

HANDS-ON TRACTOR SERVICING EXPERIENCE

By Lushomo Muchindu



Picture 1: - Training participants pose for a photo after a successful tractor servicing

The Zambian-German Agricultural Knowledge and Training Centre (AKTC) is a lead promoter of Mechanization and Mechanized Conservation Agriculture (MCA) in Zambia. From the interactions with Zambian farmers it has been noticed that despite farmers accepting the importance of mechanization, the adoption has not been sustainable as many farmers are lacking the technical know-how on how they can maintain their machinery in a manner that prolongs their life span .

AKTC has been highlighting that the maintenance of the tractor is key to farm mechanization sustainability and therefore encourages farmers to put it to practice. One of the key maintenance activities, is tractor servicing. Timely tractor servicing is important as it ensures that the tractor's optimum performance is utilized.

In this regard, AKTC conducted a hands-on tractor servicing exercise open to the public on Tuesday 28th June 2022. Three tractor owners, one tractor operator and a student on attachment participated in this exercise. Among the attendees was a Mr. Mpofu, an emergent farmer from Mumbwa who recently acquired a Massey Ferguson MF 360 tractor and wanted to learn how to service his tractor.

The tractor servicing exercise was supervised by AKTC's Machinery Expert; Mr. Martin Sikanyika. He began the servicing exercise by explaining the difference between servicing, maintenance and repair. He mentioned that maintenance is aimed at ensuring that a tractor keeps working in its optimal state while repair is aimed at restoring its functionality after a breakdown.



Picture 2: - Training participant changing engine oil

It should be noted that tractor servicing is a maintenance practice that can be done with minimal skills and knowledge. He advised the trainees that repair works should be done by a qualified mechanic and encouraged timely tractor servicing so as to avoid unnecessary and costly repairs.



Figure 3: - Mr. Sikanyika explaining how to clean the radiator

Mr. Sikanyika repeatedly emphasized that tractor servicing schedule differs from one tractor brand to another and encouraged the tractor owner and operators to always refer to their tractor manual for a guide. Trainees were later engaged in a hands-on tractor servicing exercise that included air filter cleaning, fuel and oil filter change, engine oil change, radiator cleaning. Mr. Sikanyika took time to answer questions from the trainees and cleared out some misconceptions regarding tractor servicing. Under good tractor servicing practices, Mr. Sikanyika clearly stated that different oils are needed for different components, hence engine oil cannot be used as gear box oil. He further emphasized that used oil should not be reused but instead be replaced with new oil. Used oil should never be used in a tractor.

After the exercise, Mr. Mpofo, shared how much he had benefited from the exercise in that it will help him do the right thing in the right way when doing his tractor service. Mr. Mbewe, a farmer from Mpongwe thanked AKTC for the training and wished it would be extended to even more tractor owners and operators in Mpongwe.

Kindly visit our YouTube channel @AKTC Zambia for videos on tractor servicing and other agricultural related topics.

AKTC remains open to training requests in this regard. Kindly contact our trainings coordinator, Mr. Genius Chabinga for training requests and reservations. Email: - genius.chabinga@afci.de

A Farmer's friend ATKC 2022

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