

Postharvest processing enterprises for African smallholders

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Abstract: African agriculture, the millions of smallholder farmers at its foundation, and the service providers that serve them are caught in a productivity and investment trap. Smallholder farmers account for the vast majority of agricultural production on the continent. Mid-sized processors and farmer groups, often with the support of NGOs and government-funded development programs, have emerged to try and close the gap between scale and profitability. Cooperatives, farmer groups, hubs, etc. all have at their core the hope of aggregating demand for inputs and services, supply of outputs to create economies of scale for producers and lower transaction costs. There are few examples where these models have reached commercial sustainability and scale. A principal but not the only reason is that the range of goods and services provided by hubs and like models are narrow. CTI has a range of post-harvest processing solutions that reduce required labor, losses, and cost and increase yields, quality, and profits that are properly scaled to service 25 100 smallholder farming households. Priced in the 400 - 1,000 range, manually operated, with throughputs of under a ton per day, they can serve as the core of profitable service businesses at the village level. Our solutions offering includes technologies, yes, but of equal importance are technical support, training and advisory services on how to use them to establish a profitable business.