FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE

As we close out 2018, we are pleased to share with you the second issue of the FAO Uganda newsletter.

The year has been particularly marked by important activities and results in crop production and value chains, forestry and animal health sectors, which we are delighted to share with you.

In this edition, you will also read about recently launched projects that focus on improving climate resilience in the West Nile and Karamoja regions, and on enabling refugee and host communities to grow high value crops and vegetables all year round and to move on from subsistence agriculture.

Recognizing how central individuals are to what we wish to achieve collectively in the country’s agriculture sector, you will find an interview from two inspiring Ugandans: Michael, our colleague who heads up FAO’s Moroto office, and Ali, one of the 25 Agriculture Youth Champions recognized by FAO and MAAIF as resourceful agri-preneurs who can, and are, mentoring other youth to start agri-businesses.

Happy reading!

Antonio Querido
FAO Representative

DID YOU KNOW?

FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) work through their Joint Division to assist member countries, including Uganda, use nuclear technologies safely and appropriately.

FAO, Government of Uganda commemorate World Food Day. Call for stronger partnerships to address food insecurity

FAO, together with the Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), joined the rest of the world to commemorate World Food Day celebrations on 16 October 2018 at Nabuin Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute (Nabuin ZARDI) in Karamoja. The event, commemorated under the theme: Our actions are our future. A zero hunger world by 2030 is possible was presided over by the Minister, MAAIF, Hon. Vincent Bamulangaki Ssempijja. Read more

FAO calls for stronger social integration of refugees in national development agenda

The Office of the Prime Minister, together with FAO launched the Food security, resilience and well-being analysis of refugees and host communities in Northern Uganda report (RIMA) as well as FAO’s roadmap to support refugee and host communities to be resilient and food secure. Read more

Knowledge generation: In July 2018, FAO conducted a study to determine the resilience of farmers to climate change in 13 cattle corridor districts using the Self-evaluation and Holistic Assessment of climate Resilience of Farmers and Pastoralists tool (SHARP). The results of the study indicate very low levels of resilience to climate change in all districts, attributed to inadequacies in implementation of policies, socio-economic factors and poor agronomic practices.

Empowering youth: Ugandan youth recognised at the 2018 Kigali Youth Conference

Five youth from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and South Sudan have been recognised as East African Youth Champions in Agriculture at the Youth Employment in Agriculture Conference held in Kigali, in August 2018. The Youth were awarded with certificates of achievement at a ceremony presided over by the FAO Director General, Graziano Da Silva.

The youth also received financial grants as part of FAO’s technical cooperation programme with the East African Community (EAC) dubbed ‘Promoting Youth Employment in the Agricultural Sector in East Africa,’ which aims at creating decent employment for young people in the agricultural sector in the region.

Speaking at the event, Da Silva emphasised the need to take action to make agriculture more attractive to young people saying that they must perceive agriculture as a remunerative and profitable sector. Read more and watch the video about FAO’s ICA.
FAO has signed an agreement with the Government of Sweden to implement a five year project to support women in Karamoja and West Nile in addressing climate change challenges and improving household income.

The project, “Climate Resilient Livelihood Opportunities for Women Economic Empowerment (CRWEE) in Karamoja and West Nile Regions of Uganda,” aims to strengthen inclusive, gender responsive and climate change resilience of rural women. This project will empower disadvantaged women and youth including those in refugee camps, through enhanced capacity development, addressing the root causes of gender inequalities at both household and community level and improved access to productive resources such as land, water and forests in eight districts in Uganda.

Read more

Refugees, host communities in Moyo to receive solar powered community irrigation system

Some 50 households in refugee host communities in Moyo District will benefit from a solar-powered irrigation system and improved farming practices. This support is part of a USD 500,000 funding from the Government of Japan to the Government of Uganda, through the “Strengthening the Resilience of Refugee and host-community Livelihood System” Project, implemented by FAO.

