



MozaCajú training session for cashew farmers in Chiúre, Cabo Delgado, Mozambique

MozaCajú trains cashew farmers on crop protection techniques

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Under the sprawling branches of a large cashew tree, Angelo Levi, MozaCajú production lead, gazes at a group of farmers who have gathered to attend a training on the chemical treatment of cashew trees.

“What is the first activity we need to do in order to spray our plants?” Levi asks the group.

“Selection of the plant,” one farmer replies.

“Yes – we all agree? Yes or no?” Levi looks around and smiles.

There is a general murmur of consent and he continues, “Yes! Very good. And why do we need to select trees for treatment?”

“We want to select a tree that will produce and give profit,” another farmer responds.

“Exactly,” confirms Levi, “We want a tree that will produce at least 4 kilograms.”

He continues to explain that trees that currently produce less than 4 kilograms of cashew are not worth treating due to the cost of the chemicals and the spraying. However, the more productive the tree is at the time of treatment, the more cost-effective it is to treat.

The discussion then turns to the specifics of how and when to select the trees to treat, what part of the tree to treat, and how to mix and spray the chemical treatment, including interval treatment. The goal of the training is for the farmers to walk away with all the knowledge required in order to begin the spraying season, which generally runs from late June to August, right before the harvest season.



After explaining the full treatment process, Levi invites some of the farmers to come up and explain it again to the group, using the poster designed by the MozaCajú production team. The farmers get a chance to demonstrate what they have learned, ask questions about the treatment process (for example what they should do when they have trees that are flowering at different times), and are tested on new concepts (for example how many liters of chemical for each 100 trees).

When the session ends, each farmer receives a copy of the informational poster and creates an action plan to disseminate the knowledge. In fact, these are not average farmers – these are MozaCajú promoters who are known and trusted in their communities and who are trained to deliver technical assistance on cashew production to other farmers. MozaCajú has specific criteria for choosing the promoters, including attainment of a certain level of schooling as well as approval from the community.



MozaCajú promoter Sofia Momade explains the chemical treatment process to the group

Over the past two years, MozaCajú has trained 168 promoters on techniques for improved cashew production and crop protection including cleaning, pruning, spraying and post-harvesting. Promoters are then responsible for disseminating the knowledge and information to other cashew farmers (around 175 per promoter) in his or her

community through the help of the materials they get at these sessions, such as the posters. In this way, MozaCajú is reaching over 23,000 cashew farmers through the extension services of these promoters with valuable messages on cashew production and crop protection.

According to Levi, the chemical treatment training is one of the most important trainings of the crop season. The correct application of chemical treatment helps to ward off disease and pests and could double cashew production, thus significantly impacting the livelihoods of these smallholder cashew farmers.

Typically, cashew farmers in this area have not always applied chemicals to their trees, due to a lack of capacity, knowledge, and/or resources. Certain farmers may spray some of their trees, but not necessarily in a consistent, cost-effective or efficient manner. MozaCajú teaches both the technical, agronomic approach for spraying as well as the business implications of investing in spraying, for example maximizing return on investment through selection of productive trees.

Recognizing the importance of spraying cashew trees before the harvest, MozaCajú also works with INCAJU, Institute for Cashew Promotion, to facilitate the distribution of chemicals to cashew farmers. MozaCajú has also given a grant to Agrifocus, a company that provides agricultural inputs, to distribute spraying machines to farmers and other service providers willing to purchase the machines on a cost-share basis. These sprayer providers also receive training on the chemical treatment process, similar to the sessions for the promoters.

In this way, MozaCajú trains farmers on crop protection techniques and facilitates their access to chemicals and machines so that they are able to continue to increase their production of cashew in the future.

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At the end of the session, Levi asks the farmers, “So, why do we do this?”

“To earn more money!” they reply.

*MozaCajú is a project funded by USDA that works to connect smallholder cashew farmers to markets and factories in the three northern provinces of Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Zambézia. For more information about the project, please see [www.mozacaju.com](http://www.mozacaju.com).*

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