



THE NATIONAL FARMERS'

MANIFESTO



Agenda 2016 and Beyond



Priority Issues

- ≈ Water for Agricultural Production
- ≈ Agricultural Extension and Research
- ≈ Agricultural Financing
- ≈ Market Access and Co-operatives
- ≈ Strengthening Regulation and Agro-inputs

"A Deal for Farmers and the Agriculture Sector in Uganda"

October 2015



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Introduction

The Uganda National Farmers' Manifesto is a call to action directed at the Government of Uganda, Political Parties, Development partners, and Non-State Actors. As the country prepares for the 2016 general elections, the farmers of Uganda are asking each of these Stakeholders to prioritize the needs of the agricultural sector. The collective voice of Uganda's farmers needs to be heard in political discussions, agreed priorities, and holding leaders accountable, before and after 2016 general elections.

One can not overemphasize the importance of the agricultural sector to the national economy, rural livelihood, and the food security of Ugandans. Agriculture is the backbone of Uganda's economy, accounting for over 75% of total employment, over 26% of the GDP, and 45% of foreign exchange earnings. Agriculture provides the basis for growth in other sectors such as the manufacturing and the related services industry.¹

In spite of these figures, the sector's recent performance has been unimpressive. Agricultural production and productivity has declined due to the lack of guidance and support from the state. For example, between 2000 and 2002, agricultural output reduced from 7.9% to 3.0%.

It is against this background that Ugandan farmers and farmer organizations, under the auspices of the National Coalition on Agricultural Governance in Uganda (CAGU), began compiling the National Farmers' Manifesto. The team administered questionnaires, organized face-to-face interviews, and held district and regional meetings to develop regional positions. The exercise took place between the months of March and August 2015 and included over one million farmers.

It was conducted in more than 80 districts across the Central, Western, Eastern, and Northern regions. Each region identified the key constraining factors affecting their agricultural production and productivity. From these regional priorities, farmers countrywide agreed on five key issues to be highlighted in this manifesto.

We believe that thorough and timely action on the issues raised in this proclamation will revolutionize agriculture and give the sector a face and pride once again. It will improve our livelihoods and contribute to the realization of Vision 2040. It is a covenant upon which the farmers in Uganda will base their selection of their next government, as well as keep it accountable on an annual basis.



Issue One



Water for Agricultural Production

The continued total dependence on rain fed agriculture is the main contributor to low agricultural productivity and is therefore the farmers' number one national issue. Rainfall has become unreliable since the 1970s and it is likely that matters will only worsen, especially with the onset of climate change. Farmers also noted that there is an absence of infrastructure and facilities to extend water availability for livestock. This is especially an issue in areas where livestock frequently have to cover long distances in search of water, a practice that comes with several health and productivity risks.

According to the most recent National Development Plan (NDP II), the government will address these problems by investing in water for production infrastructure in order to boost commercial agriculture and

industrial activities. Specifically, they plan to double cumulative storage by constructing large and small scale water schemes for irrigation, livestock and rural industries. In addition, farmers at the household level will be trained on water harvesting and small irrigation technologies such as foot operated systems. Lastly, the government plans to implement the necessary infrastructure to support the re-use of water in order to conserve this invaluable resource.

Farmers countrywide, however, have noted that the legal and institutional frameworks, and the capacity for developing water for agricultural production are not adequate. It was also noted that attempts have been made in the last few years to revise the Water for Agricultural Production Policy framework but with limited impact. Institutional disagreements have been partly to blame for this. It is important that the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries

(MAAIF) moves decisively to strengthen its capacity to provide planning advice and analysis around the use of water for agriculture.

Farmers also noted that the irrigation potential is clearly not utilised and reported yields on the schemes that do exist are far below what they should be. MAAIF notes key challenges such as: uncertain ownership and tenure, low value crops, poor access to markets, poor quality infrastructures, unsuitable farming methods, the unavailability of appropriate extension services, inadequate farmer skills, inappropriate technology, and the absence of viable financial services for small farmers and small industries.

Farmers' Demands:

1. Expedite the implementation of the Water for Agricultural Production policy framework.
2. Improve the economic evaluation of different water-based interventions to improve the selection of more technically and cost effective solutions.
3. Assimilate the lessons to date and focus on optimising the use of rainwater for increased crop production by maximising the utilisation of existing irrigation schemes and developing new irrigation schemes in a sustainable manner.

