Guide to form and operate a Potato Cooperative

A Basic Guide for Namibian Learners

smart consultancy services

Personal details

Name : _____

Grade : _____

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Introduction

Welcome to your guide on starting a potato-growing cooperative! A potato cooperative is a group of people working together, sharing responsibilities, and sharing the harvest. In this booklet, you'll learn how to grow potatoes, work as a team, and fairly distribute your harvest among members.

1. What is a Cooperative?

A cooperative is a team effort where everyone shares both the work and the rewards. Instead of one person doing everything, each member has a role, making the work easier and more fun. The harvested potatoes are divided equally among the members.

2. Why Choose Potatoes?

Potatoes are:

- Easy to grow.
- Nutritious and a good food source.
- Able to grow in different types of soil.

3. Starting Your Potato Cooperative

Step 1: Form Your Team

Find friends or classmates / community members who are interested in gardening and teamwork. Decide on roles based on strengths and interests.

Step 2: Divide Responsibilities

Some possible roles include:

- **Planters** – Prepare the soil and plant the potatoes.
- **Caretakers** – Water and check the plants for pests.
- **Harvesters** – Collect the potatoes when they are ready.
- **Record Keepers** – Track work done and harvest distribution.

Step 3: Set Rules and Goals

- How often will you meet and work?
- How will you divide the harvest? Keep in mind that such division does not only reflect the physical labour each individual has contributed, but also the assets and all other contribuitions each member has brought into the potato cooperative. This is a very important aspect of your cooperative, and it should be formulated in writing and signed by all members.
- What happens if a member does not complete his / her assigned work?

4. How to Grow Potatoes

Step 1: Preparing the Soil

- Choose a sunny location with loose soil.
- Remove weeds and add compost for nutrients.

Step 2: Planting Potatoes

- Cut seed potatoes into pieces with at least one eye (sprout) per piece.
- Remember the newly cut potato has to dry for a day before planting.
- Plant them in rows, about 10 cm deep and 30 cm apart.

Step 3: Caring for the Plants

- Water the plants regularly, especially in dry weather.
- Remove weeds to help potatoes grow strong.
- Add soil around the plants (hilling) to protect them.

Step 4: Harvesting and Storing

- After about 3-4 months of sprouting, when the leaves turn yellow, the potatoes are ready.
- Gently dig them up and let them dry before storing in a cool, dark place.

5. Distributing the Harvest

How to Share the Potatoes?

- Divide the harvest in line with the predetermined signed agreement of the cooperative among all members.
- Set aside some potatoes for the next planting season.
- If there are extra potatoes, consider donating them to a community group or school kitchen.

6. Cooperation and Problem-Solving

Working Together

- Help each other and communicate well.
- Keep track of responsibilities and progress.

Solving Conflicts

- Discuss problems calmly and find fair solutions.
- If needed, vote on decisions as a group.
- Once an issue has been voted upon, formulate that decision in writing have it signed by the members and then if necessary remind all stakeholders that such a decision is binding

Celebrating Success

- Organize a small celebration to enjoy your hard work.(Remember, you should not spend your profit on the celebration.)
- Plan for the next planting season!

Conclusion

By working together, you can grow and distribute potatoes successfully while learning teamwork and responsibility. Start your cooperative today and enjoy the rewards of teamwork and farming!

Memory Quiz – test your knowledge

1. What is a cooperative?

A) A business owned by one person
B) A team where people share work and rewards
C) A government organization
D) A type of potato plant

2. Why are potatoes a good choice for a cooperative?

A) They are difficult to grow
B) They require very little care
C) They are nutritious and easy to grow
D) They only grow in certain areas

3. What is the role of a planter in a potato cooperative?

A) Selling the potatoes
B) Preparing the soil and planting potatoes
C) Keeping financial records
D) Cooking the potatoes

4. How should the harvest be divided?

A) Unequally, based on effort
B) Equally among all members
C) Given only to the planters
D) Sold for profit only

5. Why is teamwork important in a cooperative?

A) It allows one person to do all the work
B) It helps share responsibilities and ensure fairness
C) It makes selling the potatoes easier
D) It prevents conflicts entirely