



## Cashew farmers in Mozambique prepare for a busy harvest season

### September 2016 – Mozambique

Alda Filomena André, a cashew farmer from the village of 3 de Fevereiro in Nangade district, enjoys showing off her young, green cashew nuts that have begun to emerge on many of her cashew trees. Alda and her husband have worked hard throughout the year to get to this point and are now busy preparing for the harvest.

As one of the 23,000 farmers participating in the MozaCajú project, they have spent the last few months pruning and cleaning their cashew trees, i.e. eliminating branches that are dry,

diseased or no longer productive. Currently they are in the process of spraying to protect the trees from pests and disease. Their goal is to have a harvest even more plentiful than the last and they are hopeful that this year it will happen.



The first cashew apple of the season on Alda's farm

Over the next few weeks the cashew apples on Alda's trees – and all cashew trees across Mozambique – will start to form above the cashew nut, which grows in a hard shell connected to the bottom of the apple. Once the cashew is ripe, it will fall to the ground and the cashew nut and apple will

be ready to harvest.



Typically, cashew farmers in Mozambique harvest both the cashew nut and apple. Though the raw cashew nut is the primary income-generating product of the cashew tree, some farmers make money from selling the cashew apple as well, which makes a juice called *cajuina*.

Additionally, some farmers keep cashew nuts and apples for consumption in the home. Whether it is roasted, ground and added to curries or turned into juice, cashew nuts and apples are a favorite in the family – however, this is primarily only during the time of the harvest when it is plentiful in the household.

A well-producing cashew tree can produce anywhere from 5 to 15 kilograms of raw cashew nut. Farmers like Alda who have many cashew trees will hire local day-laborers from the community during the harvest to help with the collection of the cashew nut and apple, making it a busy time not only for the cashew producers but the entire community.



Cashew nuts and apples emerge from the small pink flowers that grow at the tip of the branches

By mid-October, the cashew harvest season will begin in this northernmost district of Nangade, the major cashew-producing region of Cabo Delgado province. By November, the trees in the rest of the cashew producing areas of the country will be ready for harvest, which typically lasts through December, when commercialization begins.



**MozaCajú** is a project funded by USDA that connects smallholder cashew farmers to markets and factories in three northern provinces of Cabo Delgado, Zambézia and Nampula.

For more information about the project, please see: [www.mozacaju.com](http://www.mozacaju.com)

Story and photos by C. Denny Newhouse