

A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a light green polo shirt, is smiling and looking to his right. He is holding a large, dense bundle of long, green, blade-like plants, possibly a type of grass or herb, in front of his chest. The background shows a lush, green outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

The finest essential and  
cold pressed oils from Zambia

AOFI – African Organic Farm Industries

## AOFI exporter of essential and cold pressed oils from Zambia

AOFI – African Organic Farm Industries – intends to establish a long term relationship with buyers through regular supply of premium quality oil and dried lemon grass. In order to be capable to do so we develop a strong relation with the farmers. The mutual understanding is based on a good supply and a transparent buying system. AOFI has already sold various oils to south Africa and the UK, analysis results from samples are very positive.

### Lemon grass oil analysis

Color	Pale yellow
Aroma	Citrus, fruity, herbal
Viscosity	Low
Refractive index (20°C)	1.4851
Specific gravity	0.8974
Solubility	Cloudy solution (1ml oil in 3 ml alcohol 70%)
Geraniol	7.8%
Limonene	–
Linalool	0.7%
Other Components	Borneol 1.6%; myrcene 8%; 6-Methyl-5-Hepten-2-one 1.8%; Citral 74.3% (= Neral 32.9% + Geraniol 41.4%)

Chemical properties and composition of the different essential oils. Tested by Rutgers university, USA

### Lemon grass farming

The lemon grass from the variety Cymbogon citrates can be harvested at least four times a year, starting in March. The AOFI's own farming area and the small scale farmers are certified organic. New farmers who are in transition are delivering the grass separate from the organic farmers.

### The AOFI project

AOFI aims to export organic essential oils, dried herbs and wild harvest cold pressed oils. AOFI started working with these products in 2001. The company has vast experience in the growing of organic crops for essential oils and it gains for more produce and involvement from Zambian farmers. The farmers are stimulated to organise themselves in groups when growing lemon grass. Community work like preparation of the fields for basin irrigation and other heavy workloads are done together. AOFI has been exporting lemon grass essential oil in the recent past. Encouraged by the results it seeks to expand production. In the Southern and Lusaka provinces, a number of farmer groups are already sensitised, they have already started lemon grass production and are open to increase on short notice.

## Improved soil management

The improved soil management, like mulching, use of manure, manure teas, composting and crop diversification, on the farm results in higher production of their food crops. The farmers are advised to do intercropping with lemon grass to obtain a variety of food and cash crops. Lemon grass has some major advantages:

- Easy to produce.
- Erosion control
- Not sensitive for disease and can survive droughts.
- The cultivation is not labour intensive.

## Expanding business

AOFI wants to use this opportunity to expand its activities in the organic lemon grass production. It wants to expand its out-grower groups and diversify in other herbs for essential oil or dried teas. AOFI also want to expand its wild harvesting cold pressed tree oil production, besides the Baobab and Marulla oil they have trials on some new tree seeds.

The aim is to have 350 or more out-growers for the lemon grass production, producing a minimum of 20 tons of essential oil and a considerable quantity of dried lemon grass.

During the training of the farmers, special emphasis is made on maintaining soil fertility (by the use of leguminous plants, mulch and compost), post harvesting (hygiene, drying and storage concerns) and agricultural techniques (organic agriculture, basin irrigation, agroforestry).

## Expected outcome

- 10 tons of lemon grass oil by end of 2006
- Crop diversification
- An average income increase of 30%

Due to the organic practises the farmer will be able to grow a better crop. During the project trials for other essential oil/herb crops will be done to see if there is possibility to diverse on small scale farmers level.

## Small-scale farmers and gender equality

The project is situated in three different areas in the Southern and Lusaka provinces. AOFI started with 60 and their target for 2006 is 350 small-scale farmers.

The farmers are registered in a group or association. The contact farmer is the farmer at whose premises trials are conducted. Each farmer will start with one quarter of a ha from where they can expand. Gender equality is strongly emphasised in the project. An effort is made to have a 50 per cent participation of women. The cultivation of lemon grass is not labour intensive. Once the crop has been established, very little has to be done to maintain the fields. This means a considerable advantage for families affected by HIV/Aids as the crop provides an income for at least five years without need for annual land preparation.

# AOFI – Africa Organic Farm Industries

## Contacts

**Mark Dunn**, overall manager director

e-mail: [markdunn@zamnet.zm](mailto:markdunn@zamnet.zm)

mobile: +260-(0)97-861 858

**Trevor McIntosh**, Shipping and export manager director

e-mail: [Trevorvl@zegaltd.co.zm](mailto:Trevorvl@zegaltd.co.zm)

mobile: +260-(0)97-881 239

**Fiona Dunn**, Export handling and international contact

e-mail: [aofi@zamnet.zm](mailto:aofi@zamnet.zm)

tel: +260-(0)1-221 880

fax: +260-(0)1-221 879

**Don McIntosh**, Production manager

e-mail: [gwenafarms@zamnet.zm](mailto:gwenafarms@zamnet.zm)

tel: +260-(0)1-511 294

mobile: +260-(0)97-851 689



Supported by

**EPOPA – Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa**

EPOPA is a programme created by the Swedish international Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in 1994. The programme has ongoing projects in Uganda and Tanzania and has just started its work in Zambia.

The EPOPA programme aims to give African smallholder farmers better conditions through developing the exports of organic products from Africa. The rural communities, thus the farmers, get a premium price for their crop, they get a more transparent price setting from the exporter who buys more directly and they are paid cash in hand.

Get more information at [www.epopa.info](http://www.epopa.info) or e-mail: [carianne@agriorbis.com.zm](mailto:carianne@agriorbis.com.zm)