



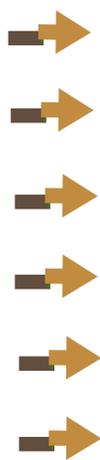
# SUPPORTING FARMERS AND CHANGING LIVELIHOODS IN ZIMBABWE

**UNIVERSAL'S COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT FARMERS IN ALL POSSIBLE WAYS MAKES A BIG IMPACT ON TOBACCO GROWERS' LIVELIHOODS IN ZIMBABWE**

THANKS TO THE COMPANY'S SUPPORT, TRAINING AND THE PROVISION OF TECHNICAL INPUTS, ZLTC'S CONTRACTED FARMERS HAVE A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING COMPARED TO OTHER PEOPLE IN THE SAME PROVINCES.



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## Supporting farmers and changing livelihoods in Zimbabwe



After the Zimbabwean land reforms, tobacco growing became widespread among small-scale farmers. Zimbabwe Leaf Tobacco Company (ZLTC) supports its farmers in a variety of ways, facilitating meaningful increases in opportunities and standard of living in a relatively short time.

ZLTC offers an extensive service network, where ZLTC technicians offer training and advice to no more than 90 farmers per technician. They assist the farmers with all the steps of production, curing and market preparation. The training and support are not only on good agricultural practices but on labour practices and environmental protection as well. ZLTC identifies and works with model farmers to create centres of excellence for the other farmers to emulate in pursuit of replicating their success.

All contracted small-scale farmers are provided with technical inputs, including seeds, fertilizers, agrochemicals, packing material, personal protective equipment (heavy-duty gloves, masks, goggles and raincoats) and enough coal to cure one third of their production. This is deducted from the farmers' tobacco sales at the end of the season. In addition, ZLTC gives the farmers five kilograms of high-yield maize seeds to grow enough maize to feed a family of four.

The technicians promote various techniques to help farmers to increase their yields and save on labour. The most successful one, which is being adopted by an increasing number of growers, is continuous cropping.

**After tobacco is harvested, maize (or another crop, such as beans or groundnuts) is planted in the same ridges used during the tobacco season. This new crop benefits from the fertilizers that were used on the tobacco and still remain in the soil, and the yields of food crops are therefore much higher for tobacco farmers than other small-scale farmers, who also generally do not practice crop rotation and do not use fertilizers.**

Rotating crops prevents diseases and improves the soil structure and fertility. The food crops are not only used for family consumption and to pay workers – 50% is sold on the local market. This gives farmers an alternate source of income. Another of the most successful labour-saving techniques encouraged by ZLTC technicians is resetting of seedbeds. Other techniques include the adoption of Kurt machines for reaping leaves and the use of clips to hang tobacco.

The farmers' success can be gauged through their expenditure. At the end of the tobacco season, a huge market blooms in front of the tobacco auction and contract selling floors, where farmers buy goods ranging from agricultural equipment to household furniture and electrical appliances. Zimbabwe has no other crop like tobacco, which has a very organised value chain. The day farmers are ready with their crops, there are companies willing to buy it; it allows farmers to have contracts and sell their whole output at the end of each season.

