

FARM TALK

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRIES
AND FISHERIES NEWSLETTER / **ISSUE 1. MARCH 2025**

BRIDGING THE GAP

Agricultural rebirth

Uganda and the Comprehensive
Africa Agriculture Programme



Big boost

Agro-Industrialisation
Programme yields big

Vaccine hopes

Construction of state-of-the art
vaccine storage facility kicks off

Farming tips

How to keep foot and mouth
disease far from your animals

Top MAAIF leadership



Yoweri Kaguta Museveni Tibuhaburwa
President of the Republic of Uganda



Hon. Frank K. Tumwebaze
Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry & Fisheries



**Hon. Maj. (Rtd)
Kyakulaga Fred Bwino**
Minister of State for Agriculture



**Hon. Lt. Col. (Rtd) Dr. Rwamirama
Bright Kanyontore. Ph.D.**
Min. of State for Animal Husbandry



Hon. Hellen Adoa
Minister of
State for Fisheries



Maj. Gen. David Kasura-Kyomukama
Permanent Secretary





Editor's note

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *Farm Talk: Bridging the Gap*. I am delighted to introduce you to our new quarterly newsletter, where genuine farm experiences meet the cutting edge of agricultural policy.

As we launch this publication under the banner of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries (MAAIF), our goal is to deliver insights, updates, and thoughtful analysis on the events and initiatives that are transforming Uganda's vital agricultural landscape.

In this first issue, we celebrate recent strides in the production of priority commodities—gains that underscore the robust progress taking root across our farms. On the policy front, Uganda recently played host to the African Union Extraordinary Summit on the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Programme (CAADP) from January 9th to 11th, 2025. The adoption of the Kampala Declaration on January 11th sealed a forward-looking agenda for continental agricultural development from 2026 to 2035, setting a clear road map for progress.

Yet, while the successes are notable, significant challenges still lie ahead. Within these pages, you will find detailed accounts of proactive measures designed to overcome obstacles to productivity. An upcoming vaccine storage facility promises to boost the livestock sector, while a vigorous campaign aims to eliminate rabies from our communities. Additionally, crucial guidance on managing foot and mouth disease is offered to safeguard animal health.

Climate change continues to be a formidable challenge. A project launched late last year is equipping our farmers with the tools and knowledge necessary to withstand erratic weather patterns and other climate-related disturbances. In tandem with these technological and infrastructural advancements, our commitment to education remains unwavering—the ministry is continuously empowering extension workers with vital resources to better serve Uganda's agricultural backbone.

Our feature stories this quarter broaden the narrative further—from innovative developments in palm oil to an illuminating report on the African Fine Coffee Association Conference and Exhibition (AFCA) held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and the launch of the Atari Irrigation Project. Each story highlights the myriad opportunities available for those ready to embrace change and invest in the future.

I trust that this edition will both inform and inspire you as we collectively pursue a future marked by sustainable growth and prosperity. Thank you for joining us on this journey from the field to the forum.

Charlotte B. Kemigisha

Public Relations Manager - MAAIF
Editor-in-Chief

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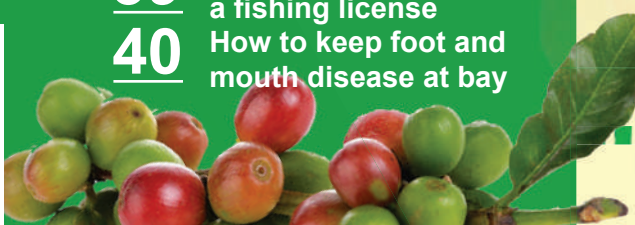
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Creating conditions for farmers to thrive

The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries' Agroindustrialisation Programme (AIP) is at the heart of the approaches to transform Uganda's agricultural landscape.

Grounded in the National Development Plan (NDP) III goal of "Sustainable Industrialisation for inclusive growth, employment and sustainable wealth creation" AIP aims at: boosting agricultural productivity; enhancing post-harvest handling and storage; improving agro-processing; growing market access; increasing access to agricultural finance and strengthening institutional coordination for improved service delivery.

Although some gaps remain, demonstrable progress is being made towards making agriculture a commercially viable and transformative activity. The statistics speak for themselves; in Financial Year 2022-2023 production of key crops, prioritised under the programme, grew by an average of 37.1%. The growth speaks to the importance of intentional and sustained strategic investments in the sector and offers lessons as NDPIII draws to a close.

A significant milestone in the quarter was Uganda's successful hosting of the African Union Extraordinary Summit on the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Programme (CAADP), sealing the country's position as a key player in the agenda for Africa's agricultural transformation. The event brought together Ministers of Agriculture from the union's 55-member states from January 9th to 11th, 2025.

The resulting Kampala CAADP Declaration noted the urgency of renewing efforts to develop of resilient, inclusive, and sustainable agrifood systems in Africa, given future pressing demands for good given the rapidly growing continental population.

The Declaration lays down commitments to

ensure sustainable agrifood production; boosting trade, mobilising agricultural financing, building food and nutrition systems, promoting inclusivity, fostering climate-resilience and strengthening systems governance.

In Uganda, these outcomes will be delivered through AIP and the Parish Development Model, both of which are aligned to the upcoming NDP IV (2025/26 - 2029/30) whose theme is 'Sustainable Industrialisation for Inclusive Growth, Employment, and Wealth Creation', a goal that will be delivered through, among other things, prioritising the growth of the county's competitiveness in agriculture, value addition and industrialization.

Government remains fully committed to creating and sustaining the enabling environment that is necessary for farmers and agribusiness to thrive, through programmes such as AIP and other supportive interventions that address the challenges to productivity, sustainability and inclusivity. The US\$354 million (Shs1.3 trillion) Uganda Climate-Smart Agricultural Transformation Project is just one such example. To be implemented in 69 districts, the project will strengthen climate adaptability and put in place robust emergency responses.

Innovation and collaboration are key in the efforts to leverage Uganda's agricultural potential. As such, the Government continues to facilitate opportunities for knowledge exchange and synergies.

I invite you to tap into these opportunities and partner with us in making agriculture count.

*Maj. Gen. David
Kasura Kyomukama*



President Yoweri Museveni at the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in January.

CAADP SUMMIT

Uganda hosts Africa

From January 9 to 11, 2025, Speke Resort Munyonyo in Kampala was a beehive of activity as African ministers of agriculture gathered for a three-day extraordinary summit.

The meeting was convened to discuss the transformation of agriculture as a driver of prosperity on the continent.

It ended with the adoption of the Kampala Declaration and a ten-year strategy and action plan to accelerate agricultural growth.

Addressing the summit, the President urged a focus on commercial agriculture, value addition, integration, and sustainable practices as pathways to prosperity.

Vice President Jessica Alupo encouraged participants to address the bottlenecks to agricultural growth, such as limited private sector investment, low mechanisation, over-dependence on nature, limited access to inputs and limited intra-Africa trade.



Vice President Maj. (Rtd) Jessica Alupo graced the event

Bilateral Engagements at CAADP Kampala Summit



Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Frank Tumwebaze, and African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat (left) during the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Kampala Summit at the Speke Resort in January.



Minister Tumwebaze meets Algerian Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development H. E. Youcef Cherfa.



Meeting State Secretary (International Development), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway, Ms Bjørg Sandkjær.



Minister Tumwebaze meets Moroccan Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Ahmed El Bouari.



Left, the Minister meets South African Minister of Agriculture John Steenhuisen.



With Zimbabwe's Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, and Rural Development, Hon. Dr. Anxious Jongwe Masuka.

Leaders
at CAADP

Prime Minister Nabbanja

'We must feed ourselves'

A call to action at the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme Summit

As the sun rises over Africa every day, millions of smallholder farmers get up to work the tiny pieces of land from which they feed the continent. With close to 90% of Africa's food supply and most of its employment coming from these farmers, they carry the continent's economy on their backs. In Uganda alone, nearly 30% of the GDP comes from agriculture.

However, these farmers daily face huge hindrances that undermine their productivity. From lack of access to financing and vital information to disruptions arising from climate change, conflict and economic instability, countless are the mountains Africa's farmers have to scale every day.

It is not a sustainable state of

Over 280 million Africans suffer chronic hunger.

“



affairs. Already, with the rapidly growing population and limited capacity to meet the increasing demand for food, over 280 million Africans today suffer chronic hunger as food systems struggle to keep up. The result is a vicious cycle of ill health, social and economic vulnerabilities and even lower productivity.

Unaddressed, these circumstances bode ill for the future. With Africa's population predicted to reach 2.5 billion by 2050, the need for significant improvements in efficiencies in the sector and a related growth in agricultural production cannot be overstated.

It is against this background that agriculture ministers from 55 countries of the African Union gathered Kampala in January for a three-day extraordinary summit. >>>

A call to self-sustenance and

The goal of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Summit, which run from January 9 to 11, 2025, was to enact a road map for the transformation of Africa's agriculture sector to make it more productive and sustainable.

Addressing the meeting, Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja pointed out the shameful irony of a continent so richly endowed by nature importing food worth US\$100 billion. She urged

participants to deliver concrete proposals for Africa to extract itself from such an unfortunate situation. "For us to guarantee our future as Africans, we must feed ourselves," she said.

It is to this that the summit addressed itself, adopting the Kampala Declaration and launching the landmark 10-year Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Strategy and Action Plan (2026-2035).

The plan provides for the acceleration of agricultural transformation and strengthening food security, reinforcing commitments made in the Malabo Declaration of 2014 by AU leaders meeting in Equatorial Guinea and committing to agricultural transformation in Africa by 2025.

The Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Hon Frank Tumwebaze, under whose leadership, as Chair of the

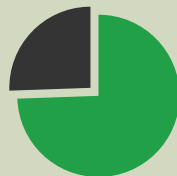
Agriculture, Africa's secret weapon

HARNESS YOUR RESOURCES, PRESIDENT MUSEVENI CHALLENGES

If African nations awoke to their potential, their economies would be forever changed. Speaking at the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) summit, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni challenged delegates to be deliberate about modernising agriculture. "With two harvests a year in many parts of the continent and abundant natural resources, Africa has the capacity to become an economic superpower. What we need is to move from subsistence farming to modern, commercial agriculture," he said.

