

Pack 117

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**Marketing pigeon peas in Mozambique: Challenges and solutions  
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Notes to broadcaster

In the last decade, pigeon pea production has grown remarkably in Mozambique, and has become one of the main cash and export crops. Pigeon pea is mainly grown in the province of Zambézia, where production multiplied by a factor of seven between 2002 and 2012. The districts of Milange, Mocuba, and Morrumbala grow most of the pigeon peas. The crop is also produced in other northern and central provinces of Mozambique.

In 2016, India agreed to import 125,000 tons of pigeon pea in 2017-18, gradually increasing to 200,000 tons by 2020-21. In response, the national government intensified the promotion of pigeon pea production.

Pigeon peas are rich in protein and minerals such as calcium, phosphate, magnesium, and sulfur.

In this script, we interview Mr. Rufino Bila from the Mozambican Cereal Institute (ICM), and we speak with two farmers. We learn that producing and marketing pigeon pea in Mozambique has had several successes, as well as many challenges.

If you want to produce a program on pigeon pea, you may wish to draw inspiration from this text. If you choose to present this radio script as part of your farming program, you can use voice actors to represent the people interviewed for this script. In this case, please tell your audience at the very beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors and not of the actual participants.

If you want to air programs on a similar topic, talk to farmers who grow pigeon pea, as well as traders, processors, exporters, pigeon pea experts, and others in the pigeon pea value chain.

You may wish to ask them the following questions, among others:

* Is pigeon pea a suitable crop for this area?
* What are the major challenges with growing and marketing pigeon pea? What solutions have been proposed for these challenges?
* Do you recommend that farmers, traders, and processors invest in pigeon pea production, trading, and processing, respectively?

* What are the opportunities for women to be involved in the pigeon pea value chain?

Estimated duration with music, intro and extro, is 15-20 minutes.

**HOST:** Good morning (afternoon, evening) listeners. Today, our show focuses on pigeon peas, especially on marketing the crop. To explore this topic, we present several interviews. First, we speak with Mr. Rufino Bila from the Mozambican Cereal Institute, or ICM. We also talk to Mr. Nelito Viriato, a pigeon pea farmer in the province of Manica in central Mozambique. Finally, we speak with Mrs. Laura Simbi, a farmer from Sofala province who also cultivates pigeon peas. Both farmers shared their experience with producing and marketing pigeon peas.

Mr. Rufino Bila, in 2015, Mozambique stood in fifth position globally in terms of production, and third place in global exportation of pigeon pea. Currently, how is production and where is it being developed?

**RUFINO BILA:** Pigeon pea is a cash crop in Mozambique and is grown in the central and northern zones. It’s easy to grow. It is planted once and produces for two to three seasons. It creates good soil fertility for subsequent crops such as maize. It’s also very nutritious. Pigeon peas are rich in protein and minerals such as iron, calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus. For better nutrition, it should be eaten with cereals such as rice, maize, or wheat.

**HOST:** When you talk about pigeon peas as a cash crop, do you mean that it’s produced, sold, and exported?

**RUFINO BILA:** Exactly. It is not like maize and other crops that are primarily for subsistence. It's a cash crop because it puts money directly into a farmer's pocket.

**HOST:** Are farmers aware of its nutritional value?

**RUFINO BILA:** Yes. Farmers know that they can make fast money for their families, and so they sell it. But they also consume it, though it’s customary to consume it fresh, before it dries.

**HOST:** Knowing the nutritional value of pigeon pea, why is production and mass consumption not promoted on a national scale?

**RUFINO BILA:** It is a challenge. Our technical secretariat works with farmers and aims to do this. For example, in India, many people consume pigeon peas regularly. It is part of their culture. The Ministry of Agriculture in Mozambique, through its technical secretariat, is engaged in scaling-up national consumption of pigeon peas. But it shouldn’t only be this institution that is taking action on this issue. It must also include the government and other actors, including civil society, government partners, academics, and others.

