



AMATHEON AGRI

OUTGROWER SCHEME GROWS

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Over 2,000 Mumbwa farmers to join outgrower scheme

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ESTHER MSETEKA, Mumbwa
ABOUT 2,500 small-scale farmers are expected to benefit from Amatheon Agri Zambia Limited's out-grower scheme through the provision of market during the 2015/16 marketing season.

Amatheon Agri Zambia Limited managing director Troy Minne said the scheme plans to diversify agricultural production and

scale up interventions to cover Mumbwa and surrounding areas.

Mr Minne said the objective of the scheme is to ensure that there is food security and increased income at household levels.

He said this when Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Given Lubinda toured the 20,000-hectare farm and commissioned the construction of Abba and Katonga dam at different sites in Chief Kaindu's area in Mumbwa last week.

"Last year, we purchased maize and soya beans from 600 farmers and provided access to market to 400 farmers through our farm shops. This year we expect to buy farm produce from 1,000 farmers. Last week, we purchased our first animals [livestock] from the community and we intend to further establish a growing partnership in this aspect as well," Mr Minne said.

He also said the organisation is supporting about 150 smallholder farmers in the area to acquire loan schemes through a partnership with Zanaco Bank.

Mr Minne said Amatheon will continue formulating programmes that enable smallholder farmers increase their productivity through sustainable farming and trading.

He said the loan scheme is a triangular relationship that involves Zanaco Bank as the financier, Amatheon as the guaranteed off-taker market and the farmer being the producer.

"The farmer pays 50 percent loan up front to Zanaco Bank, Amatheon Agri supplies the inputs to the farmers and Zanaco pays the suppliers. Then Amatheon Agri Zambia Limited buys grain from farmers and deducts the loan money on behalf of Zanaco Bank, meaning the farmer pays the loan through the grain," Mr Minne said.