Work on the micro-irrigation scheme is ongoing. The scheme will provide water for crops and livestock, domestic household use, enabling production of high value crops and off-season vegetables for income generation. The intervention seeks to supplement the Government of Uganda’s efforts to promote sustainability of resilient livelihoods for refugees and host communities.

Refugee and Host Community Response Roadmap

The Integrated Country Approach (ICA) for promoting decent rural employment, an FAO programme to help countries generate more and better employment opportunities for youth.

Download here

Government and United Nations in Uganda launch new strategic framework to tackle climate change

The Government of Uganda launched its first ever National Adaptation Plan for the Agriculture Sector (NAP-Ag), which will guide mainstreaming of climate change in agriculture sector policies, plans and budgets.

The strategic framework, launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal industry and Fisheries, was developed with technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through the programme “Integrating Agriculture in National Adaptation Plans” (NAP-Ag).

The Uganda NAP-Ag framework presents 21 priority adaptation options in the key areas of Crop Production, Livestock Production, Fisheries Management, Climate Information, Early Warning and Disaster Preparedness; Forestry, Land and Natural Resources Management; and Research and Knowledge Management.

Read more

Policy-making support: The FAO-EU Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation (FIRST) Project is supporting the review of the National Veterinary, Medicinal products and Devices policy (VMPD). With technical support of FAO, a draft policy has been finalised and regional consultative meetings across the country are on-going. When completed, the new policy will provide the basis for reviewing and establishing a regulatory framework required to deliver well governed veterinary services in Uganda.
In other livestock related news, a new study to assess the prevalence of ticks, tick-borne diseases and tick resistance to acaricides in Uganda, conducted by FAO has revealed that tick acaricide failure and the upsurge of tick-borne diseases have reached an emergency level and are seriously constraining livestock production and negatively affecting the economy and livelihoods.

During a stakeholders’ feedback meeting held in Mbarara District, experts called for immediate measures and recommendations to prevent the likely economic losses that will result from high prevalence of ticks and tick-borne diseases (TTBDS) in the country.

In a bid to respond to the Fall Armyworm (FAW) outbreaks and minimize the pest’s destruction of crops, FAO, working with the Government of Uganda through MAAIF, have rolled out the use of a mobile phone application—Fall Armyworm Monitoring and Early Warning System (FAMEWS), for monitoring and early warning of the pest.

As part of the exercise, FAO provided MAAIF with over 100 mobile smartphones loaded with the FAMEWS application which are being used in 15 districts to pilot a community based FAW monitoring and early warning system.

As part of ongoing efforts to respond to a Rift Valley Fever outbreak in Uganda, FAO donated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to the Government to boost efforts to respond to the outbreak that has affected both livestock and humans in the country.

The items, including coveralls, goggles, disposable respirators, gloves and boot covers were handed over to the Minister of State for Animal Industry, Honourable Joy Kabatsi who appreciated FAO’s support, saying that the items will enable MAAIF technical teams to effectively and safely conduct investigations across the country.

Rift Valley Fever is caused by a virus spread by mosquitoes, and can be transmitted to individuals who are in close contact with contaminated blood, such as veterinarians and butchers. Currently, the epidemic has been reported in four countries in East Africa including Uganda.

FAO, working with the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Water and Environment, has certified 95 private commercial tree nurseries in Uganda, for the period 2018-2019. Certification, conducted through the EU-funded Sawlog Production Grant Scheme (SPGS) III Project, is an annual voluntary activity by which nurseries undertake rigorous audits to assess their production capacity and operations, as part of efforts to promote establishment of quality forest plantations, through healthy and good seedlings.

**Highlights:**

**Walk for Zero Hunger in Uganda**

FAO, together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), held the first Zero Hunger walk in Kampala on 12 October 2018.

The walk was presided over by the State Minister for Agriculture, Honourable Christopher Kibanzanga, attracted members of the public, civil society, private institutions, academic institutions, among others, and was aimed at creating awareness on the plight of the 820 million hungry people globally. It also called for national attention and action towards the food stressed populations in Uganda.