He stated that in the colonial days, Uganda's economy was built on the export of raw materials which left Africa dependent on foreign markets. Under this model, value addition was limited, as was job creation.

He said: "A kilogramme of coffee may give us US\$2.5 as a raw-material. However, the same kilogramme, roasted, ground into powder and packaged, will give the cleverer foreigners who add those steps abroad, US\$40. This is how Africa has been a major donor to the parts of the World



67%

of Ugandan households are now part of the money economy, compared to 9% at Independence, but there is clearly still much to be done for Africa to safeguard its agricultural future, the President said.

that are managed by cleverer people. We do not only lose money,... we also lose jobs. The roasting jobs, the grinding jobs and the packaging jobs, are done by the children of the foreigners, while Africa's children are drowning in the Mediterranean Sea going to prosperous Europe and running away from impoverished Africa."

He proposed careful strategies for instance with small landowners growing high-value crops such as coffee and fruits to engage in intensive farming, while extensive farming is done by or large-scale enterprises like ranching and tea plantations.

He also called for a reduction in food imports through the promotion of local consumption of staple crops.

He outlined some strategies for the modernisation of agriculture such as farmer education; research in and development of high-yield, disease-resistant crop varieties and promotion of good farming practices.

He criticised non-tariff barriers that disrupt regional trade, advising African countries to strengthen intra-Africa trade.

strategic planning

CAADP in brief

The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) is an African Union initiative whose goal is to raise agricultural productivity, increase public investment in agriculture, and stimulate economic growth through agriculture-led development. Launched in 2003, it focuses on improving food security and nutrition and increasing incomes in Africa's farming-based economies.

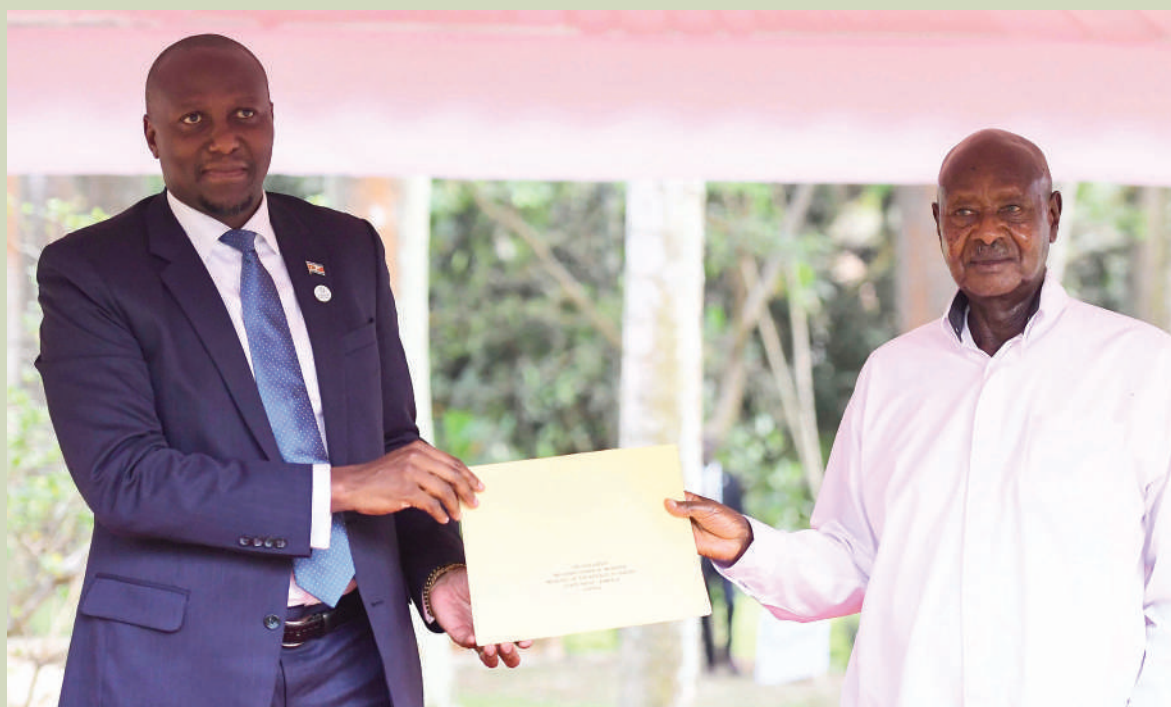
Specialised Technical Committee of the AU on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment, the strategy was developed, stressed the urgency to move into its implementation stage: "It is by focusing on execution that we can make a meaningful impact to our continent and our people," he said.

The Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment at the African Union

Commission, H. E. Ambassador Josefa Sacko, underlined the importance of a strategy to boost food production, value addition, intra-Africa trade, and job creation.

He also stressed the importance of inclusive agrifood value chains and enhanced accountability among all stakeholders.

With a real commitment to these strategies, perhaps Africa's farmers can lay their heads down each night with fewer anxieties of what dawn will bring.



Rt. Hon. Dlamini (left) and President Museveni during their meeting at Speke Resort Munyonyo in Kampala.

'A simple, but profound message'

On the sidelines of the Extraordinary Summit, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni met with the Prime Minister of Eswatini, Rt. Hon. Russell Mmiso Dlamini.

The two leaders discussed matters relating to agriculture, economic sovereignty and deepening ties between Uganda and Eswatini.

Rt. Hon. Dlamini expressed gratitude for Uganda's hospitality, acknowledging President Museveni's consistent advocacy for food sovereignty and economic self-reliance. "I have been following your speeches on social media and in meetings like this, you have been articulate in emphasising food sovereignty and the dangers of

relying on external aid. Today, your simple yet profound explanation of exporting jobs and relying on donations resonated deeply with me," he remarked.

Rt. Hon. Dlamini added that President Museveni's approach shows that transformation can be achieved through practical, small-scale efforts.

An agricultural rebirth

Implementing the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme in Uganda

During a high-stakes Ministers Meeting in 2024, Hon. Frank Tumwebaze—the Chair of the Specialised Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment—issued an urgent and sobering message similar to the one that had been delivered in the 2023 Biennial Report on African Union Member States' performance: "There is no country on track to achieve the Commitments made in the 2014 Malabo Declaration."

The Declaration, adopted at the African Union Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in June 2014, comprises a set of agricultural goals to be attained by 2025 in the quest for prosperity and improved livelihoods.

Tumwebaze, speaking as a farmer, a former President of the Uganda National Farmers Federation, and a Cabinet Minister, made a passionate plea for the Kampala CAADP Declaration to reflect the realities

Performance highlights

100%	CAADP process completion.
86.4%	Capacity to use agricultural data.
100%	Accountability mechanisms.
47.3%	Climate-resilient households.

and aspirations of Ugandan farmers.

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) has been touted as a gamechanging driver of Africa's prosperity. Conceived in 2003 by the African Union's leaders, CAADP was designed to drive agricultural development and supports the African Union Agenda 2063, whose vision is "The Africa We Want."

It is a noble goal. And Uganda has distinguished itself as an example of progress under the CAADP framework.

Measuring Progress Under CAADP

Rated as "progressing well," the nation's performance is reflected in impressive metrics:

- 100% for CAADP process completion.
- 86.4% on the index measuring the capacity to generate and use agricultural statistical data and information.
- 100% for establishing inclusive, institutionalised mechanisms for mutual accountability and peer review.
- 47.3% of farm, pastoral, and fisher households now show resilience to climate and weather-related shocks.
- Every one of the five agricultural commodity value chains has developed strong Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) linked directly to smallholder agriculture. These figures speak to a structured approach that tries to combine policy with practical implementation and which holds promise for even more ambitious endeavours.



Initiatives and Innovations

Uganda's promising rating is the result of deliberate initiatives, such as:

- **Innovative Projects and Investments:** Projects such as the Climate Smart Project, the UGiFT – Micro-Scale Irrigation Programme, the Agriculture Cluster Development Project (ACDP), and the Resilient Pastoral Livelihoods Project present new possibilities for farming communities.

- **Policy Integration:** CAADP principles have been embedded into Uganda's National Development Plans (NDP) and the National Agriculture Investment Plan and Strategy (NAIPS), ensuring that state policy aligns with the pressing needs of the agricultural sector.

- **Public-Private Synergy:** The Parish Development Model has been a game-changer in nurturing strong Public-Private Partnerships, effectively linking agricultural value chains to the smallholder farmers the heart of Uganda's agricultural production.

The Approaches

Some of the objectives set out in the Kampala Declaration seek to address the core challenges and opportunities of rural communities:

- **Intensify Sustainable Food Production, Agro-industrialisation, and Trade:** The goal is to grow productivity through robust agro-industrial value chains, driving trade and boosting economic growth.

- **Boost Investment and Financing:** By unlocking innovative financing mechanisms, the declaration seeks to offer tangible support to those transforming agri-food systems on the ground.

- **Ensure Food and Nutrition Security:** A commitment to improving access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food directly impacts both the farmer and the consumer.

- **Advance Inclusivity and Equitable Livelihoods:** Focused on ensuring that women, youths, and marginalised groups benefit equally, these policies aim to make agriculture more inclusive.

- **Build Resilient Agrifood**

Systems: Strengthening resilience against climate change and other shocks means that agriculture is more sustainable and livelihoods are secure even in challenging times.

- **Strengthen Agrifood System Governance:** With robust systems of accountability in place, farmers will be better served.

Looking Ahead

With improved infrastructure, the use of modern technology, strengthened capacities, and a stable sociopolitical environment, the ground is fertile for great progress, with agricultural transformation resulting not only in increased productivity but also broader economic growth and social inclusivity.

For Ugandan farmers, the success of CAADP would look like sustainable practices and thoughtful investments that make their lives tangibly better, but also create lasting prosperity for themselves, their children and their communities.