4. Undertake district-based demonstrations on small-scale irrigation technologies and rainwater harvesting and management.
5. Capacity-building of stakeholders in the irrigation sub-sector.
6. Provide information to private investors, both large and small scale, on aspects of methodologies, water rights and water access.
7. Build a monitoring framework for the supply, utilization and management of water for crops.
8. Provide backup support including promotional activities, guidelines, regulations, standards designs and manuals, and technical assistance for small scale and commercial private irrigation developers.

Issue Two



to the farmers.

Agricultural Extension and Research

2.1 Agricultural Extension

Agricultural extension, advisory services, and research are of paramount importance in rural development. There has been much debate in Uganda over the last fifteen years about the appropriate approach, coverage, and performance of the agricultural extension system. This debate has taken place within the evolving context of the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) programme, an extension delivery approach that targeted the development and use of farmer institutions. A second phase of the NAADS programme was planned to start in 2010. Instead, midway, it was suspended due to corruption in the subsector. Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) was pioneered to take its place. The details and implications of this transition have not been made clear

The confusion surrounding the extension system of Agriculture in Uganda is of concern to all farmers from all regions. Specifically, there is concern regarding the inconsistent approaches towards agricultural extension, the transition to National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), its subsequent suspension, and now the introduction of Operation Wealth Creation (OWC). In addition, there is confusion regarding the role that Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) plays in extension service.

The UPDF has been criticized for supplying fake seeds, the wrong seeds or bringing the seeds late when the season has passed. Farmers are calling for their removal and the revitalization of the old system of extension. Farmers also noted the unavailability of extension staff at village, parish, and sub-country level and the delay to implement the single spine extension system.

Farmers' Demands:

1. Revive the old system of extension in which there were extension services at every parish.
2. Place an extension worker in every LC1.
3. Prioritize AES delivery.
4. Facilitate the lead farmers in the community so that they can train people from their farms.
5. Implement the policies put in place.
6. Remove the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) from extension services. They scare away farmers.
7. Empower UNFFE to manage NAADS instead of the UPDF.

2.2 Research

The government of Uganda has pledged to strengthen agricultural research in the next five years. Specifically, they plan to continue the current analysis of soils and fertilizer for specific crops and extend it to cover the whole country. This would lead to a spatially differentiated programme for agricultural research, inputs and irrigation for priority crops.² In order to facilitate this, they have committed to identifying and building key human resource capacity.

The key bodies mandated with research in MAAIF are the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) and the National Genetic Resource Centre and Databank (NAGRC&DB). These operate under the sector objective 1, to increase agricultural production and productivity. Key interventions include: Strengthening ecologically sound agricultural research and climate change resilient technologies and practices and Implementing the Single Spine Agricultural Extension system. They also include the promotion of gendered innovation in agricultural research centres and extension services.

Since its establishment 16 years ago, NARO has made progress in generating technologies for improving the productivity of crops, forestry fisheries and livestock. Its performance in terms of returns to investment in agricultural research and development has been rated third behind Ethiopia and Morocco.³ Impact studies conducted in Uganda also indicated that investments in agricultural research have made more impact on poverty than investments in the road, health, and education sectors.⁴

This success has been attributed to the provision of technologies that enhance production and productivity by agricultural research institutions in Uganda.

Despite the above successes, significant challenges continue to prevail. For example, although the ratio of spending on agricultural research to agricultural GDP in Uganda grew, from 0.06 percent in 1990 to 0.71 percent in 2000, it is still well below the Maputo Declaration target of 6 percent. In addition, most farmers have not been able to access the technologies generated by NARO and poverty levels remain unacceptably high.

Farmers are also concerned that research is taking place without their involvement and participation in neither the processes nor the validation of the outcomes. They are also concerned that much research has resulted in the production of farmer unfriendly technologies and products that did not measure up to their traditional methods of production and conservation of the original taste in modified farm products.

Farmers Demands:

1. Involve farmers in research at different levels including inception, participation, and sharing of research findings.
2. Promote farmer field schools.

²NDP II p.111

³World Bank 2008

⁴IFPRI 2006

3. Work together with farmers to promote ownership and acceptance of value addition along the different crop value chains.
4. Promote research in investment in the development of light cottage industries.
5. Promote the use and adaptation of indigenous knowledge in modern scientific research.
6. Strengthened the National Agricultural research System (NARS) so that it can generate more technologies further along the value chain.
7. Improve Uganda's ability to compete in the global knowledge market.
8. Coordinate and assure the quality of the services provided by an increasing number of participants in the NARS.
9. Ensure continuity in research capacity for pursuing cutting edge science.
10. Decentralize research services and reach a balance between subsidiarity, stakeholder involvement and the need to maintain a critical mass of scientists.
11. Enhancement the quality of the service-providing process aimed at improving products and services to farmers.
12. Develop and maintain a core strategic programme of advanced science to feed the adaptive research activities at zonal level.

