



The growing conflict between elephants and rural African farmers is one of the greatest threats to the survival of the African elephant. Nearly 80% of elephants exist outside protected parks. With expanding human populations, humans and elephants are increasingly forced to coexist with often-dire consequences. Two major problems exist with this population expansion: first, there is severe conflict between rural farmers and elephants because elephants eat and trample food security crops; and second, the destruction of the elephant's natural habitats through non-sustainable agricultural practices.

Six years ago, Australian businessman Michael Gravina and American Zoologist Dr. Loki Osborn teamed up to address the conflict between humans and elephants. The approach needed to target both the conservation objective of protecting elephants and their habitat as well as address the fact the most African farmers are very poor and lack the opportunity to earn an environmentally sustainable livelihood. Simply, poverty-stricken people need to focus on their own survival; conservation is often a secondary priority, if at all. The solution needed to be a non-lethal method of deterring elephants away from crops that could be grown or sourced locally by farmers at a virtually nil cost.

Dr. Osborn had set up what was then called the Mid Zambezi Elephant Project, aimed at reducing the conflict between elephants and rural farmers. After researching repellents he found chilli-based deterrents repelled elephants from fields significantly faster than by traditional methods

It was around this time Michael met Loki and went to work on addressing the livelihood and sustainability issues faced by the project. Seeing an opportunity to leverage this amazing story and link rural African farmers into the world chilli markets, Michael launched the Elephant Pepper brand of products. This for-profit initiative manufactures and sells gourmet chilli sauces and other branded products using chillies grown by the same small-scale farmers.

The organization quickly grew into a successful philanthropic venture, and today has over 3000 participants, encompassing a range of gourmet food products that are delivering new sustainable revenue streams to the project and back into the African community. Elephant Pepper employees advise farmers on natural resources conservation and sustainable agriculture that prevents conflict with wildlife.

For general questions or interview requests please contact us at [info@elephantpepper.com](mailto:info@elephantpepper.com).

Thank you,  
Elephant Pepper

