

Ripping Toward Resilience: Lucky Seremenga's Mechanisation Story

📍 Chimushonga Village, Ward 3 — Dande Valley, Mount Darwin



No smallholder should suffer the indignity of poverty

In Chimushonga Village, Ward 3, Lucky Seremenga knows how demanding land preparation can be in Dande Valley. For years, his family relied on labour-intensive basin digging and ox-drawn ploughing to establish their crops. The work was slow, physically demanding, and difficult to complete on time, especially when labour was limited and the season was short.



That began to change in 2025, when Lucky took part in agroecology training, supported by GALS (Gender Action Learning System) methods, through APT, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWACSMED) and Agritex. He became interested in mechanised tillage as a way to reduce labour, improve timeliness, and expand production while still supporting soil-conscious farming practices. Seeing sorghum as a crop well suited to Dande Valley's dry conditions, he decided to invest with family members in a two-wheeler tractor, planter and trailer through a 30:70 co-financing arrangement.

The equipment has transformed how his household farms. With the planter attached, one person can rip planting lines, place fertiliser and seed, and cover them with soil in a single pass. Lucky says this has greatly reduced labour needs and helped the family complete land preparation more easily and on time. It has also enabled him to increase his sorghum area from 1 hectare to 3.5 hectares in a single season. For Lucky, the ripping method matters not only because it saves labour, but because it is gentler on the soil than conventional ploughing. By opening planting lines without turning the soil over, it helps protect soil structure, slows the loss of organic matter, and supports better water infiltration and moisture conservation.

The benefits are not only technical. Because the machine now handles the heaviest tillage work, the family can focus its time on other field activities. Lucky also notes that in dry years, livestock no longer have to bear the same burden of ploughing and can instead be retained as valuable household assets.

The investment is already opening new business opportunities. Lucky has begun offering tillage services to others, though he says uptake is still at an early stage. The trailer is also generating income through transport services, including the movement of building materials, inputs, water and groceries. Between January and March 2026, he earned \$184 from trailer hire. According to Lucky, this income has helped him pay school fees for his children, service the machine, and support his broiler and Sasso chicken enterprises as he diversifies household income.

Lucky also says the training helped him think more clearly about the relationships needed to make a rural enterprise work. Through GALS-based facilitation within the wider agroecology approach, he learnt the



importance of building links with neighbours, local leaders and government stakeholders. "Build those relationships, and knowledge flows, farming thrives and business booms," he says.

Lucky's story shows that appropriate mechanisation can strengthen agroecology when it is used to improve timeliness, reduce labour bottlenecks, support soil-conscious tillage, and create new service businesses. In his case, the two-wheeler tractor is not only a machine for cultivation. It is becoming a tool for greater resilience, productivity and rural enterprise development.

Agroecological principles reflected in this story: 🌱 Soil Health — Ripping supports more careful soil management | 💧 Input Reduction — Timely, targeted planting operations | 🐄 Animal Health — Reduced dependence on draught power | 💰 Economic Diversification — Tillage and trailer services plus poultry | 🧑🏾 Participation — Active engagement in training and co-investment | 🗨️ Co-creation of Knowledge — Building relationships that support learning and enterprise