Issue Three



Agricultural Financing

Considering the fact that farmers account for over 75% of Uganda's workforce and contribute a large percentage of the GDP, the agricultural sector receives a shockingly small portion of the public expenditure. According to the Agriculture Sector PER (GoU, 2007), the sector has rarely received more than 3 percent of the budget in any year since 1991. In some years the share has been below 2 percent. In 2009/10 the sector was allocated just above 4 percent for the first time in many years but this slipped again in 2010/11.

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Plan (CAADP) suggests a strong need for increased government support towards agriculture. In order to adequately support Uganda's agricultural sector, the quality of spending needs to be considerably improved.

Financing of the agriculture sector is based on the Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP) and is operationalised through the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) of the Government of Uganda. This provides 3-year budget ceilings for the sector and for some of the agencies and sub-sectors within it. In practice, however, there have been major changes to the MTEF ceilings, as well as to the allocations to subsector votes. MoFPED insists that the substantive new budgeting procedures introduced for 2010/11, including the requirement for signed Performance Contracts, will lead to more performance monitoring and better budget discipline. This means the MTEF has to be the reference point for the DSIP budget in any given year.⁵

Non-State Actors have also become significant players in the agriculture sector, particularly through provision of finances as well as free agricultural inputs to internally-displaced people in the northern Districts.

⁵DSIP

Such inputs have included livestock, seeds and plant cuttings, pesticides and veterinary drugs, farm tools and crop processing equipment. Again, and not least because records of these activities are scanty, it is difficult for MAAIF to co-ordinate the investments in relation to agreed sectoral development goals.

A number of stakeholders in the private sector, academia and civil society are upping their game to get more public financing for agriculture. Action Aid Uganda, Uganda Agribusiness Alliance (UAA), SNV Uganda and the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) are some of the big actors in advocating more public financing for agriculture.⁶

When government does not put more money in agriculture, they leave farmers at the mercy of private capital and commercial banks. A key challenge is that there is a lot of mistrust between financial institutions and farmers, blocking any kind of understanding between the two parties. Hence farmers continue missing out on financial assistance from banks, because they think banks are there to cheat them. On the other hand, banks are also missing out on these customers, because they consider agriculture to be risky.

Agriculture lacks a good financial institution that understands, and is passionate about, farming. The present levels of low funding have prevented agriculture from becoming a commercial activity that farmers can depend on to earn favourable income. This is in spite of the fact that finance is a key enabler in developing profitable agricultural value chains and in addressing issues of community mobilization, cooperative development, production planning and management as well as harvesting and marketing. What are more challenging are the many unclear agriculture policies in Uganda which do little to encourage growth in the sector.

Access to finance is critical to agricultural and rural transformation in Uganda. However, notwithstanding this, agricultural finance seems to be lost in the array of what is termed as other “critical priorities” of government such as security, energy and infrastructure. This state of affairs is not helped by the lack of policy frameworks dedicated to agricultural finance and the lack of coordination among stakeholders, with often fragmented policies

and regulatory and supervisory authorities acting in conflict within the mother Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF).

This lack of coordination in turn inhibits the strengthening of coherent, sustainable and socially responsible agricultural finance policies and supportive underlying legal and regulatory systems.

Farmers’ Demands:

1. Revive farmers cooperatives and banks for cheap access to credit.
2. Reduce taxes on agricultural products.
3. Build a framework for dialogue between agricultural entrepreneurs on one hand and financial institutions on the other.
4. Work with agriculture finance stakeholders to identify and coordinate solutions to increasing the access of farmers, processors and agricultural entrepreneurs to information on financial products and services.
5. Improve policy and regulatory environment and coordination within and between government agencies, farmers’ apex organisations, the private sector and development partners, improved outreach, speed, cost effectiveness and appropriateness of agricultural financial products and services by financial institutions and other intermediaries.
6. Improve provision of agribusiness development services by all sectors to increase bankability of farmers and agricultural SMEs.
7. At the micro level, improve awareness, demand and usage of a range of financial products and services by farmers and agricultural SMEs; improved usage of agribusiness development services by farmers and agricultural SMEs to improve bankability.

