

CASE STUDY



WINTER MAIZE PROJECT

Tongaat Hulett is committed to contributing to food security for the communities that surround its sugar producing operations in Zimbabwe. In the year to 31 March 2016, Zimbabwe experienced adverse weather conditions which had a significant impact on maize production. In recognition of the need for basic food, Tongaat Hulett produced 1 300 tons of maize which has been distributed to vulnerable rural communities. This project supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of ending hunger and achieving food security.

Maize is Zimbabwe's staple crop with approximately 2,1 million metric tons required for the nation to be food secure. The onset of the El Niño weather phenomenon resulted in poor maize growing conditions and consequently lower maize production over the past two years.

In the 2014/15 maize season the country experienced severe food deficits, which left more than four million people food insecure at household level. Some 100 000 households in Zimbabwe applied for food aid, and in the Masvingo province, where Tongaat Hulett's operations are based, some 700 000 people were in need of urgent food aid.

In May 2015, the Government of Zimbabwe requested that Tongaat Hulett's Zimbabwe operation participate in winter maize production, a project which was initially started in the early 1990s under similar circumstances. This resulted in 329 hectares of maize being planted at Tongaat Hulett's sugarcane plantations in the Triangle Estate. This Public Private Partnership Project with the Government of Zimbabwe was managed by a number of members from various departments within Tongaat Hulett's Zimbabwe operations.

A total of five overhead irrigated sections of Triangle Estate participated in the project, which commenced in June 2015 and ended in January 2016. Tongaat Hulett fully funded the project

by contributing some \$500 000 towards the growing and harvesting of the maize. Despite some theft and damage from wild animals, a total yield of 1 300 tons of maize was realised. During the course of the project, Tongaat Hulett created employment for more than 480 people from the surrounding communities, further cementing relations with local rural communities through job creation and its contribution to food security.

The maize was handed over to the Government of Zimbabwe. The Minister of Agriculture, Mechanisation, Tourism and Irrigation Development, Dr Joseph Made subsequently confirmed that the government had made the decision to allocate 44 tons of maize to each of the 26 constituencies in the Masvingo Province. Tongaat Hulett received numerous messages of thanks from various levels of government for its ongoing commitment to contributing to food security in Zimbabwe.