Bridging the divide

CAADP in Uganda, from paper to practice

A common adage says that the eyes of the African are in their hands. It speaks to a desire to experience things tangibly. As such, for a farmer in the Ugandan countryside, success in the sector might look like a safe storehouse full of a good harvest that has ready market. It might look like new farm equipment that makes work a little easier. It also might look like an improved standard of living with an income that enables access to good health care and education for the family. What it may not look like is a binder filled with good policies and promises.

Uganda's experience under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) is a representation of the above contrasts. While the country has excelled in establishing the necessary frameworks for agricultural transformation, turning these policies into actual benefits for farmers remains work in progress. This story is repeated across many African nations working to achieve ambitious agricultural goals in the face of environmental and technological challenges.

A review of CAADP indicates that Uganda has made notable achievements, suggesting that, on paper, Uganda is well-positioned relative to its peers in the region when it comes to putting in place the necessary infrastructure for agricultural development. However, when broader outcomes are examined, a different picture emerges. Recent biennial reviews reveal that Uganda's overall

performance score in 2021 was approximately 5.89 out of 10, falling short of the benchmark target of 7.28 on the Malabo commitments. Like many other nations under the CAADP umbrella, Uganda is grappling with how to convert sound policies into benefits that farmers can see and touch.

A mixed scorecard

Although certain programmes have been put in place to enhance farmers' productivity, some challenges remain.

Performance highlight

5.89

out of 10 overall performance score against a target of 7.28 on the Malabo commitments, a set of goals adopted by African Union member states to transform agriculture across the continent.

Climate Resilience: Uganda's journey to agricultural resilience is supported by initiatives like the Climate Smart Project and the Resilient Pastoral Livelihoods Project. These programmes equip farmers with adaptive tools and practices—from drought-resistant crops to micro-scale irrigation systems—to deal with climatic ups and downs. However, scaling these efforts remains a challenge. Only 47.3% of farm, pastoral, and fisher households have achieved resilience against climate shocks.

Technology Investment: Uganda has embraced digital solutions to boost agricultural productivity through strategic Public-Private Partnerships. Mobile platforms that facilitate market access and financial services are increasingly becoming part of the agricultural value chain. However investments in advanced technologies—such as precision farming and biotechnology—are still in their infancy.

Lessons from Regional Peers

Not all is doom and gloom. In continental collaboration there is opportunity and the experiences of other African nations offer valuable insights:

- Rwanda has woven environmental sustainability into every aspect of agriculture, resulting in comprehensive policy adoption.

- A leader in agricultural technology, Kenya has invested heavily in digital platforms and innovation hubs, ensuring that farmers have access to the latest technological tools and market insights.

- Boasting advanced infrastructure, South Africa has successfully integrated precision

farming techniques, optimising resource use and enhancing overall efficiency.

By further aligning its strategies with those of its peers, Uganda could speed up improvements at the grassroots to spark real change that small farmers can see and touch.



Sampling coffee at the event



Tanzanian Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Hon. David Silinde MP opens the event

Smelling the coffee

Inspiration and opportunity at the 21st African Fine Coffee Conference and Exhibition

The Department of Coffee Development and Production under the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) in February participated in the 21st African Fine Coffee Conference and Exhibition (AFCC&E) and 2nd African Coffee Week. The conference took place at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Center in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania under the theme “Value Regeneration”.

The African Fine Coffees Association (AFCA) is an association of 11 countries: Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia.

The Secretariat has its headquarters in Kampala, Uganda.

The three-day event is Africa's largest coffee trade platform, bringing together over 2,000 regional and international coffee roasters, traders, producers, professionals and connoisseurs and presenting a unique

The Uganda Coffee Booth

The MAAIF department run a booth and co-exhibited with eight exporters/producers and coffee sector players including:

- Ankole Coffee Producers Cooperative Union
- Mountain Harvest Coffee
- Kwezi Coffee
- Mugamba Farm
- Mt. Elgon Agroforestry Communities Cooperative
- Clarke Farm
- Ankole Revival Discovery Coffee

Activities in the booth included:

- Three brew bars at which visitors tasted Ugandan coffee.
- Buyers linked to producers.
- Cupping session.
- Visit from the Guest of Honour.

opportunity for showcasing and networking.

Uganda had the opportunity to showcase its Specialty Arabica and Fine Robusta coffees, engage with potential buyers and benchmark how to optimise production.

The conference highlighted key issues in the coffee value chain like sustainability, climate-smart agriculture, intra-Africa trade, and the importance of value addition and processing to maximise the sector's potential.

The performance of Ugandan barista, Ibrahim Kiganda, who took second place in the African Barista Championship further enhanced Uganda's profile on the continental coffee stage.

JOINT EFFORT NEEDED

Opening the event, the Guest of Honour, Tanzanian Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Hon. David Silinde MP, urged collective efforts to tackle the challenges affecting the coffee industry, such as fluctuating global market prices. He stressed the importance of encouraging the next generation to be proactive in the coffee value chain as well as empowering women to thrive in the industry.



Ibrahim Kiganda (centre), came second in the Barista Championship



■ Hon. Frank Tumwebaze (right) and PS, Maj. Gen. Kasura-Kyomukama during the hand-over.

Fueling extension services countrywide

When agricultural staff are unable to reach farmers with timely information, farming outcomes are impacted. To address the gaps in the delivery of extension services across the country, the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries is distributing motorcycles to extension workers countrywide to ease their work to sensitise, collect data from and monitor farmers.

Hon. Frank Tumwebaze, the minister in charge of agriculture, said the ministry resolved to procure strong machines capable of handling the bad roads in the areas where extension workers operate. He urged the beneficiaries to use the motorcycles for extension and not personal work.

At a ceremony during which the first two batches of motorcycles, procured through the National Oil Seeds Project, were handed over at the ministry headquarters in Wandegaya, Kampala, Hon. Tumwebaze urged extension workers to use various avenues, including radio programmes, information technology (ICT), and online meetings, to deliver information to farmers.

He also urged district production officers and Chief Administrative Officers to monitor the extension workers to ensure effective service delivery.

The Permanent Secretary, Maj. Gen. David Kasura-Kyomukama, said the distribution of motorcycles would continue every financial year until every district has received their allotment.



■ The vaccination programme under the eRabies Surveillance Project gets underway in Soroti.

Fighting rabies the smart way

In line with a goal to eliminate rabies in Uganda by 2030, the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries, in collaboration with Makerere University's College of Veterinary Medicine and the Infectious Diseases Institute, launched rabies vaccination and community education in Soroti District under the eRabies Surveillance Project. The project is a web-based system that monitors rabies in Uganda for both humans and animals.

The launch, on the theme "Promoting Public Health Through Rabies Vaccination and Awareness", took place at Kamuda sub-county headquarters in Soroti County Constituency.

At the event, Dr. Peter Wanyama, the Assistant Commissioner, Animal Diagnostics and Epidemiology, said the ministry plans to vaccinate 70% of the national dog population every year for five years to eliminate the deadly disease. "When you eliminate rabies in dogs, you are sure of preventing the disease in humans. It is also 10 times cheaper to vaccinate a dog than treat a person who has rabies," he said.

The e-Rabies project links data on human bite victims and biting dogs. It uses a One Health approach, which combines research, education, and vaccination campaigns. It also includes the development of the REACT app, which helps with contact tracing and rabies exposure assessment.

The e-Rabies project aims to improve diagnostics and case surveillance, ensure that people who are exposed to rabid dogs receive post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) and to reduce the amount of PEP that is wasted as it is given to people who are not exposed to rabies.



■ Mr. Querido receives a gift from the Permanent Secretart.

Fond farewell for FAO Country Rep.

Uganda is one of the richest countries in the world.” Many might disagree. But according to Mr. Antonio Querido, the outgoing Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Country representative, the country’s wealth lies in the fact that any agricultural commodity one might pick interest in has the potential to drive transformation.

“Uganda is extremely beautiful and endowed with natural resources that enable it to receive moderate rainfall, unlike my country where we only receive rain after nine months. I will not hesitate to tell my people that Uganda is now my second home,” Mr Querido said at a farewell party thrown in his honour by the Senior Sector Management on 31st March 2025.

Permanent Secretary, Maj. Gen. David Kasura-Kyomukama, thanked Mr. Querido, who is ending a six-year tour of duty in the country, for his contribution to the agricultural sector. “You have spearheaded a number of projects which are greatly contributing to the economy of this country. I want to request you, please don’t go back to your home country, Cape Verde. If possible, please stay in Uganda because we still need your experience and guidance in the agricultural sector,” Kasura said.

Mr. Querido thanked the Permanent Secretary, ministers and all commissioners for the good working relationship between FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries which enabled him carry out his duties smoothly.



■ Minister Tumwebaze visits the MAAIF Village at the Harvest Money Expo.

Harvest Money Expo: A chance to learn

Initiatives like the annual Harvest Money Expo provide invaluable opportunities for the acquisition of agricultural knowledge, says the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Hon. Frank Tumwebaze. As such, he has ordered district authorities to take an interest in the Vision Group-organised expo and send representatives, particularly extension workers, to attend.

The Minister was in February speaking at the official opening of the ninth Harvest money Expo at Mandela National Stadium, Namboole, where he represented Vice President Maj. (Rtd) Jessica Alupo as chief guest. Hon. Tumwebaze said the expos were the best extension platforms, where farmers to could learn about agricultural innovations.

The Minister tasked the Director for Extension Services in the agriculture ministry with ensuring that each district sends at least two extension workers to these expos. “Let them come and see the latest innovations and technologies and then go back and guide the farmers at the grassroots,” he said.

He visited the MAAIF Village, where a number of agencies and departments showcased their work. He was impressed by the new crop varieties introduced by the MAAIF research arm, the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO). Some of the new crop varieties showcased were sorghum and millet. Emilly Adikini, a crop breeder at NaSARRI told the Minister that three new finger millet varieties (Naro Mil 1-2, Serem 2), four sorghum varieties (Naro Sog 1-2) and one green gram variety (Narogram 2) are being developed and will be soon available for farmers to multiply.

A healthier future for animals



“

We are tired of procuring vaccines that go to waste because the country has nowhere to store them.