Hon. Kibanzanga called for individual actions that directly and indirectly contribute to a hunger-free generation by 2030.

**Boosting commercial forestry: Ninety five nursery operators certified**

FAO, working with the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), has certified 95 private commercial tree nurseries in Uganda, for the period 2018-2019. Certification, conducted through the EU-funded Sawlog Production Grant Scheme (SPGS) III Project, is an annual voluntary activity by which nurseries undertake rigorous audits to assess their production capacity and operations, as part of efforts to promote establishment of quality forest plantations, through healthy and good seedlings.
The first cohort of trainees for the FAO In-Service Applied Veterinary Epidemiology (ISAVET) Programme recently completed Part I of the training course to enhance the capacity of African countries, including Uganda, to prepare for, detect and respond to emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases that include zoonotic and transboundary animal diseases. A total of 26 frontline veterinarians from seven countries were trained. Frontline veterinary field epidemiologists are responsible for conducting effective and timely surveillance and outbreak response. 

Read more

In the Spotlight: Ali Acidri- FAO Youth Champion

Ali Acidri, 31, emerged as the first runner up for the coveted FAO-MAAIF Youth Champions in Agriculture Award, following a competitive country-wide search for youth-led enterprises.

His enterprise, Honey Pride Apairy, based in Arua District, came to life in January 2013 after his efforts to find a job failed to pay off. Four years later, he had increased his bee hives from 50 to 100. Ali describes his recognition as one of the top three National Champions as a turning point.

“I have been exposed to many opportunities in Uganda and outside the country, most of which are financed and facilitated by FAO. I have been trained to design and implement business plans, received funding which has helped me expand from 150 to 800 bee hives. I have also been connected to market networks where I now sell my honey at a competitive price,” Ali says.

Ali is now dedicating his time to provide technical training to young people interested in modern bee keeping.

Interview: Michael Lokiru, Head of FAO Sub-office, Moroto District

Michael joined FAO in 2013 as an agronomist. He spent most of his childhood years as a shepherd and young farmer tending to the family’s backyard garden, an experience that would later inform his career choice.

Michael provides technical support and guidance to District Local Government officials, implementing partners, and Agro-pastoral Farmer Field Schools (APFS)/Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) and Facilitates targeting the objectives of FAO projects implemented in Karamoja. He supports farmers to adopt to climate smart practices, to manage woodlot plantations, poultry, and other livelihood activities.

One of the key highlights of his five-year journey with FAO is the re-modelling the cereal/grain bank for food and income security among the APFS in South Karamoja.

“In the re-modelled version, we improved the APFS stocked grain bank, applied post harvest management practices and targeted the lean season for selling. In so doing farmers were able to have food available for the community at the critical moment of need and at fairly affordable prices while at the same time earning greater profits.”

Michael’s memorable experience was seeing the rapid uptake of ox-traction technology in Amudat. After many years of resisting the technology and labelling it a form of punishment to livestock, farmers finally embraced the technology after realising its multiple benefits such as opening large acreage within a relatively short time and relieving women of the burden of opening land in a short time, allowing them to make good use of the short rain cycle for crop production.

Away from work, the 44 year old father of four, ‘Rare’ as he is fondly known in his home village, spends most of his time tending to his private farm in Moroto and playing indoor games such as scrabble and chess which he says stimulates his brain to think and keeps him alert.

Michael prides in having made friends in FAO who have become more of family than mere colleagues.

Delivering results through demonstration of climate-smart agricultural practices in Karamoja

A new solar powered irrigation facility and green house, supported by FAO have been commissioned by Honourable Vincent Ssempijja, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries at Nabuin Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute in Karamoja. The facility will be used to train farmers in the region on intensive farming of high value crops and foster food security in the semi-arid region that is prone to droughts and erratic rainfall patterns.