

## Agrovet Shop becomes New MAC in Embu, Kenya

By Alice Wamae<sup>1</sup>



Alice in her shop; the new MAC in Embu

Alice Wamae is an Agrovet dealer, she is a vet doing part time private practice and a women's community leader. She met James Kanyi, Regional Manager for AgriTrade at the AGMARK office (Agricultural Market Development Trust) in June. Alice was told about the process of finding farmers to grow sunflower for BIDCO; she introduced James to one of her groups who then became interested in growing sunflower for DrumNet with an agreed price and guaranteed market. At the business meetings in Embu in August, Alice learned about the DrumNet and AgriTrade business opportunities for setting up a marketing network. First she became interested in putting up an Information Board at her Agrovet shop. This interest then grew into the idea of running a Market Access Company from her shop to provide market information services to the area and a link to DrumNet.

### Marketing Challenges in Embu

Alice explains the marketing challenges in Embu from an Agrodealer's perspective: *“There is a lack of reliable information from some people who are doing business (selling agricultural products); they are*

*not trained so they don't have the product knowledge, so sometimes they sell things that they don't understand.*

*Another challenge that we have is the lack of buying power by the customer and also the high prices of the (agricultural) products themselves. As a stockist, sometimes we are not able to stock enough because of the prices.*

*But the biggest problem in Embu is the lack of a market for the farmers' produce. Too often people have come around and introduced their product and asked the farmers to grow it; the farmers have grown the product but those same people have disappeared without buying the product.”*

### The Role of the Market Access Company

Alice aims for the Embu Market Access Company to supply farmers with the information on the available opportunities, such as growing sunflower with DrumNet, and linking farmers with the big buyers in the market like BIDCO. DrumNet and AgriTrade aim to provide access to markets, finance and information services to improve farm businesses.

DrumNet builds partnerships to ensure that farmer groups get access to:

- **training** on how to grow and prepare the sunflower for market;
- **credit** (through Equity bank) for farm inputs which farmers can access through a token system from reliable Agrostockists;
- **a big buyer** (BIDCO); with a guaranteed price for their produce;
- **transaction security** for the collection of product and payments.

### Agrovet Stockist and MAC Shop

<sup>1</sup> Interviewed by Anne Dennig in September 2008



Alice; a trained AGMARK Agrovet stockist

Embu MAC will be situated in Alice's shop. She is certified by AGMARK as an Agrostockist. *"I am going to advertise to the farmers and other people on available opportunities. I will be getting price information from the local market and I will put up the prices of the farm inputs like the fertilizers and seeds. I can get the information from the main markets through AgriTrade. I will rely on James totally to get me the information I need which is not available to me in Embu.*

*I plan to put up a small information board outside the shop and my husband has a small outlet near the bus stop where he is selling mobile phones and accessories so that we can put an information board there. We can encourage people to come and advertise if they have something to sell; like the women who grow grain amaranth can advertise there for so many kgs of grain, the price and give their contact.*

*I will have computers in the MAC, so that people can come and use them, I can access market information on the internet and communicate on Linking Local Learners.*

*I will have a contract with DrumNet to supply the fertilizer and the seed for sunflower to the farmers. The farmers' representatives will bring me a token from the bank, which will inform me of the*

*quantity and variety of seed and fertilizer to provide. I am looking forward to doing that business, it is a good opportunity.*

*I will also keep links with the Farmer Recruiters and the Transaction Agents for DrumNet. I will give them information and get information from them on their progress and challenges. I will be a link between them and the Regional Manager James Kanyi.*

*This is this first time that there has been such a concept as a MAC in Embu and I am sure that even the brokers are not going to be adverse to the business. They can advertise on my board. I can even give them an IB so that they can advertise what they are selling and what they are buying. I will be facilitating them. I won't be competing with them."*

We look forward to hearing from Alice on the Demand Driven Services Team on the Linking Local Learners platform.



Clive and Alice at the Embu Business Forum

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