**HOST:** Who should be responsible for changing the perception of pigeon peas as a crop for export to one for home consumption?

**RUFINO BILA:** Everyone: the government, society, from the health sector from the perspective of promoting consumption of this nutritious legume, and the private sector.

**HOST:** And how can it be done?

**RUFINO BILA:** By training producers. And by engaging other stakeholders in drying, grinding, and canning the beans. By getting the beans cooked and mixed with seasoning and meat. By developing the capacity to process the beans in local factories, increasing access to the product, and promoting it as a regular part of the diet.

**HOST:** What is the government's role in this?

**RUFINO BILA:** We are facilitators. We study the market and bridge the gap between producers and the market. We certify the origin of Mozambique's pigeon peas, and we update the domestic sales price in response to international market rate, and share it with farmers.

**HOST:** Mr. Rufino, how long has the country been exporting pigeon peas?

**RUFINO BILA:** We have a memorandum of understanding with India to export pigeon peas. India is an excellent market, and we have exported pigeon peas to India for many years. We had a first memorandum of understanding with India between 2016 to 2021, whereby Mozambique exported about 200,000 tonnes per year. Then we signed a second contract that runs from 2021 to 2026. The marketing price of pigeon pea varies according to the market price. ICM simply updates the market price and seeks partnerships. The private sector makes its investment by contacting producers directly. Then it does the processing and sale.

**HOST:** We know that your role is to facilitate the marketing of pigeon peas, and that radios can contribute to maximizing the market. Is there a strategy to achieve this?

**RUFINO BILA:** Yes, there is a strategy on how radio stations can pass on information to rural people, and what types of messages they must pass on.

**HOST:** Can you tell us a few specific messages?

**RUFINO BILA:** We warn farmers about the risks of producing too much if there is a bad market season coming. And we encourage them to produce a lot when the market is predicted to be favourable. By acting on this kind of advice, farmers can be more successful.

The main idea is to transmit information to small producers about the current situation of pigeon peas before and at the time of marketing. We also raise awareness of good agricultural practices and publicize competitive markets, so that small farmers obtaining a reward for their agricultural work. We help small producers make marketing decisions.

**HOST:** What other messages can be broadcast on the radio?

**RUFINO BILA:** Messages about the usefulness of pigeon peas and the importance of consuming pigeon peas all over the country. By talking about its importance and marketing it, radio stations can help pass along the message about the nutritional value of pigeon peas to everyone.

**HOST:** Thank you, Mr. Rufino. Is there anything else you would like to share with our listeners?

**RUFINO BILA:** There is another very important point. Radio must make it clear to the farmers that the government has nothing to do with the price of pigeon peas. The price varies from season to season according to the international market. The role of the government is just to pass along the latest information and update farmers and the whole community.

**HOST:** Thank you.

(PAUSE) We will now speak with Mr. Nelito Viriato, a pigeon pea farmer in the province of Manica in central Mozambique. We will talk to him about the kind of problems he faces when trying to market pigeon peas.

**HOST:** How is your pigeon pea production going and where do you grow the crop?

**NELITO VIRIATO:** Production is going well. I am based in the province of Manica, in the district of Gondola in the city of Chimoio.

**HOST:** Can you give us some details about how things are going well?

**NELITO VIRIATO:** Well, from what I produce in a season, I can sell everything and ensure that I have food at home and I can afford to buy all the farming inputs I need to organize myself for the coming season, like fertilizer, seeds, and other things.

**HOST:** Are you working in an agricultural co-operative or alone?

**NELITO VIRIATO:** I work on my own field. I hire helpers at planting time and harvesting time only.

**HOST:** How much do you produce per season?

**NELITO VIRIATO:** My current harvest varies from 18 to 25 100-kg bags per season.

**HOST:** Where do you sell your crop?

**NELITO VIRIATO:** After harvesting, the beans are taken to Vanduzi Company in Vanduzi District, Manica, and processed and finally exported.