Minister of State for Animal Industry, Lt. Col (Rtd) Bright Rwamirama

In a frustrating irony, the country has often suffered significant losses as animals die in disease outbreaks, yet large amounts of vaccines have been rendered unusable due lack of proper storage. Not for much longer.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries is constructing a state-of-the-art cold chain storage facility for animal vaccines at the National Animal Disease Diagnostics and Epidemiology Centre (NADDEC) Laboratories in Entebbe. It will be the country's first.

“We are tired of procuring vaccines that go to waste because the country has nowhere to store them,” the Minister of State for Animal Industry, Lt. Col (Rtd) Bright Rwamirama, said at the ground breaking ceremony in January.

The minister said the UGX 2.5 billion facility will be able to store up to 80 million doses of vaccines at a time. He added that ensuring the health of Uganda's estimated 14.5million cattle, 17.4 million goats, 4.4 million sheep, 7.1 million pigs, and over 57.8 million poultry through better vaccine management will solidify the country's position as a robust agricultural nation.



■ Maj. Gen. Kasura-Kyomukama, commended the ministry's political leadership for defending the proposal for the facility

2.5

billion
shillings

Cost of
facility

80

million
doses

Storage
capacity

“I don't want to hear about FMD (foot and mouth disease) outbreaks after this facility is completed. If it happens, the Commissioner for Animal Health and team will have to make a statement. We have been crying

every day that we don't have money. We have now been given money; what else are we going to tell the public?” the minister asked.

The Permanent Secretary, Maj. Gen. David Kasura-Kyomukama, commended the ministry's political leadership for defending the proposal for the facility in Cabinet and Parliament. “Their efforts resulted in what we are about to see,” he said.

He added that the ministry could no longer afford to continue importing vaccines and destroying for lack of storage facilities. Underlining the urgent need for the new facility, he directed Eng. Boniface Okanya, the commissioner for Agricultural Infrastructure, Mechanisation and Water for Agricultural Production, to expedite its construction.

“You should work day and night to ensure that it is completed within the specified time. If you don't, I will have uncomfortable discussions with you,” the Permanent Secretary said.

Eng. Okanya assured the Minister and the Permanent Secretary that his team would do a good job and deliver on time because the ministry has been building internal engineering capacity.

Harvesting tea near
Kayonza Tea Factory in
south-western Uganda.

37.1%

Growth in production of
priority commodities under
the Agro-Industrialisation
Programme.
Target was 35%.

Harvesting growth

Agro-Industrialisation Programme: Gains and gaps

Financial Year 2022-2023 saw encouraging success, as the production of priority commodities in the country grew by an average of 37.1% . This was above the 35% target. Enterprises that contributed greatly to this result included: coffee, beans, bananas, cotton, milk, beef and fish.

The growth was attributed to farmers' increased access to water and agricultural technologies, as well as improvements in the control of pests and diseases.

These were delivered through the Agro-Industrialisation (AGI) programme,

whose goal is to increase the commercialisation and competitiveness of agricultural production and agro-processing in Uganda.

The programme contributes directly to the first strategic objective of the National Development Plan (NDP) III, which is to “enhance value addition in key growth opportunities”.

Starting in Financial Year 2020/21, the Ugandan government, through NDP III, adopted a programme-based approach to planning, budgeting, implementation and the reporting of results. This reform is in line with the government's commitment to improve service delivery while leveraging collaboration among related ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs). The AGI programme is one of the 20 under NDP III. >>>



Performance of selected enterprises

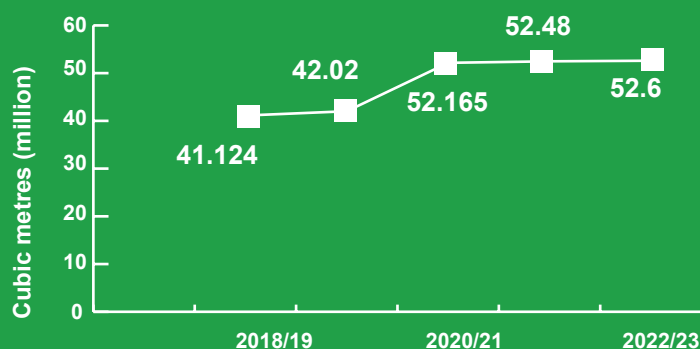
Product	From	To	%age
GREW			
Milk	2.81 billion litres in 2021	5.4 billion litres in 2022	3%
Fish	621,987 metric tons (MT) in 2021/22	651,719 MT in 2022/23	4%
Beef	228,243 MT in 2021	230,746 MT in 2022	1%
Cotton	69,099 bales of 185kg each in 2021/22	115,975 bales in 2021/22	67%
Bananas	11.1 million MT in 2020/21	11.23 million MT in 2021/22	1%
Maize	3.5 million MT in 2021/22 (Exports: 165,491 MT in 2021)	4.737million MT in 2022/23 (exports: 190,573 MT in 2022)	35%
Beans	770,000MT in 2021	826,700 in 2022	7%
Soya bean	138,000 MT in 2021/22	171,700 MT in 2022/23	6%
Groundnut	133,000 MT in 2020/21	176,000 MT in 2021/22	32%
Simsim	348,800 tons in 202/22	388,400 tons in 2022/23	11%
Sunflower	40,600MT in 2021/22	420,300MT in 2022/23	4%
Tea	84,185 MT in 2021/22 (Exports: 76,532MT valued at US\$85.50 million in 2021/22)	87,264MT in 2022/23 (Exports: 78,538MT valued at US\$90.01 in 2022/23)	3.6% (Exports: 2%)
Fruits and vegetable	(Exports: 62,999 MT valued at US \$ 47.05 million in 2021/22)	(Exports: 101,297MT valued at US\$ 71.58 million in 2022/23)	(60% in quantity, 52% in value)
DECLINED			
Cocoa	43,378 MT in 2021/22 (Exports: 41,313MT valued at US\$ 97.61 by 30th June 2021)	39,861MT in 2022/23 (Exports: 37,868 MT valued at US\$93.03 million by 30th June 2022)	-8%
Millet	72,000MT in 2020/21	70,000 in 2021/22	-10%
Oil palm	189,000 MT in 2021/22	179,000 MT in 2022/23	-5

Water for production

During Financial Year 2022/23, the storage capacity of water for agricultural production increased to 52.6 million cubic metres from 52.48 million cubic metres in FY 2021/22. This increase was, however, below the year's NDP III target of 57.52 million cubic meters, as a result of inadequate funding.

At the current rate, it is unlikely that the overall NDP III target of 76.82 million cubic metres will be achieved by June 2025. As such, there is need to increase funding to accelerate progress.

The graph below shows the trend of cumulative increase in water for production storage capacity for five years, from FY 2018/19.





Minister Frank Tumwebaze launching the Uganda Climate-Smart Agricultural Transformation Project in Munyonyo

Countering climate change

Climate-Smart Agricultural Transformation project launched

Back in the day, the Ugandan farmer, just like his or her forefathers had, could make a fairly safe bet as they planned when to plant or estimated the yields from their animals. Today, climate upheavals have robbed them of the predictability with which to plan with confidence.

From changing temperatures, to weather extremes and changing seasons, climate change poses huge risks to agricultural productivity.

Creative responses are required

to counter the effects of climatic shocks. One such response is the US\$354 million (Shs1.3 trillion) Uganda Climate-Smart Agricultural Transformation Project (UCSATP) launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries (MAAIF) at the end of last year.

Co-funded by the Ugandan government and the World Bank, the six-year initiative aims to counteract the effects of climate change by enhancing agricultural productivity, improving market access, and strengthening the value

chains for crops, livestock, and fisheries.

The project was officially launched by the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Frank Tumwebaze, during the National Stakeholders' Engagement that took place on 19th November 2024 at Speke Resort Hotel Munyonyo, Kampala.

He said the project would focus mainly on sub-counties where climate challenges such as excessive rainfall and prolonged dry spells have disrupted farming activities.

>>>

Standing up to climate change

“It is the first of its kind to bring all key players together. Let us give it all the required support because this is the real transformation we have been looking for in the agricultural sector,” he added.

The project will support the entire agricultural value chain, from seeds to production, harvesting, storage, value addition, and marketing

Eng. Boniface Okanya, the National Project Coordinator, representing the Ministry’s Permanent Secretary, said that farmers participating in the project are required to co-fund at least 20% of the allocated resources. This, he said, would ensure sustainability and promote a sense of ownership among beneficiaries.

He added that the project is one of the Ministry’s most ambitious undertakings as it is expected to deliver sustainable solutions to the adverse effects of climate change while improving livelihoods for thousands of farmers in Uganda.

“By integrating modern agricultural practices with sustainable funding models, the project reinforces the Ministry’s commitment to fostering resilience and self-reliance in Uganda’s agricultural sector,” he said.



A GAME CHANGER



Lt. Col. Dr. Bright Rwamirama, Minister of State for Animal Industry: “The project is a game changer for livestock farmers. In all the districts selected for implementation, five sub-counties will be selected for support of dairy farmers and five for beef farmers. The project will give out climate-smart Jersey and beef breeds. In addition to inputs, the project will provide milk coolers, milking machines and other value addition facilities.”



Bwino Fred Kyakulaga, Minister of State for Agriculture: “The project is supporting 10 enterprises (coffee, cocoa, Hass avocado, cashew nut, mangoes, soy beans, citrus, cassava, sorghum and maize). The selection of which enterprise should be taken on by which sub-region is guided by the agro-ecological zones. Agricultural extension workers will be key in the selection of parishes and farmer groups to benefit from the project. Farmers will be supported to acquire post-harvest, storage and value addition facilities.”



Hellen Adoa, Minister of State for Fisheries: “The project will support capture fisheries and aquaculture to increase fish production by investing in fish seed and fish feed infrastructure at Kajjansi Aquaculture Research Development Centre. Private fish hatcheries and fish feed mill operators will also be financed through matching grants. The project will also support fish farmer groups to construct fish ponds, acquire fish cages and boats and establish bulking centres.”



