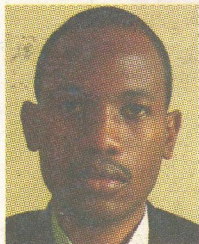


FROM  
THE  
EDITOR

There are a number of exciting topics in this issue. These range from post-harvest losses, forestry and environment conservation, and market opportunities in agribusiness.

So it would be a good read if you went through all stories.

But if I am to point out some of these, I would start with the last, the one on pig semen on page 7. This is a yet to be exploited opportunity.

Those who are interested, please ensure that you have signed up for the farm clinic next month. See the advert below the story for details.

I bet one would also relate to the personal stories of Stephen Kiddu on page 3 and Margaret Ssebagala on pages 4-5.

## NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

## Project on food, harvest losses launched

Against the backdrop that farmers make losses during and after harvests, it is pertinent that there is an intervention to reduce or prevent this.

This is the aim of a recently launched project on stopping such losses, which occurs at various stages from harvesting through to storage and milling, with a focus on maize, beans and sunflower.

Earlier this month, representatives of the partnering organisations convened in Kampala for the inception of the project.

**Critical beneficiaries**

The collaboration involves UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (Ifad), National Agricultural Research Organisation (Naro) as well as Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries.

"It is important to note that in Uganda, small-scale farmers are the main producers in the maize, beans and sunflower value chains," noted Alhaji M. Jallow, the FAO country representative.

"Thus this makes them critical beneficiaries of project interventions for development of the value chains of these commodities."

**Increase access**

He added that the efforts by FAO include addressing food security concerns in war-affected areas in Adjumani, and reduce food losses in Acholi and Karamoja regions.

"Our partners like WFP are

to reduce post-harvest losses at household level and increase market access for grains in more than 20 districts in northern and eastern Uganda."

The target districts include Lira, Apac and Adjumani since they produce large quantities of sunflower and maize and have a

large number of mills revealed Dr Michael Otim, a senior research officer, Naro. He highlighted a research study conducted in these districts to establish the reasons for food loss at different stages.

Some of the findings for maize were that "harvested cobs are thrown on the ground, fallen

plants are not harvested or cobs from some standing maize plants are not harvested." Other factors were poor storage structures and lack of storage containers, which account for the loss.

**Learn from others**

For sunflower, these include smaller heads not being harvested and the poor storage structures, which leads to mixture of the harvest with other products like cassava.

Through food loss prevention, the project seeks to improve food security and generate income through reduction of food losses. This will be implemented with farmers who have used the technology sharing their success stories with others.

"We expect to learn from the different stakeholders, and get feedback about on-going efforts to reduce post-harvest losses," Jallow said.

**More research**

Increasing food production is the answer to improving food security and this helps in reducing poverty and malnutrition, noted the WFP representative Simon Costa, in reference to the objectives of the project.

He cited a research that pointed out that "95 per cent of all research investments in the past 30 years have focused on increasing farming productivity and only five per cent on reducing post-harvest losses."

-Gumisiriza Mwesigye

EXPERT  
ADVICE

Have a question for the expert? Type SEEDS [space] question and send sms to 6933.

**Qn.** I am a student planning to join tertiary college and have savings of Shs0.5m, so I am asking for advice on which agricultural activity to invest in. My intention is that after two years, I have earned Shs10m.

**Ans.** With Shs0.5m, you can venture into many farming activities, but the question is: Do you have land?

If yes, where is it located and what's its fertility?

Well, assuming you have the land, probably near Kampala or any other town, do not hesitate to venture into vegetables including onions, tomatoes, watermelon and cabbages. You can also try pumpkins. These do have ready market.

According to my experience and interaction with farmers, I would recommend that you first try onions.

