saying that they ‘sell like hot cakes’?

**Mrs. Kondolo**: What I mean is that there is a very good market for these crops. But I must give a word of caution to my fellow farmers. Products must be produced under good management practices and well-packaged. They must also have high nutritional value, and no trace of pesticides. Finally, they have to look attractive to meet European standards.

**Alice:** How did you manage to meet the European standards?

**Mrs. Kondolo:** I belong to a Mwanamwemba farmers group, which is a member of the Zambia National Farmers’ Union. It was easy for us to meet those standards because the Union trained us on good management practices, from land preparation to harvest. The Union also ensured that we were linked to markets, both locally and internationally.

**Alice:** How is your livelihood compared to the time you were a secretary?

**Mrs. Kondolo:** I am very comfortable. I have money in my pocket everyday and I manage to support many school children. I also help out other households in my village whenever the need arises.

**Alice:** How many hectares of land do you own? Do you grow any other crops?

**Mrs. Kondolo:** I have 60 hectares of land. Because I know that diversification of crops is important, I grow other crops - maize, soybeans, groundnuts and sunflower.

**Alice:** What method of cultivation do you use and for how long have you been practicing it?

**Mrs. Kondolo:** Some time back I used conventional methods of cultivation and my yields were not very good. But, because of the Zambian National Farmers’ Union, I now use conservation farming methods, organic farming and crop rotation. I don’t like the idea of using chemicals.

**Alice**: Why not?

**Mrs. Kondolo**: I don’t want the value of my soil to be degraded. And the European Union, which is my target market, asks for products which have high nutritional value. I realize that farming is a business and I have to meet my clients’ needs if I want to stay in business.

**Alice:** Thank you for speaking to us on *Voice of the Farmer*. I hope you will find time to talk with us again.

**Mrs Kondolo:** Thank you and you are welcome anytime.

**Presenter:** Thank you, farmers and other listeners, for taking time off from your busy schedule to listen to *Voice of the Farmer.* Please tune in next week at the same time. Many thanks to my co-producer Annie Sampa. I am Alice Lungu Banda saying good bye and have a productive day.

*Cue in closing signature tune.*

## Acknowledgements

Contributed by Alice Lungu Banda.

Producer: Zambia National Farmers Union.

Farmer: Mrs. Nancy Kondolo. Mwanamwemba Village, Farm no. 1977/M, Mazabuka, Zambia.

Presenter: Palesa News Agency, P.O.Box 314 FW, Lusaka.

Broadcaster and Interview: Alice Lungu Banda.

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