Maj. Gen. David Kasura-Kyomukama, Permanent Secretary: “The project represents a prescription for chronic climatic challenges. It aims at addressing the barriers to agricultural transformation by promoting the adoption of climate-smart technologies, innovations and management practices. The ultimate measure of this project’s success will be its ability to eliminate the need for future similar interventions. The task ahead is to ensure that every investment contributes to sustainable transformation of the agricultural sector.”

The project in brief

The objective of the Uganda Climate-Smart Agricultural Transformation Project (UCSATP) is to increase productivity, market access and resilience of selected value chains in the project area and to respond promptly and effectively to associated crises. The project supports the Government of Uganda to identify, develop, and incentivise the adoption of climate-smart agriculture technologies and management practices that build climate adaptation and sustainably increase agricultural productivity and household incomes, while enhancing resilience to climatic shocks.



UCSATP team led by the Deputy Project Coordinator, Mr. Alex Asiimwe, posing with Kyegegwa District Local Government leaders

Climate Smart Project rollout: 69 districts on board

As part of the national implementation plan, the Uganda Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation Project (UCSATP) held a two-week stakeholder engagement in 69 districts, to build support and a conducive working environment for implementation of the project. The meetings were intended to address potential problems and risks that might result in project failures as well as build a good working relationship between the national project implementation team and the district local governments for project success.

The engagements formed part of the critical roll-out activities following the successful national stakeholder engagement workshop in Munyonyo. The district stakeholder engagements targeted district and sub-county technical staff, political leaders, and refugee settlement leaders.

In numbers

• **8,147** stakeholders (technical staff, political leaders, and community members) participated in workshops held in 69 districts.

• **38** radio talk shows, 13 newspaper articles, 6 TV features, and 24 news bytes reported on project activities.

• Subcounty selection by value chain:

- Crops: **715** sub-counties selected, with coffee emerging as the leading commodity, followed by soybean and cocoa.

- Livestock: **476** Sub-counties identified, prioritizing dairy (287) and beef (189) production.

- Beneficial Insects: **717** sub-counties focused on apiculture and black soldier fly production.

- Fisheries: **162** sub-counties designated for aquaculture and capture fisheries.

Key issues arising

- Significant gaps in key technical positions, such as District Entomology Officers, Fisheries Officers, and Agricultural Engineers, particularly at the sub-county level, limit technical support for project implementation.
- Insufficient recent data on production capacities make it challenging to set realistic targets and monitor progress effectively.
- Limited understanding and integration of environmental and social safeguards at the district level.
- Regional disparities were noted in preferred value chains, with demands for additional crops such as cassava, poultry, vegetables, and coffee in specific districts particularly in Elgon, Teso, Bukedi, West-Nile regions.
- Inadequate facilities, including laboratories, animal holding grounds, and weather stations.



Minister Frank Tumwebaze listening to stakeholders at the Uganda Climate-Smart Agricultural Transformation Project National Stakeholders meeting in Munyonyo.



State Minister for Animal Industry, Hon. Bright Rwamirama (left), in Katakwi District with the Vice President, Jessica Alupo (fifth left), during a farmer mobilisation campaign.



State Minister for Agriculture, Hon. Fred Bwino Kyakulaga (centre), meeting leaders from Eastern Uganda to explain to them the new policy shift by Government to have farmers cost-share in the FMD vaccination campaign.



Hon. Hellen Adoa the Minister for Fisheries meeting fishermen and other stakeholders at the Civil Service College in Jinja early this year.



Mr. Odongo Kizito from the Department of Crop Production making a presentation during the World Bank Mission for Uganda Climate-Smart Agricultural Transformation Project in Namanve.



Mr. Collen Nuwarinda the senior entomology officer at MAAIF, explaining to farmers the benefits of bee keeping at the Harvet Money Expo.



Climate-Smart Agricultural Transformation Project national coordinator, Mr. Boniface Okanya, consults the World Bank team during the national stakeholders meeting in Munyonyo.



A rapid response team comprising MAAIF crop inspectors rushed to Luwero recently to assess the impact of pests that had invaded the district and destroyed gardens.



MAAIF supports the development of agricultural infrastructure, water for agricultural production, and mechanisation to enable the achievement of the overall sector objectives.



The Ministry does not only stop at supporting large-scale farmers; small-scale farmers are considered too, and provided with hand-held tractors.



Ms Daisy Oyella Aciro, Commissioner Fisheries Resources, making a submission during the World Bank mission for Uganda Climate-Smart Agricultural Transformation Project engagement in Namanve.



MAAIF supports farmers with water for agricultural production.



MAAIF, through NAGR&DB, is constructing animal feeds storage facilities across the country.



Senior monitoring and Evaluation Officer Mr. Deo Opolot making his presentation at the Kaberamaido District leadership engagement for the Climate-Smart Agricultural Transformation Project.



The department of crop inspection supports inspection and certification of plants and plant products for both import and exports.



The Permanent Secretary, Maj. Gen. David Kasura-Kyomukama, hands over tractors to leaders from Northern Uganda during a campaign by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries to support farmers in tractor use.

Oiling a path to prosperity

The vital role of smallholder oil palm farming

Oil palm farming, long considered a cornerstone of global agriculture, has been making its mark in Uganda, particularly through the efforts of smallholder farmers. While often met with both praise and criticism due to its environmental impact, oil palm cultivation by smallholders in Uganda holds significant promise for the country's rural economy and food security. This article delves into the importance of oil palm growing by smallholder farmers in Uganda and highlights the multifaceted impacts of this practice.

Economic Empowerment of Rural Communities

Smallholder oil palm farming is an economic lifeline for many rural communities in Uganda. By engaging in this venture, small-scale farmers gain access to a sustainable income source. This income helps alleviate poverty, improve living standards, and reduce dependency on traditional subsistence agriculture. As smallholders cultivate oil palm for commercial purposes, they become active participants in local and national economies, contributing to increased economic resilience and diversification.

Food Security and Livelihood Enhancement

Oil palm farming contributes to food security by offering a stable income stream that enables smallholder farmers to purchase essential commodities, including food. As these farmers secure their livelihoods through diversified income sources, they can invest in education, healthcare, and improved nutrition for their families. This, in turn, supports the overall well-being of communities and helps break the cycle of poverty.

Innovation and Technology Transfer

Engaging in oil palm cultivation introduces smallholder farmers to modern agricultural practices and technology. This transfer of knowledge enhances



Creation of alternative livelihoods and youth employment in Kalangala oil palm project.

their skills and empowers them to adopt more efficient and sustainable farming techniques. As farmers gain access to improved seedlings, knowledge and pest control methods, they increase their productivity and contribute to the modernisation of Uganda's agricultural sector.

Rural Infrastructure Development

The growth of oil palm farming often catalyses the development of rural infrastructure. Improved road networks, access to electricity, and the establishment of processing facilities create an enabling environment for economic growth in previously marginalised regions. This not only benefits oil palm farmers, but also stimulates investment in complementary industries, leading to job creation and improved living conditions. In Buvuma, 16.5km of access roads and 32km of farm roads had been constructed by December 2023.

Empowering Women and Youth

Oil palm farming can contribute to gender equality by providing women with opportunities to participate in income-generating activities. As women



Construction of community access road in Buvuma.

IN NUMBERS

16.5

kilometres of access roads and 32km of farm roads constructed under the oil palm project by December 2023.

become involved in decision-making and agricultural management, their social status improves. Additionally, engaging youth in oil palm farming helps address rural-urban migration by offering viable employment options within their communities.

Smallholder oil palm farming plays a pivotal role in Uganda's efforts to enhance rural livelihoods, promote economic growth, and ensure food security. While carefully addressing environmental concerns, the practice offers a pathway for sustainable development, technological advancement, and improved living conditions in rural areas. By supporting responsible oil palm cultivation and empowering smallholder farmers, Uganda can harness the benefits of this industry while safeguarding its natural resources for future generations.

Anthony William Wanyoto, Communications and Knowledge Management Officer, National Oil Palm Project



Smallholder oil palm farming plays a pivotal role in Uganda's efforts to enhance rural livelihoods.



Participation by Kalangala Oil Palm Growers Trust in the Jinja Agricultural Show.

Balancing Environmental Concerns

While acknowledging the environmental concerns associated with oil palm cultivation, it is important to highlight that responsible and sustainable farming practices can minimise negative impacts. Smallholder farmers can be incentivised to adopt agroforestry approaches, which integrate oil palm cultivation with native tree species. This practice not only mitigates deforestation but also preserves biodiversity, soil quality, and water resources.

In Buvuma, the National Oil Palm Project

(NOPP) is using Taungya restoration system where crops and trees are grown on the same land unit. The aim is to achieve a win-win for the environment and for farmers.

As the farmers look after their crops, for example through weeding, the trees benefit until the tree canopy closes and the crops cannot be grown as they do not receive sunlight. We then shift to another degraded area to do the same until we gradually restore the entire degraded area.

Progress with palm

Buvuma residents cash in

When Vincent Nsubuga decided to sell his land in the island district of Buvuma district to the government for the expansion of the National Oil Palm Project (NOPP), he was swimming against the tide. The project was shrouded in controversy, with local leaders telling residents that they were making a mistake in supporting it.

According to the Buvuma district chairman, Adrian Wasswa Ddungu, short-sighted and politically motivated leaders scared residents from selling land to Government. Those who had already sold were told they had been ripped off. They were encouraged to refuse to vacate the land for which they had already received payment. Some were even funded to open up court cases, which they, however, subsequently lost.

Challenges such as these led to major delays in implementation. While the idea of extending the palm oil project to Buvuma was birthed over 20 years ago, it was not until just under five years ago that planting started.

The roadblocks notwithstanding, President Yoweri Museveni stayed the course, convinced that the project was a major tool for the liberation of the people of Buvuma from poverty. His persistence has been rewarded and people like Nsubuga are the proof.

In spite of the negativity, Nsubuga sold one and half acres to the government. He used some of the money he received to start a poultry business, buy land elsewhere and build a house.

