



Advocacy Coalition For Sustainable Agriculture

"Collective voices for sustainable development"



The state of agro inputs in Uganda Policy Brief April 2015

KEY ISSUES;

In April 2015, Advocacy Coalition for Sustainable Agriculture (ACSA) carried a study to assess the 'State of Agro inputs in Uganda, with a view to provide ACSA members with documented understanding of the status in order to pursue evidence based advocacy. The Study highlighted that most of the farmers are using purchased agro inputs, seeds and planting materials, crop protection chemicals including herbicides and less population use home saved/made agro inputs. However, they have limited awareness about genuine agro inputs as well as limited understanding of existing policies in Uganda. This has resulted into increased losses country wide. Value lost due to Counterfeiting; the country registered Uganda shillings 2.8 trillion (8%) loss of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 87% loss to agro-industries (Mwaura et al 2014). These conditions translate into the country's food consumption gaps, high Global Median Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates, with many people marginally able to meet their minimum food needs.

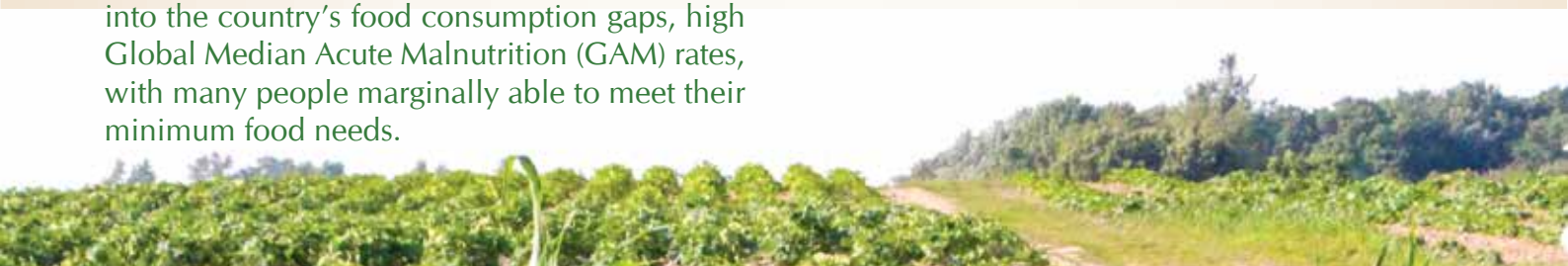
Much as all we are all aware that this happening, it should however be noted that the extent of damage caused and its impact on government programmes, smallholder farmers, environment and human life etc, is questionable still since limited efforts geared towards Research dissemination on counterfeit in Uganda.

Guiding policies to the agro input sector;

- Government has put in place policies and laws to guide the formal and informal Agro input

Subsector Including:

- National Vision 2040
- National Development Plan 2010- 2015
- The DISP II, 2010/11-2014/15 as an agricultural component of NDP has shaped developments in the sector over the last five years.
- The National environment management policy
- National agricultural policy
- National seed policy
- National fertilizer policy
- National biotechnology and bio-safety policy



These are all in place to ensure that desired goals are achieved by providing the overarching development policy framework for Uganda and recognizing the importance of agriculture in transforming the country's economy.

Fertilizer Usage in Uganda: Uganda is the least user of both Organic and inorganic fertilizers in Africa with less than 2% or 1kg/ha as compared to Sub Saharan Africa average of 9kg/ha or less than 5% of that used in East Africa, which impacts negatively on productivity. If salient issues are not addressed, the country may fail to achieve its vision due to limited capacity of small holder farmers and other relevant stakeholders to understand the existing crop related agro input policy regulations and laws.

Where does the problem lie? Limited access to information about genuine, quality, and affordable agro-inputs. Farmers have limited awareness about existing laws, policies, and regulations. Women, children and youth are the most affected because they predominantly provide labour in sector with limited access to information on agro inputs information. The men who have the information do not participate in direct production hence women have to look for agro inputs which most of the time are counterfeits. This has limited their ability to access quality agro inputs as well as engaging effectively in policy processes.