⁶<http://www.busiweek.com/index1.php?Ctp=2&pI=3460&pLv=3&srI=84&spI=463&cl=25>

Issue Four



Market Access and Co-operatives

There is a huge potential for Uganda to generate more wealth by engaging in the export of processed agricultural commodities and simple manufactured goods. A study⁷ done in 2014 urges the country to diversify its export basket into food processing and agrochemicals, manufacturing of construction materials and equipment, as well as garments, machinery and chemicals in that order of priority. Export trade, however, is hampered by the continued existence of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) and the inability of Ugandans to fully exploit the vast opportunities under the various market access opportunities that have been acquired through bilateral and regional engagements and agreements.⁸

Internally, market access is hampered by poor access roads from farms to potential markets and between districts and regions. There is also an absence of information about available markets for particular produce. This leads farmers to succumb to low commodity prices due to the perishability of a number of their primary produce. Lack of value addition also makes it difficult to keep primary unprocessed farm produce for longer. One of the strategic interventions of the agriculture sector under increasing agricultural production and productivity is to increase market access and improve physical agricultural infrastructure.

Under the Trade Industry and Cooperatives sector, The Government's major role through the leadership of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives is to provide an enabling environment through policy formulation, provision of infrastructure and negotiation of market access.

⁷Special Economic Zones (SEZs), agricultural zones, educational zones, financial services zones, free trade zones, industrial parks and ICT parks, science and technology parks, tourist and recreation centres and township SEZs. Hausmann et.al. (2014)

⁸NDP II p 63

The poor state of market infrastructure is a consistent theme emerging from almost all the farmers' views countrywide. While the poor condition of rural roads is outside the remit of the agriculture DSIP, there are two areas that can be addressed: storage and market infrastructure. In relation to storage, most farmers store only for short periods of time, in their houses, or in old stores, the conditions and management of which are poor, with farmers tending to sell early in the harvest season to avoid losses caused by rapid deterioration.

Farmers' Demands:

1. Support the private sector to carry out market research on local products.
2. Set farm gate prices and do away with liberalisation.
3. Improve market access and delivery of market information to all actors in the sector.
4. Investments should be made to improve storage and market infrastructure to help preserve the quality of produce for marketing and processing, to reduce marketing costs for households in more remote areas and to help farmers benefit more from commercialization.
5. Need for better assistance on post harvest handling in order for farmer groups or associations to bulk, clean, grade, and store their produce more effectively and improve storage prospects.
6. Farmers also need to be considerably assisted to access rural and term finance to support the linkage between production and storage.
7. Other areas where investments are required are in promoting (and improving) market buildings and infrastructure, in constructing slaughter slabs and sheds, and in

rehabilitating key milk collection centres.

8. Facilitate farmers to work together in a cooperative system/groups to enhance productivity and incomes. Grouping farmers with common interests provides a conducive environment for group members to work together on increasing yields, on the basis of improved technologies, and it also introduces the concept of working together to improve market access for all.
9. Support through capacity building the Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFFE), and the Uganda Cooperative Alliance (UCA) organizational, entrepreneurial and group dynamics skills in order for them to continue mobilizing small-scale farmers into groups or co-operatives nationwide.

Issue Five



Strengthening Regulation on Agro-inputs

Under the sector objective of Increase access to critical farm inputs the interventions include among others; improving access to high quality animal breeds, seeds and planting materials as well as enhancing access to and use of fertilisers by both women and men.

The private sector provides goods and services and facilitates trade through the provision of storage, transportation, insurance, and financial services. The actors in the private sector include: private sector associations, manufacturers and manufacturers' associations, traders and traders' associations, financial institutions and cooperatives. Cooperatives play a major role in empowering members through access to economic and social services, namely: financial services through SACCOs, delivery of inputs to farmers, access to markets,

enhancing the bargaining power of small scale producers, imparting skills for better production, and marketing services.

It was noted by the farmers that there were too many unscrupulous and unregulated dealers and suppliers of fake agro inputs on the market in Uganda. This issue was echoed all over the country and is acknowledged by the government itself. This was mainly because of the absence of a clear regulatory framework with the role of the UNBS not clearly covered under its mandate.

