

## Northern region expected to boost fertilizer use through AFAP partnership

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The African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership (AFAP) signed an Agribusiness Partnership Contract (APC) with Mrs Rose Joseph Assenga, Managing Director and Owner of Assenga Agro-vet, a fertilizer distribution company located in Moshi in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania.

This partnership is for the injection of much needed tailored fertilizers for smallholder farmers in the region to increase agricultural productivity of smallholder farmers, increase food security and support the government of Tanzania’s policy to boost fertilizer usage in Tanzania and increase agriculture productivity.

AFAP’s partnership with Mama Assenga will enable her to purchase a warehouse with storage capacity of up to 6 000 metric tons and subsequently enable her to supply fertilizer to more than 70 000 smallholder farmers in her region. “The purchase of the warehouse will not only serve the agro-dealers that purchase fertilizer from them every year, but the partnership will also serve thousands of farmers who will now, maybe for the first time, have access to suitable fertilizers, packed in various convenient sizes,” Mama Assenga said. The storage facility will also generate income for Mama Assenga as she is now renting part of her storage to a major fertilizer supplier, who stocks fertilizer for ease of distribution in the Kilimanjaro region and surrounding areas.

“Through our field visits we found that some farmers still do not use fertilizer because of varying reasons, such as high costs, accessibility, timely delivery and bag sizes (50 kg) that most smallholder farmers cannot afford to purchase at once,” Cecilia Khupe (Program Director: AFAP) said. Khupe added that AFAP partnerships such as the one with Mama Assenga, allows AFAP to work with local agribusinesses to identify areas that constrain fertilizer use and make the essential interventions to smoothen these areas.

Supporting Khupe’s statement, Mama Assenga said that the AFAP partnership is a “win-win” situation in which they will be able to store and supply a variety of fertilizers. Retailers in turn will purchase more fertilizer; improving their incomes and smallholder farmers will have access to fertilizer, thus encouraging them to use it to boost crop yields.

The Kilimanjaro area was identified by the government of Tanzania as being one of the “food baskets” of the country, thereby introducing an inputs subsidy program to boost the use of fertilizer in the country. The subsidy program currently provides seeds and fertilizers in many parts of the country to improve maize and rice productivity. Through this program, the government has created a stronger fertilizer demand – a demand that Mama Assenga says they will be able to meet confidently through their bigger storage facility.

Agreeing that the northern region is a potential “breadbasket” for the country, Mama Assenga said the partnership between them and AFAP will work to elevate all government efforts to reduce rural poverty and increase yields and incomes in the country. The company already provides over-the-counter advice to farmers on the correct use of fertilizer. Through the partnership with AFAP, Mama Assenga is already planning to open five more outlets in the rural areas. In addition the company plans on establishing more demonstration plots and field days throughout their distribution area to educate farmers on the importance of not just

choosing fertilizers, but choosing fertilizer that will work with the soil type as well as proper application methods to provide maximum yields.