

Cassava in Tanzania: A famine or commercial reserve?

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Abstract. Tanzania is one of the largest cassava producers in Africa. About 655,700 ha of land are under cassava with a total annual production of about 1,795,400 tons. Cassava is a staple food crop in most of the semi-arid and the frequently drought stricken areas. For this reason cassava has traditionally been considered a famine reserve crop. The main objective of this paper is to provide evidence that there is an opportunity to change the role of cassava in most farming systems in Tanzania. That cassava is becoming an important source of income (a cash reserve). The paper is based on case studies undertaken in selected villages in

Tanzania. The results show that cassava producers/processors can earn as much as Tanzanian shillings 170,000 per month from cassava. This amount is more than three times the minimum wage in Tanzania.