It is known that technology adoption in Ugandan agriculture is very low, holding back productivity and income for the rural population. There is overwhelming evidence of fake agricultural inputs on the market in Uganda but little empirical proof of their impact on agricultural production and productivity as there are other cofounders such as supply side constraints as well as pre and post harvest handling challenges along the different commodity value chains.

In Uganda ,⁹ the sale of counterfeit agricultural inputs is a problem that affects some of the most vulnerable segments of the population. Smallholder farming provides the critical lifeline for many rural Ugandans so a threat to the integrity of agricultural input supplies is a threat to the heart of the country. According to a report for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ugandan manufacturers lose between US\$10.7 and US\$22.4 million annually due to counterfeit maize, herbicide and inorganic fertilizer sales. These kinds of figures are staggering. The average size of a small farmer's land in Uganda is 2.5 hectares (6 acres) and average per capita income was just \$506 in 2012.

Research also shows that retail-level inputs tend to be of poor quality, partly explaining poor adoption. In fact, the vast majority of fertiliser samples were sub-standard. Additionally, very few of the allegedly improved seeds showed much success in producing large crops. In short, the agricultural inputs sold at retail level in Uganda are often fake or have at least deteriorated to the point that they seem so. As such, the return on investment into the technologies is much lower than one might assume. Farmers' choices can thus be seen to be much more rational than the rejection of modern techniques suggests on the surface.

There are however efforts by the government of Uganda to fight this. In October 2012, government launched a crackdown on the growing sale of counterfeit farm inputs, a move that would cost traders with stocks of such products millions of shillings. The government started to issue new licenses to traders dealing in agricultural inputs, after establishing that farmers were losing billions of shillings purchasing counterfeit farm inputs that neither improved production nor controlled pests and diseases. The government was also working on criteria of selecting traders, who would either import or manufacture agricultural inputs in the country, including farm machinery and equipment.

The dealers would also be allowed to distribute the inputs to districts through agents to farmers. The minister said the exercise would involve the Uganda National Bureau of Standards, and traders would be issued with new licenses once the selection is completed, to necessitate tracking of counterfeit inputs.

It should be noted that Uganda is not the only country affected by the menace as Tanzania and Kenya are also struggling to combat unscrupulous traders selling counterfeit inputs, mainly fertilisers and seeds to farmers. So the problem spans East African one.

Three years down the road however, it is unclear how effective these efforts of government and the private sector to clamp down on counterfeit agro inputs has been. Besides, it also emerged from the consultations with the farmers that there was no clear regulatory body to deal with the issue, with the known standards bodies, the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) saying it was outside their mandate, and perhaps leaving it to the Agri Chemical Board.

Farmers Demands:

1. Clear the mandates and overlaps between the Agricultural Chemical Board and the UNBS in handling fake agro inputs on the market.
2. UNBS should be mandated to deal with unscrupulous dealers of fake agricultural inputs on the market.
3. Arrest and prosecute people dealing with fake agro inputs and products.
4. CSOs need to help farmers play an advocacy and watchdog role.
5. Reduce taxes for agric-inputs and outputs.

⁹<https://blog.transparency.org/2014/08/28/working-together-to-stop-fake-agricultural-products-in-uganda/>



Conclusion

This is the Uganda National Farmers' Manifesto. It calls to action political parties, the government of Uganda, and all other stakeholders to take into account the five key issues that have been identified by the farmers nationwide. The farmers of Uganda are asking you to take action on these pertinent issues that will revolutionise agriculture and give the sector a face and pride once again. It will be important for any government to put agriculture and the farmer first, because the farmer provides food every day on the table and without this much needed food, the country would come to a halt. Let us think agriculture and put our money where our mouth is!

For God and our Country!

Commitment and a Call to Action

We the farmers of Uganda call upon government, all political parties and all other relevant political actors in Uganda to take the issues of the farmers raised in this manifesto seriously by promising to act on these five chosen farmers demands. The farmers are going to use these issues as the basis for choosing their next leader and government.

We call upon you to sign the farmers manifesto as a social contract and commitment to the issues that farmers have raised herein. This compact will form the basis of evaluation of the performance on these issues by the different political actors in government and outside it including all the non state actors.

Farmers will be meeting every year to evaluate how far the different actors have gone in implementing the farmers' agenda. We believe as farmers of Uganda that acting on the farmers' manifesto is acting with the majority of the people of Uganda and is the greatest act of patriotism of putting your country first.

Long live the farmers of Uganda, long live the people of Uganda!

S/N	Political Party/Stakeholder	Title of Representative	Signature



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