STORY OF TWO CASHEW FARMERS IN MUCOJO

Abudo Kunoa and Calisto Ingero are cashew producers in Mucojo, a village in the District of Macomia. Both have complained that cashew crops normally succumb to the Oidium disease, a fungus that causes the leaves to crinkle and become minimally functional. It attacks flowers and young fruits making them look burnt or wrinkled. The leaves are not able to support the development of quality fruits.

	Abudo produced last year only 450 kg from his 100
	medium-sized trees and 200+ smaller trees, The
	INCAJU chemicals used to control Oidium came late,
	Abudo said. While waiting for the chemicals to arrive he
	wondered if he could spray them as the power sprayers
	were also broken. Abudo harvested only 1.5kg/tree in
	2014, a low harvest compared to previous years.
	Midway in the harvest this year, Abudo already
	surpassed last year's 450 kg of cashew nuts harvested
Abudo after sprayiing the trees with natural materials	and has sold already 7 bags (630 kg). He continues to
(June 2015)	harvest and expects up to 900 kg from his medium sized
	productive trees (equivalent to 250 large trees) that
	would give him an average of 3.6kg per tree (in terms of
	big trees). Abudo would be receiving between Mts
	21,000 – 27,000 gross incomes which are respectable
	income.
	Calisto was slightly better off, he produced last year
	720kg from his 80 big old trees (from seedlings) 60
	medium sized grafted trees and 200+ smaller air-layered
	trees (all equivalent to 250 large productive trees).
	Calisto's trees are early bearers, flowering in late April
	when Oidium is not favored by the hot climate. Thus,
	Calisto harvests in August and this normally extends up
	to January. Calisto averaged last year an equivalent of
	2.88 kg/ tree harvest. Calisto also wished that INCAJU
Calisto after spraying the First Aid Strategy in	chemicals arrive earlier.
May	Calisto has now harvested some 820 kg from his big,
Calisto would be receiving between Mts 21,000	medium and small sized trees (also equivalent to 250
- 27,000 gross incomes which are respectable	large trees) and expects this to rise to about 920 kg for
income.	an average also of 3.68kg per tree. EARLY/NATURAL
	AID is appearing as a potential strategy that can be
	used for Mucojo as well as for other areas where
	chemicals may not be available on time.

The situation of the late arrival of the chemicals for Oidium control is difficult to change. It was therefore thought that a strategy which we at MOZACAJU call the EARLY AID or FIRST AID (Primeiro Socorro) STRATEGY was needed to complement the INCAJU program. MOZACAJU could not buy chemicals, so we opted for natural fungal control with Trichoderma and EM (the Effective Microorganisms) and the MM

(a semblance to EM), and we applied them as an EARLY AID and we also call these the **NATURAL AID** while waiting for the INCAJU chemicals. Since the cashew trees are on poor sandy soils, we had a foliar spray of Potassium Nitrate (that I had been keeping for other purposes) as a nutritional booster aside from being a flowering inducer. We also brought in a long pole hand sprayer that can spray the tops of the tall trees.

This year one buyer installed a buying booth beside the house of Calisto, auguring a new opportunity not seen years before. Both Abudo and Calisto expect incomes after costs close to \$500 per year, a substantial income for most farmers. With their sales Abudo and Calisto are thinking of making decisions on buying inputs at the right time and also in marketing. Now, can a farmer with 40 plants be doing a business using the alternative method?

The gross margin (on total proceeds) of the alternative system is 59%, an attractive ratio even with hidden costs not counted since these are actually management and overhead costs of the farmer and his family for which he does not have any cash outflow. Besides there are also some costs that can still accrue to the farmer such as clearing and pruning if he does it himself.

The impact on this is that the cashew producers do not anymore treat cashew production as an independent farming business. This is also a cap on growth of the cashew industry since production management is not anymore done by the cashew farmers who are not anymore in a position to make their own business decisions, beginning with the management of pests and diseases.

The story of Calisto and Abudo is able to bring back cashew producers especially the small ones into the business of farming cashew as a profitable business. Even those smaller farmers with 40 trees can also follow the story of Calisto and Abudo. There would be no more cap on their growth and initiatives as they can make decisions on their own. They can decide to grow (an exponential growth) as they would have their own resources and not anymore dependent on others. This is ideal for the unlimited growth of many farmers.

Both Abudo and Calisto show that cashew farming as a business is quite profitable and can even be much more profitable as they grow in area and as they practice techniques that they can control on their own. There are many alternatives that both Abudo and Calisto can decide on, if given the chance. MOZACAJU has shown one and can still show more. Here are some others alternatives that can follow:

- 1. Use of air-layered (Alporquia) plants from their own selected materials. Air-layered materials are early bearing and can escape the season for Oidium preponderance.
- 2. Home-processing and packaging of cashews (molasses, pulps, juices, dishes, sweets). These are value adding activities that the whole family can participate in.
- Farm-made fertilizers. This can be to convert flammable materials like dry grasses into useful fertilizers like Bokashi.
- 4. Farm-made "medicaments" with distillates. This would make use of the cashew nut shell oil as a fungicide and insecticide.

- 5. Farm-made feed ingredients for farm animals. A well-fermented mass after juice and molasses extraction, the mass becomes very palatable to chickens, ducks, goats, etc.
- 6. Market development on their own. A thriving cashew community can attract the market by itself, if it shows a great dynamics of production.

We can explain all of these later. Both Abudo and Calisto are as desirous to make the most out of cashew as an integrated business, starting from being a farming business.

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