

**THE TEA RESEARCH FOUNDATION
OF CENTRAL AFRICA:**

ONE OF THE SABINA NODES

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INTRODUCTION

- TRFCA, **Not-for-profit**, established in **1966**
- Service provider in tea **R & D to Tea growers** in central & southern Africa
- Head offices at **Mimosa in Mulanje, Malawi**
- Two satellite stations at Nsuwadzi in Mulanje and Chipinge in Zimbabwe.

MEMBERSHIP AND FUNDING

- TRFCA, **Regional in nature**
- 10 tea companies, 6 in MW, 1 in ZA, 3 in ZW
- Members pay a cess per kg of made tea produced
- About 40% of its own from its green leaf sales

TEA PRODUCTION

- Tea an **important economic crop** in these member countries.
- In Malawi, about **8% of foreign exchange from tea**
- About **40,000 people employed** in the industry
- MW 19000 ha produce annually about **42,000 mt made tea**
- ZW 6,000 ha produces about **10,000 Mt**
- Other tea companies 1000 ha produce **2500 mt**

MISSION STATEMENT

Committed to the provision of services to tea growers in central and southern Africa by:

- I. **Developing ethical and improved tea production technologies,**
- II. **Providing training and specialist advices**
- III. **To increase made tea yields and quality & sustain and viable tea industries**

ACHIEVEMENTS

- All tea-growing practices currently used
- **Notable achievement- widely adopted clonal tea cultivars**
- They are HY and produce high quality tea
- MW growers are replacing old seedling teas with clones
- **Getting high yields and good prices of tea**
- **Other technologies:**
 - Production of composite plants,
 - use of pluckable shoots in vegetative propagation,
 - determination optimum time for pruning and practices for mechanical harvesting etc
 - **Recently, the possibility of developing cultivars with health benefit characteristics has assumed some priority.**

RESEARCH PROGRAMS

- Plant breeding
- Vegetative propagation
- Agronomy
- Pests and diseases (surveys and monitoring of incipience & prevalence)
- Technology transfer through annual reports newsletters, field days, seminars, workshops and scientific peer reviewed papers and annual TEVs to tea estates.
- Few professionally trained scientists implement all programs
- Any prioritised research that cannot be conducted by resident scientists is contracted

CHALLENGES

- Dependence on a **low and narrow income base**
- **Low number of scientists disproportionate** to the production problems
- Threatening **climate change impacts**, drought, pests, and diseases
- **Food safety & other standards** on the world market (MRLS, Social responsibility, ETP etc)
- TRFCA needs to be **pivotal to finding such solutions**

FUTURE PROSPECTS

- World tea production of 3.9284 exceeds demand of 3.7838 million metric tonnes, **reducing world tea prices,**
- Higher prices dependent on **high quality tea**
- TRFCA to develop cultivars inherently of high quality
- CC requires TRFCA to develop cultivars, hardier to drought
- **Health benefits of tea promotes** tea consumption of the beverage
- TRFCA has **to identify such cultivars, programs on going**
- MRLs considered as a trade barriers & TRFCA to develop resistant cultivars with minimal use of pesticides in tea.

NETWORKING

- TRFCA networks with TTRA , Sri Lanka TRI, TRF of UPASI, TRFK, TRIT & UP
- Longest history of collaboration with UP
- Now collaborating with UP through THRIPs
 - I. Subscribes through payment for analysis of its made tea samples at the UP's biochemistry department
 - II. One scientist trained through collaboration
- TRFCA has SABINA as the only regional network as an industrial partner
- Scientists are being trained through this networking
 - I. Two PHD students being trained through SABINA
 - II. Through the POL Sabina, a rain shelter
- Exchange of info with other networks

CONTRIBUTION OF TRFCA TO THE NETWORK

- TRFCA is supportive with regional network of Universities
- Promotes University/Tea industry partnership
- Both parties to benefit
 - I. TRFCA will be open to the universities for their students
 - II. Lecturers could implement long-term projects in tea
 - III. TRFCA is the only centre for tea research in this part of the world
 - IV. Students visits to familiarise with the tea industry
 - V. New products from tea could be study area for biochemistry students

CONCLUSION

- TRFCA To continue being a partner
- TRFCA strongly believes in partnership

- Thank you