**HOST:** Who transports the product?

**NELITO VIRIATO:** The buyers come to the fields and use their own transport. This helps a lot because we used to have serious transportation problems. Currently, demand for pigeon peas is very much from foreign buyers. After the crops has been harvested, we sell to Vanduzi, PHONix seeds limitada, CD Co, LUtiari, Moz Grain, Export Market at Manica District. These companies are all headquartered in Manica District and deal directly with India. They buy directly from local farmers and export pigeon pea.

**HOST:** What is the selling price?

**NELITO VIRIATO:** The most recent price was 50 Mozambican meticals per kilogram. But it’s important to note that prices vary from season to season in the international market.

**HOST:** Do you consume pigeon peas?

**NELITO VIRIATO:** Pigeon pea is consumed when young as a raw pea, and when more mature as a dried pea. When immature and fresh, they do not need to be cooked and the peas can be shelled and added to salads or eaten as snack. Cooked peas can be added to soups, stews, curries, sauces, salads, and rice dishes.

**HOST:** Do merchants in shops buy from you and other pigeon pea farmers?

**NELITO VIRIATO:** There are very small farms with very little production who sell locally. Others sell for themselves in the markets and shops without selling to a merchant who is looking for the product.

**HOST:** And you, Mr. Nelito, what do you think about the situation with marketing pigeon peas?

**NELITO VIRIATO:** I would like ICM to help us with processing factories because the foreign buyers do not pay us well for the products we sell. Another thing is that we don’t know whether the prices we receive are fair or not.

**HOST:** Do you have community radio stations?

**NELITO VIRIATO:** Yes, we do, and through them we hear about the volume of production of crops like rice, maize, and others in the region, and also about the weather, floods, and droughts and other general things.

**HOST:** Do radio stations talk about pigeon pea prices?

**NELITO VIRIATO:** No, they don't talk about it on our behalf. We don't know prices on the international market. The radio stations talk about shop prices when they talk about prices for products in general.

**HOST:** Thank you, Mr. Nelito.

Finally, we spoke with Mrs. Laura Simbi, a farmer from Sofala province who also cultivates pigeon pea. She shared her experiences producing and marketing pigeon peas.

**HOST:** Mrs. Laura, how can community radio help farmers produce and market pigeon peas?

**LAURA SIMBI:** Radio stations can talk about the nutritional value of pigeon peas and make sure they are purchased widely throughout the country. It can help us obtain fertilizers and seeds in partnership with fertilizer and seed suppliers, it can help us find better customers, and it can help us to have warehouses and co-operatives. Radio stations can broadcast a lot of advertising about our pigeon peas, explain about different production techniques, and different markets where pigeon pea farmers can sell their crop, so that we can sell as much as possible.

**HOST:**  We asked Mr. Bila to respond to Mr. Nelito and Mrs. Simbi’s comments and here is what he said.

**RUFINO BILA:**  ICM’s vision is to coordinate agricultural marketing at the national level and to establish the value chain between demand and supply. As a government institution, we have several goals in developing the pigeon pea value chain. One of these is to encourage processing pigeon pea into dhal to add value. Processing can encourage internal consumption. Pigeon pea is rich in minerals such as calcium, phosphate, magnesium, and sulfur, as well as vitamins. Regarding prices, if Mozambican producers do not consume pigeon pea, then prices will always depend on the international market, the export market. We must first create mechanisms to encourage domestic consumption of pigeon pea.

I agree with the commentsfromMr. Nelito and Ms. Laura. More needs to be shared about the benefits of pigeon pea and domestic processing to improve the nutritional situation.

**HOST:** We have learned from this program that farmers are producing and marketing pigeon peas on their own and not working very much with co-operatives. For economic reasons, they cultivate the crop mainly for export and not for their own home consumption.

ICM is responsible for creating a system that helps farmers to find markets, has not yet had a direct intervention with farmers to help them better market their products.

Dear listeners, thank you for your attention, until the next edition.

**Acknowledgements**

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Interviews:

Rufino Bila, April and May, 2021

Nelito Viariato, April 2021

Laura Simbi, April 2021

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