**EXERCISE 5A. CHOOSING FOOD PRODUCTS AND MARKET PRODUCTS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *OBJECTIVE*  **After this exercise the participants will be able to:**   * Identify the five most important agricultural products the farmers grow for food, and the top five they grow to sell. | |
| *EQUIPMENT NEEDED*   * Large sheets of paper, marker pens | *EXPECTED OUTPUTS*   * A list of the five most important agricultural products they grow for food. * A list of the five most important agricultural products they grow to sell. |
| *TIME*  1-3 hours depending on number of people, and groups (men, women, mixed, youth etc.). | *PREPARATION*   * For some farmers who are illiterate, you can prepare some large pictures of crops that farmers can either point to, or place a stone next to, in a selection process. |

*This exercise enables farmers to list the most important products they grow for food, as well as the most important products that they grow to sell.*

*SUGGESTED PROCEDURE:*

1. Divide the farmers into two separate groups: men and women. Then ask the members of each group to name and rank the five most important products that they produce as food for their own families.
2. Ask each group to rank the products in order of importance. They can vote with a show of hands, or put stones next to pictures of the products they think are most important.
3. Ask them why each of these products is important. if there is disagreement, stimulate a discussion about the different opinions. For example, perhaps some farmers do not grow certain crops that others think are important. List these products and reasons using the form in Table 11.
4. Ask each group to choose the five most important products they sell, and to rank them in order of importance. Again, stimulate a discussion if there is disagreement. Find out where and how each product is marketed. List this information in the form in Table 12.
5. In some cases, women may raise the issue of income generation through handicrafts, or petty trading. Take this into account, as this maybe something the project can accept as an income generating activity, especially for women who do not have access to land.
6. Summarize the findings of the sessions and write up a new table that shows the priority of products they sell, as shown in Table 13.

*QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION:*

* How many farmers grow each crop or livestock product? How much does each farmer produce (in terms of kilograms or sacks)? Is there enough left over to sell?
* What size area of each crop do the farmers plant? How many animals do they raise?
* Is the product something that only rich farmers grow and sell, or is this something that poorer farmers with less land also regularly grow and sell?
* Where are the products sold? How far away from the village?
* Where do the farmers sell the crops and livestock products? From the farm, the roadside, or in a market?
* Do farmers sell together or as individuals?
* Who are the main buyers? Are they regular buyers, or do farmers sell to whichever trader happens to be in the market?
* How should the products be ranked? According to market demand, high price, ability to grow the product, or other criteria?

*NOTES*

Instead of men and women farmers, consider splitting the farmers into different groups – for example, farmers with and without livestock, or farmers with and without irrigated land. If you are sure there are no major differences between the opinions of different groups of farmers, do not divide the farmers into groups for this exercise

TABLE 11. FORM TO LIST FARMERS’ TOP FIVE FOOD PRODUCTS

The examples included are for illustration only.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TOP FIVE FOR WOMEN FARMERS** | |
| **Product** | **Why important** |
| 1 Eggs | important for health |
| 2 Onions | Flavor in food |
| 3 ... | ... |
| 4 ... | ... |
| 5 ... | ... |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TOP FIVE FOR MEN FARMERS** | |
| **Product** | **Why important** |
| 1 Maize | Staple food |
| 2 Beans | important food |
| 3 ... | ... |
| 4 ... | ... |
| 5 ... | ... |

TABLE 12. FORM TO LIST FARMERS’ TOP FIVE MARKETED PRODUCTS (CASH CROPS)

The examples included are for illustration only.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PRIORITY BY MEN FARMERS** | |
| **Product** | **Where/how sold** |
| 1 Maize | Local market |
| 2 Sorghum | Local trader |
| 3 ... | ... |
| 4 ... | ... |
| 5 ... | ... |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PRIORITY BY WOMEN FARMERS** | |
| **Product** | **Where/how sold** |
| 1 Milk | Local trader |
| 2 Tomatoes | Local trader |
| 3 ... | ... |
| 4 ... | ... |
| 5 ... | ... |

TABLE 13. COMPARING MEN’S AND WOMEN’S MARKETED (CASH CROP) PRIORITIES

The examples included are for illustration only.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SELECTED PRODUCT** | **PRIORITY BY MEN FARMERS** | **PRIORITY BY WOMEN FARMERS** | **OVERALL PRIORITY** |
| Maize | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| Sorghum | 3 | 4 | 3.5 |
| Milk | 2 | 1 | 1.5 |
| Tomatoes | 5 | 2 | 3.5 |
| Beans | 4 | 3 | 4.5 |

In this example, the highest-priority product overall is milk.