Cotton Season pays dividends as Farmers cash in on a successful marketing season

By Boaz Mandula- Cotton Development Officer, Blantye

Cotton farmers across Malawi's growing areas are expressing satisfaction with this year's marketing season, citing a smooth buying process, attractive prices, and improved yields from high-performing seed varieties that rivalled hybrid cotton in output.

Smooth marketing processes

Farmers report that this year's marketing season has run with minimal disruptions. Buying points opened on schedule, payments were being processed quickly without the delays that troubled previous seasons. Many growers say the improved coordination between the Cotton Council of Malawi (CCM), buyers, and farmer associations has made the selling experience far less stressful than in past years. A total of xxx marketing points were operated by buying companies like Afrisian, Admarc and Illovo sugar company Ltd.

Neno District has stood out this season, with Kasamba Market recording the highest sales volume of any market in the district. About 298 farmers sold a combined 276,172 kilograms of cotton at Kasamba, grossing approximately K414 million.

Mr Bonongwe, a lead farmer from the Kasamba area, attributed the high output to availability of high quality seed and smooth coordination among statekholders this season.

> *"Kasamba has done very well this season. Farmers had access to quality seed in good time and buying has been fast and organised,. said Mr Bonongwe.*

In Chikwawa, farmers echoed similar sentiments about the ease of this year's marketing process

Good prices bring good profit

At the centre of the farmers' satisfaction is price. At K1500 per kilogram this season's producer prices have allowed many households to realise a genuine profit after covering input and labour costs. For smallholder families who depend on cotton as a primary cash crop, the improved margins mean more than just numbers on a receipt — they translate directly into household food security and economic stability.

Several farmers interviewed said they have used their cotton proceeds to buy food for their families, cushioning them against the lean season and reducing reliance on other coping strategies. Others have reinvested part of their earnings into farm inputs, school fees, and small household needs, demonstrating the ripple effect a strong cotton season has on rural livelihoods.

Mr James Nkhuku one of the farmers from Linga area in Chikwawa noted that the good prices this season has made a visible difference for many households in his area.

> *"Most farmers here have used the money from cotton to buy food for their families. Some have also bought inputs early for next season. This has never happened like this before, and it shows what a good market can do for us," he said.*

Good performance of planted varietiew

Farmers have also praised the performance of this season's seed varieties, noting that yields compared favourably with hybrid cotton, long regarded as the higher-performing option. The strong field performance — in terms of boll formation, resistance to pests, and overall output — has boosted farmer confidence in the seed distributed this season and strengthened trust in the input support provided ahead of planting.

This outcome reinforces CCM's ongoing efforts to widen farmers' access to quality seed and ensure that input packages translate into tangible yield and income benefits at the farm level.

Looking ahead to 2027

The positive mood among farmers this season offers encouraging signs for the future of cotton production in Malawi. A smooth marketing process, fair prices, and reliable seed performance are exactly the ingredients needed to sustain farmer confidence and encourage continued investment in the crop.

The Cotton Council of Malawi remains committed to working with farmers, buyers, and other stakeholders to build on this season's gains and ensure that cotton continues to deliver real value for smallholder households across the country.