Weak and Ineffective policy implementation mechanisms; the Regulatory framework is weak with the guiding legislation comprising of unsatisfactory and or incomplete acts, regulations, and bills:- Regulations not fully implemented (in draft form or being reviewed). This has contributed to weak enforcement of these policies

Regulation of the actors in the agro input sector: The agro-input supply-demand market chain is still very weak and inefficient. The actors themselves are not qualified to sell agro inputs to be able to help small holder farmers. There is general inability of the sector to meet the current demand with high price of good quality agro inputs. This has resulted into high prevalence of substandard agro inputs on markets which has generally affected the agriculture sub sector and the industry at large.

Inadequate personnel and budget to allow for the mandated bodies to perform effectively. Institutional constraints have manifested in weak enforcement of inputs specific policies, laws, regulations and standards. This limits Enforcement of policy regulations their function to expected levels hence leading to rampant and prevalence of poor quality input, counterfeits/fake on the market.

Lack of institutions for redress. Uganda has not only less punitive laws but also institutions for the victims to seek redress like community police are lacking. The existing agricultural police are urban based police yet fines may not be deterrent to offenders if reported.

Lack of clear quality control mechanisms for the informal seed systems as well as the intermediate seed systems notably vegetatively propagated materials need to inspect and certification of nursery operators

Key Stake holders in agro input sector

The stakeholders in the agro-inputs sector include: - government Line ministries and statutory institutions (MAAIF-ACB, NSCS, LGs, MOH, MTIC, VRC, and NCST); relevant Parliamentary committees, research institutions (NARO, IFRI, IITA), academia, private sector (Seed companies, agro-chemical suppliers, agro-input dealers, and industry based associations such as , UNADA, USTA, Crop Life Uganda, Bolton, Formal and informal e.t.c.), civil society and development partners, farmer organizations, farmer groups, individual farmers, and the media. However there is poor coordination of this stake holder which also affects the research and provision of agro inputs because they complement each other.

Recommendations;

All stake holders are advised to undertake activities geared at expanding the choices and opportunities for small holder farmers to sustainably access and use agro-inputs including, Government Line Ministries, Civil society Organisations, Private sectors and Small holder farmers as follows



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1. MAAIF (Department of crop inspection and Certification):

- Continuously update the public of the recommended registered Agro input dealers on market, names and trademarks of MAAIF certified inputs.
- Effective regulation of the agro-input sector to reduce the high prevalence rates of counterfeit on market.
- Recognize and build the capacity of the informal sector in order to bridge the gap of access to quality affordable agro inputs
- Sensitize on procedures to follow if they are to get redress in case of purchasing poor quality inputs (counterfeits, expired or adulterated), where and whom to report to.
- Sensitize the public about safe use and handling of agro-chemicals. Findings revealed farmer laxity in use of protective gear, adherence to pre-harvest intervals as well as limited appreciation of dangers associated with improper use of agro-chemicals.
- Provide Linkage of informal agro input sector to formal ones so as to complement each other.
- Come up with strategies to Support farmer multiplication of seeds and planting materials to enhance sustainable access to agro inputs as recognized by the draft seed policy Private sector institutions Should reach and establish agro input centers Lower level because there is high demand for agro inputs to reduce on the fake agro input dealers, shorten the distance and resources will be reduced.
- Produce, update and disseminate IEC Materials Guidelines and develop publication as an awareness raising tool at the different levels

2. ACSA and other Farmer Organization:

- Sensitization to create awareness on the existing policies and regulations related to the agro-inputs.
- Build Capacity of MOs and farmers by accessing the IEC materials from the government line ministry to other MOs and farmers/ for Safe use and handling of agro inputs
- Provide information to farmers to link them to research to access the relevant information
- Advocate for and promote use of bio-pesticides which target specific pests compared to the broad spectrum conventional pesticides that are less toxic on human health and the environment.

Farmers:

- Engaging in bulky purchases of agro-inputs
- Collective action towards community policing
- Peer education or farmer to farmer education in the input markets, e.g farmer open days.
- Keep records of receipts with names and contact phone numbers

Conclusion:

Uganda's overarching policy frameworks recognize the importance of agriculture in the country's economic growth as well as improving the lives of the rural population. Access to relevant information on agro inputs is farmers' right in order to make informed choices to maximize productivity. Therefore, if the above salient issues are not addressed, the country may fail to achieve its vision due to limited capacity of small holder farmers and other relevant stakeholders to understand the existing crop related agro input policy regulations and laws.