He has no regrets. Nsubuga says his poultry business earns him over sh200,000 weekly, an amount he was not earning from his previous fishing activities due to the depletion of the lake. He says: "From the one and a half acres of land which I sold to BIDCO Uganda Ltd (government's partner in the project), I now have over 12 acres of land bought out of the savings I get from the



"I am building a hotel. We expect to get more people coming to Buvuma on a daily basis, as is the case in Kalangala district where tourism is booming. Those people will need accommodation, I am therefore planning early to earn out of that situation."

Sylus Lukoma
Buvuma resident

businesses I started after selling my land. I also have a piggery which is doing well."

Like Nsubuga, Sylus Lukoma is celebrating the foresight that led him to selling his land. A resident of Kabugombe Cell in Buvuma Town Council he sold his land at sh400m and used part of the money to put up a beautiful and comfortable retirement home. He also bought a truck, a Forward, from which he earns money daily. He is using that income to build a hotel. On top of all this, Lukoma is making progress as an oil palm out-grower with 25 acres of oil palm plants.



Left, Nsubuga says his poultry business earns him over sh200,000 weekly.

Below, Lukoma's house and vehicle.



"I give thanks to President Museveni for having brought this project to Buvuma. Because of it, I am enjoying long life. When I fall sick, I can go to hospital and seek medical attention which was not the case before."

Lovinsa Kwabakya
Buvuma resident



Nsubuga's new home.

He is the personification of the multiplier effect of the bold vision and transformative potential of the oil palm project which is creating a ripple effect of employment opportunities, improved livelihoods and broken shackles of poverty.

Lovinsa Kwabakya, for instance, although she was a landowner was living in poverty.

When she sold her land to the government for palm growing, she bought 12 cow. She also built a family house and is able to educate her grandchildren from her projects.

Get on board

For Susan Lakwonyero, the acting NOPP Project Manager, the call to participate is a no-brainer; palm oil has proven its potential as a leading cash crop. "It helps one yield from it for over 25 years of harvest; we don't have any other business that pays to that standard," she says, adding that many in Buvuma will see their standards improve as a result of the palm oil project. To those who are still skeptical, she says: "Get on board."



Planting new hopes

Backyard gardening, mentoring resuscitated the parent in me

Fishing was the only way that Patrick Ocheng knew to make money. Every day, he went out on the lake and came back home with fish that sustained him and his household.

Then one day it all came to a screeching halt when the Fisheries Protection Unit (FPU) impounded his fishing gear due to illegal fishing practices. When he lost his tools, Ocheng, 53, lost himself. Stressed by his inability to make a living, he was completely distracted and started to neglect his parental responsibilities.

“It was as a result of becoming broke after I was relieved from the only work I had known since my childhood. I could no longer provide for my home or maintain my children,” Ocheng recalls sadly.

Timely mentorship and backyard gardening programmes under the National Oil Palm Project saved him from the pit of despair. Within three months of starting a backyard garden, a smile had started returning to his face. He had planted tomatoes, cabbages, carrots, and *sukuma wiki* in his backyard garden and says: “First of all, searching for sauce became history at home but above all, I sold part of the yields and used the money to hire close to an acre of land to grow more tomatoes.”

He intends to hire even bigger pieces of land in the future.

After a successful season, he was able return his

three children to school and reinvested in his small shop which had completely collapsed. He also bought a goat and four hens which have multiplied to fifteen now, he says with a wide grin.

With his successes so far as a vegetable farmer, he is fairly confident of even better days to come. He is only nervous about the drought that usually hits the area, leaving the already sandy soils drier-than-normal. “The drought can last for days and sometimes months having a large impact on our crops,” he says.

Additionally, several farmers who practice tomato growing, especially on a large scale, face challenges with early blight, the most common tomato disease, which dries the crop, inflicting huge losses.

Ocheng, however, chooses hope, saying the disease can be managed if the government offers support in terms of pesticides and manual sprayers as well as stronger tomato breeds.

The hardworking father has not given up on his fishing dream. On the verandah at his home, Ocheng still keeps the wooden containers in which he used to transport fish. “Those boxes keep alive my desire to return to my area of specialty,” he says.

As his vegetable harvests grow, he plans to use some of the proceeds to start purchasing the tools he needs to return to the lake. Legally, this time.

I can now save daily

Judith Namande has big ambitions. She plans to hire land to practice large-scale farming as well as buy land in other parts of the country. She also intends to construct a house on top of ensuring that her daughter completes her education.

She is under no illusions; it will be a tough journey to accomplish her dreams. But she is not deterred. “I have learned that success comes through persistence and determination. I have learned to keep pressing on in order to escape poverty. I wake up early in the morning to fetch water from the lake and irrigate my garden. In the evening I do the same to ensure that the source of my sustainability does not disappear,” she stresses.

A resident of Tojwe Village in Nairambi Sub-county in Buvuma District, Namande is one of the beneficiaries of the Alternative Livelihood Programme funded by the Government of Uganda together with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Embracing the mentorship and backyard gardening initiatives under the programme, Namande realised the importance of saving money no matter how small the earnings. “When I became a developmentmentee, I realised that saving is the only thing that would return my peace of mind as well expand my investment options. Venturing into backyard farming gave me a kick start,” she testifies.

Committing to saving was, however, initially a big challenge



“My only appeal to the Government is to supply us with irrigation equipment and water storage materials. We experience serious challenges fetching water during sunny days to irrigate our crops.”

until she started benefiting from the backyard garden she had established at her home. Namande grows tomatoes, cabbages, onions, and eggplants.

She says: “Since the first smooth harvest, I have managed to keep earning at least five thousand shillings daily from my garden. It enables me to meet my saving commitment of two thousand shillings at our village saving group. The market for my produce finds me at home.”

Namande got sh300,000 in profits from her first smooth season, sh120,000 of which she used to pay school fees for her child. She also bought a goat and used the remaining money to set up another small garden.





Seeds of growth

Strengthening oilseeds value chains for economic development

There is power in numbers. What the single individual cannot do, a group of like-minded people enthused by a common vision can achieve and even multiply. This power of collective effort is what the National Oilseeds Project (NOSP) seeks to harness as oilseeds continue to emerge as a key driver of rural livelihoods and economic transformation.

Imagine 120,000 households allocating approximately 960,000 acres for oilseed cultivation, and aiming for an annual yield of about 480,000 metric tons. This would contribute significantly to reducing Uganda's reliance on imported vegetable oils, which currently cost the nation around UGX 1.1 trillion annually. NOSP's strategy involves clustering 120,000 smallholder households, comprising 60% women and 40% youth.

The crops targeted under the projects are sunflower, soybean, groundnuts, and sesame.

By organising farmers into clusters, the project enhances collective bargaining power and facilitates access to quality inputs, including seeds and fertilisers.

Successes so far

NOSP has supported the development of 200 local seed businesses to promote Quality Declared Production (QDS) schemes, ensuring the availability of high-quality planting materials within the oilseed clusters. Under

“

“We have benefited from the market linkages from the project as farmers of Teo-pok Community Cooperative Society Ltd in Kole District. We were connected to JOHNISA, an off-taker in Lira who bought 23,800 kilograms of soybean, at UGX 2,200 each, generating the cooperative a total income of UGX 54,740,000 in season 2024A.” - Ambrose Ogange, Teo-pok Cooperative Chairperson.

“

“I have access to a more upscale market because I sell soybeans at UGX 4,000 per kilogram to my group members as seed, while I sold grain for UGX 3,500, compared to when I sold maize for UGX 500. I was able to use the money I made from Soya sales in Season A 2024 to cover my son's school expenses.” - Sadi Baale, a member of the Right Future farmer group in Kiboga.

QDS production, a total of 2,122 acres were established with a total production volume of 976,544kg of soybean seed, which has been accessed by smallholders in the clusters. Additionally, 40 acres of groundnut breeder seed of three recently released varieties (NARONUT 3Red, 4Red and 5Red and 600 acres of sesame were established under NARO NASSARI. This collaboration guarantees that the seeds produced meet the required standards, thereby supporting the overall goal of improving oilseed production and farmer livelihoods.

To further bolster production, the project is targeting 4,600 farmer

groups, of which 4,050 have been mobilised to increase the acreage under oilseed crops across the project area to increase the crushing material for the mills. The promotional activities are mainly through exposing the farmers and farmer groups to the various improved varieties through the establishment of 405 demonstration gardens, linking farmers to input and output markets and training cumulatively 58,623 farmers on farmer group institutional development, farming as a business, specific oilseed agronomic practices, pre- and post-harvest handling and financial literacy. This has increased oilseed production and profitability.

120,000

smallholder households, (60% women and 40% youth) targeted for oil seed production.

4,600

farmer groups targeted to increase the acreage under oil seed crops across the project area.

58,623

farmers trained on farming as a business and oilseed agronomic practices'

195,700

kilogrammes of seed sold through multi-stakeholder platforms in Season 2024A.

Additionally, NOSP in partnership with Makerere University is supporting student scholarship at Master's and PhD level. A competitive selection process identified students in Plant Breeding (1 PhD, 1 MSc), Seed Systems (1 PhD, 2 MSc), Crop Protection (1 PhD, 1 MSc), Soil Fertility Improvement (2 MSc), Agricultural Economics and Value Chains (1 PhD, 2 MSc) and Agricultural Extension and rural innovations (1 PhD, 2 MSc).

These students are scheduled to begin their first semester in August 2025, and this will enhance expertise development, improve seed systems, boost agricultural productivity and promote sustainable practices. The programme is part of NOSP's broader strategy to build institutional and human capacity, ensuring the availability and adoption of quality seeds, which is fundamental to achieving food security and economic growth in Uganda.

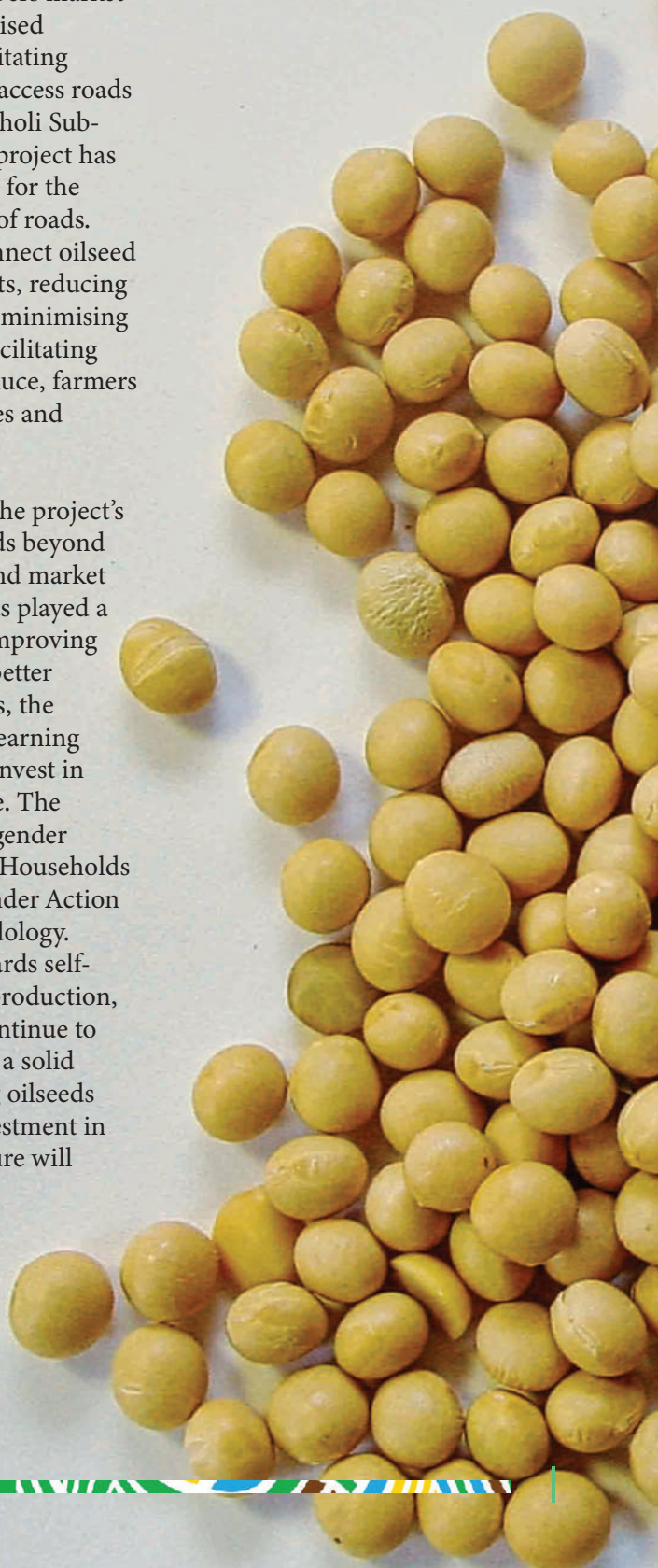
Beyond production, NOSP has prioritised improving farmers' access to markets. Through the formation of multistakeholder platforms, the project collaborates with the private sector to ensure stable market linkages. By fostering relations between the smallholder farmers and key value chain actors, the project ensures a consistent supply of oilseed for the local market, which has encouraged investment and thus increasing sectors contribution to Uganda's economy. Through these platforms, in season 2024A, a total of 195,700 kg of seed was sold.

Additionally, recognising that

poor infrastructure hampers market access, NOSP has prioritised constructing and rehabilitating 1,034 km of community access roads under Batch A. In the Acholi Sub-region, for instance, the project has allocated UGX 28 billion for the repair of 151 kilometres of roads. These improvements connect oilseed farmers to nearby markets, reducing transportation costs and minimising post-harvest losses. By facilitating easier movement of produce, farmers can negotiate better prices and increase their income.

Furthermore, the project's impact extends beyond production and market access as it has played a vital role in improving farmers' incomes. With better prices and reduced losses, the smallholder farmers are earning more, enabling them to invest in education and healthcare. The project also emphasises gender inclusion, with over 502 Households reached through the Gender Action Learning System Methodology.

As Uganda moves towards self-sufficiency in edible oil production, NOSP's interventions continue to be critical and are laying a solid foundation for a thriving oilseeds industry. Continued investment in research and infrastructure will further propel the sector towards competitiveness and sustainability that translates into improved incomes for farmers and a stronger Ugandan economy.



Atari irrigation scheme to benefit scores of farmers



Watering dreams

As the Atari river makes its way down from Mount Elgon, it waters the low-lying areas between Bulambuli and Kween districts in eastern Uganda. It is a double-edged blessing. When it rains heavily, these areas flood and gardens are destroyed. When there is no rain, however, the waters dry up completely, leaving farmers at the mercy of arid conditions that make production impossible for long spells at a time.

The proposed Atari irrigation scheme is intended to balance these two extremes, ensuring a stable supply of water through the year, while regulating it during the rain season to mitigate the dangers of flooding.

On March 27, 2025, Hon. Frank Tumwebaze, the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), officiated at the ground breaking ceremony for construction works for the 680-hectare irrigation scheme.

In his remarks at the event, the Minister thanked the Government of Japan for funding the project to the tune of US\$21 million. He also thanked the Permanent

IN NUMBERS

US\$21

Project funding

1,300

Farmers across
Sebei region to benefit

Secretary, Maj. Gen. David Kasura-Kyomukama and agriculture ministry engineers led by Eng. Boniface Okanya for ensuring that the construction of this project, to be delivered by Japanese construction company Zenitaka, kicked off.

Like most countries on the continent, the Minister said, Uganda has been experiencing climate change manifesting through erratic weather patterns. “Our usual seasons and known planting seasons have changed and this has led to variations in production and productivity,” he said, adding that irrigation systems like Atari would enable farmers to continue producing food during the dry seasons.

The commencement of the project was delayed for over two years due to compensation challenges involving speculators who purchased land in anticipation of the arrival of the project and who claimed a lot of money beyond the compensation value of the land. The minister vowed to petition the Parliament of



Hon. Tumwebaze; former Minister of Energy, Irene Muloni and Eng. Boniface Okanya on a guided tour of the planned Atari irrigation scheme during the ground-breaking ceremony.



Eng. Benon Lwanga (in a yellow t-shirt) taking the Minister through the processes the contractor will follow during the construction period.

Uganda to pass a law to criminalise individuals who sabotage Government projects intended to benefit communities.

Eng. Irene Muloni, the former Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, on behalf of the two beneficiary districts thanked the Government and Ministry of Agriculture for the project. "It is going to help us increase



Schemes like Atari will enable farmers to continue producing food during the dry seasons.

production. I want to request Ministry of Agriculture to give us more tractors because we are ready to produce and we going to be the number one producers of rice in Uganda as a result of this project," Eng. Muloni stated.

She also assured Government that the conflicts between the Balambuli and the Sabiny community were over. "We must live in harmony. Now that Government has given us this project, it is going to unite us because we are sharing it," she added.

Eng. Okanya, the commissioner for Agricultural Infrastructure, Mechanisation and Water for Agricultural Production, said Atari is a sister scheme to Acomai in Teso and Ngenge in Kween which are also under construction.

For over 1,300 farmers across the water-stressed Sebei sub-region, the Atari scheme is not just good news. It is exciting and life-altering, as they can now hope to experience improved livelihoods since they will be able produce crops, particularly rice, all through the year.

Battling silent invaders

Understanding and addressing invasive species

2.2%

Up to this percentage of the regional agricultural GDP is lost as a result of the impact of invasive species.

For the ordinary observer, the plant with small white flowers was simply a nice touch in the beautiful bouquet that sat at the hotel reception. But for those gathered at the Protea Hotel in Kampala for a three-day workshop on “Promoting Biodiversity Conservation through Strengthening Capacity of stakeholders in the Management of Invasive Species in Uganda”, it was an ironic find. The beautiful plant was *parthenium*.

Parthenium hysterophorus, an invasive species, is also known as the ‘famine weed’ because it outcompetes crops, threatens agricultural yields and harms livestock, leading to food insecurity.

Invasive alien species (IAS) are organisms which when taken outside their native habitats, pose serious threats to the environment and human health. When they spread, they can significantly disrupt ecosystems and livelihoods.

The economic impact of invasive species is particularly pronounced in the agricultural sector. In East Africa, for example, species such as the spotted stem borer, Maize Lethal Necrosis Disease, and *Parthenium hysterophorus* contribute to economic losses of between US\$0.9 billion and US\$1.1 billion annually, accounting for about 1.8% to 2.2% of the region’s total agricultural GDP.

Pineapple farmers in Kayunga district know this all too well, having experienced severe yield losses in 2023 on account of *Parthenium hysterophorus*.

When the weed spreads uncontrollably it releases chemicals that inhibit the growth of crops. It also reduces soil fertility.

How the species spread

Invasive species are introduced intentionally or accidentally through human activities such as international trade, tourism, and various modes of transportation. The bouquet at the Protea Hotel reception illustrates the usually unintentional spread of invasive species. In the early 1990s, the Golden Dodder was similarly unwittingly introduced in Kampala as an ornamental plant only to later cause disruptions, affecting hedges and avocado trees in particular.

During the workshop, organised under the auspices of ASARECA’s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme ex-pillar IV (CAADP-XP4) Programme and running from 3rd to 7th March 2025, participants had the opportunity to visit farmers’ fields in Kayunga District, where they saw the devastating impacts of invasive species, mainly Dodder (*Cuscuta spp.*) and *Parthenium*.



Dr. Alexander Ssamula the senior agricultural inspector at MAAIF examining the pests that were affecting crops in Luwero District recently for a permanent solution.

Where *Parthenium* has wreaked havoc on pineapple gardens, The parasitic Dodder has infested coffee farms in the region.

It wraps itself around the coffee plants, feeding off and draining them of nutrients while blocking the sunlight they need to grow.

Participants also visited the National Crops Resources Research Institute at the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) in Namulonge, where they saw demonstrations of biological control mechanisms for invasive species.

Dr. Kasifa Katono, an entomologist with the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) highlighted the factors that have facilitated the rapid spread of the invasive species. They include: climate change, globalisation, international trade, tourism and travel, lack of natural predators, indiscriminate pesticide use, and land-use changes.

‘Coordination is crucial’

Participants in the workshop, emphasised that knowledge is key to successfully combatting invasive species.

Farmers, who typically bear the brunt of ecological disruptions, agree. One farmer representative said while the workshop was a move in the right direction, it was important to extend the knowledge to farming communities so they can actively participate in the fight against invasive pests.

Another farmer echoed this view, stressing that while technical experts and policymakers are well-informed, many farmers in rural areas still lack critical information.

It was also noted that response efforts in Uganda so far been fragmented, making it difficult

to battle invasive species in a sustained manner.

The Minister of state for Agriculture, Hon. Fred Bwino Kyakulaga, while expressing relief that a multi-stakeholder discussion on invasive species was finally happening also expressed dissatisfaction that even these isolated efforts have been too quiet and have not generated the necessary attention.

The Food and Agriculture Organization Country Representative Dr. Antonio Querido, pointed out the importance of multi-stakeholder approach, scientific research, policy interventions, and community engagement in managing invasive species. >>>



Workshop participants

Way forward

The workshop, which benefitted from the insights of an array of experts, discussed the importance of data-based policy and regulations to effectively manage these species. For instance, with economic justification, could farmers be given permission to grow certain invasive species in controlled environments?

Other discussions centred on assessing the current management of invasive species with a view to improving it; strategies for enhancing public awareness; and the development of an action plan for the effective control of invasive species. It was generally agreed that early detection, rapid response, and integrated strategies are crucial in this effort and will help minimise the impact of invasive species both for individual wellbeing and broader economic outcomes for the country.

In Kayunga district, small steps are being taken in this direction. For instance, to manage *Parthenium*, says Ann Bulya, the District Agricultural Officer of Kayunga, several measures have been put in place including awareness campaigns, training and the provision of particular herbicides that are able to suppress the weed.

Such steps, when co-ordinated and scaled are vital weapons in the fight against the silent enemy that invasives are.



Fishing licenses and permits

Ensure you obtain the necessary licenses and permits to operate legally and sustainably in the fishing industry. These licenses are currently being reviewed as per the new regulations being drafted under the Fish and Aquaculture Act, 2023



AQUACULTURE

- Aquaculture establishment (large scale)
- Aquaculture establishment certificate (small scale)
- Cage aquaculture annual operational permit (small scale)



FISHING OPERATIONS

- Fishing control permit (Citizen)
- Fishing control permit (non-citizen)
- Recreational fishing
- Fishing vessel license (swamps, rivers & dams)



PROCESSING AND MANUFACTURING

- Artisanal Processing/ Fishmongers
- Fish Industrial Processing License



FISH TRADE AND EXPORT

- Fish export certificate
- By-Products, fresh and processed fish (Dried/Smoked) traders/transporters Importation and Transportation
- Permit for importation of fish, fishery products, or aquaculture inputs
- License for trucks carrying fish by tonnage



BOATS AND GEAR

- Boat building/local gear makers/repairers' trader's license
- Fishing appliance manufacture permit/importation



SPECIAL PERMITS

- Destruction of imported fish products certificate

Fighting FMD

What farmers need to know

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) is a highly contagious disease of animals with divided hooves including cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and world animals like buffalos and antelopes. In Uganda, FMD was first confirmed in 1953 and since then it occurs annually.

Any outbreak must be immediately reported to the Commissioner, Animal Health at the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF).

Causes of FMD

It is caused by a virus called Foot and Mouth Disease Virus (FMDV) which exists in seven different types called serotypes (O,A,C, Asia 1, SAT 1, SAT 2, and SAT 3). Immunity against one serotype does not protect animals against the other serotypes. This makes it complicated to control the disease using vaccination.

Five out of the seven serotypes of the virus have been reported to occur in Uganda. These are O,A,SAT 1,SAT 2 and SAT 3. The virus may survive for long periods in the saliva, milk, urine and faeces of affected animals, and on contaminated materials and equipment. However, the virus can easily die under extreme temperatures and pH.

Although the disease spreads very fast, affected animals, except young ones, may not necessarily die. The rate of spread and the severity of the disease depends on the virus strain, infecting dose, route of transmission, animal species and husbandry conditions.

1953
Uganda's
first FMD
outbreak

Why is FMD a concern for the country?

- FMD spreads rapidly, with the potential to spread across borders within few days/ weeks. This makes it a matter of international concern too.
- When there is an outbreak of FMD, there can be no trade in live animals and animal products, which has economic impact nationally, regionally, and internationally. The outbreaks affect all value chain actors (e.g. farmers, farm workers, livestock traders, livestock transporters, butchers, restaurants, food businesses, recreational business, feeds sellers).
- FMD significantly reduces the productivity of the affected animals that heal.
- FMD causes severe disease and death of the weak young animals, affecting the future herd.



HOW FMD SPREADS

The disease can spread through direct contact between infected and susceptible animals, inhalation of the virus in air (aerosols) or through cuts and abrasions in mucus membranes.

The virus can also spread via contaminated personnel, vehicles, and farm equipment. Outbreaks may also occur when susceptible animals are put in infected premises, facilities of farms.

What are the clinical signs?

Affected animals suffer from fever and develop vesicles or blisters in the mouth, feet and teats. The blisters eventually burst turning into erosions. The associated pain leads to other signs like drooling of saliva and lameness (limping). Other signs include loss of appetite, decreased milk production and death of young ones (calves, piglets, kids and lambs). Cattle show obvious signs unlike the other animals (goat, sheep and pigs) where symptoms may be less evident. Upon infection, the first clinical sign is observed between 2 and 12 days.

2-12
Days
within
which
the first
clinical
sign is
observed

How farmers can prevent FMD

- Vaccinate cattle every six months with an appropriate vaccine as recommended by the Commissioner, Animal Health.
- Prevent contact of your herd with other animals.
- Introduce on your farm only animals from certified FMD-free farms or areas.
- Isolate new animals for at least 30 days as you look out for clinical signs.
- Control staff and visitors' movements on the farm.
- Limit access to the farm by vehicles.
- Use dedicated footwear and clothing on the farm for all visitors and farm workers.
- Take a shower or wash your hands with soap and water before and after visiting a cattle farm.
- Place disinfection points at the entrances and exits of the farms, including foot baths (with a recommended disinfectant).
- Frequently clean and disinfect all materials (vehicles, equipment, footwear) with an approved disinfectant.
- Do not bring to your farm milk, meat or any other animal products from areas or farms that are suspected to be infected.

7 ways to control FMD

1

Immediately isolate sick animals and disinfect the animal house.



2

Notify the nearest veterinary authorities and local leaders.



3

Wash and disinfect clothes and foot wear used in the animal house.



4

Take a shower or wash your hands with soap and water before and after visiting the animal housing area.

5

Avoid visiting other farms for at least two weeks after handling the sick animals.

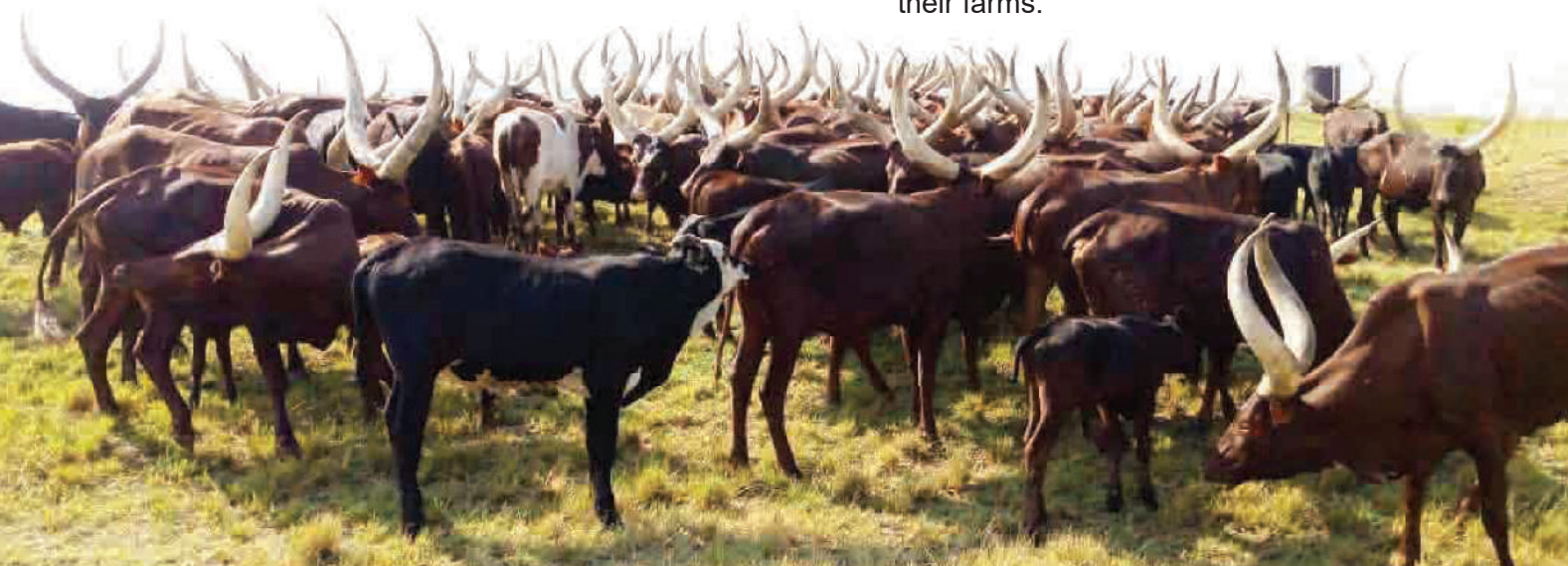


6

Alert neighboring farmers to strengthen prevention measures on their farms.

7

Do not sell any animals from the farm or area where FMD is suspected



Upcoming events:



1. World Veterinarians Day
- April 25



2. World Milk Day
- June 1



3. World Environment Day
- June 5



4. National Agricultural Show
- June 27

We would like to hear from you!



Kindly share your feedback on editorial@agriculture.go.ug



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