



Agriculture Outlook for March, 2025

With Average Retail Market Price Performances of Selected Commodities

BACKGROUND:

Uganda's agriculture sector remains pivotal to the nation's economy and livelihoods. In the first quarter of the 2024/25 fiscal year, agriculture contributed 24.8% to the country's GDP, reflecting its substantial role in economic activity (Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS], 2024a)¹. The sector experienced a year-on-year growth of 8.7%, primarily driven by a 9.6% increase in food crop production (UBOS, 2024b)². Approximately 80% of Ugandan households are engaged in agriculture, underscoring its significance in employment and subsistence (UBOS, 2024c)³. Smallholder farmers, cultivating less than five hectares, dominate the sector and are crucial for national food security and poverty reduction (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2024)⁴.

However, challenges such as limited market access, post-harvest losses, and climate-related risks persist. Notably, the first season of 2024 witnessed below-average cereal production due to erratic rainfall patterns, impacting food availability (FAO, 2024). Enhancing access to timely agricultural information and investing in climate-resilient practices are essential strategies for improving decision-making, profitability, and food security among smallholder farmers. Strengthening this sector is thus critical for Uganda's economic stability and sustainable development.

Season's Outlook: March 2025 Performance

● Weather Conditions

March 2025 was characterized by unusually dry and hot conditions across most parts of Uganda. Although March typically signals the onset of the first rainy season in bimodal areas, by the end of the month, much of the country had yet to receive substantial rainfall. Daytime temperatures remained high, with many regions experiencing intense sunshine throughout the first weeks of March. However, isolated areas in Bunyoro and Tooro received sufficient rainfall during the second half of the month, allowing some farmers to proceed with planting activities. Overall, the delayed onset of the first rains significantly disrupted the seasonal agricultural calendar, especially in regions that heavily depend on timely rainfall to begin field activities.

● Crop Performance

The delay in rainfall negatively impacted crop production prospects in bimodal areas. Land preparation and planting activities, which typically intensify in early March, were largely postponed due to dry soils. Only in areas like Bunyoro and Tooro were some farmers able to begin planting with the limited rains received mid-March. In most other regions, farmers remained on standby, awaiting consistent rainfall to commence widespread planting. In unimodal areas such as Karamoja, where March is traditionally the period for land preparation ahead of the April planting season, very dry weather conditions hampered ground tilling activities. A shortage of quality seeds, compounded by the prolonged dry spell, further constrained agricultural preparations, posing risks of delayed planting and reduced crop coverage if rains do not start early in April.

● Livestock Production

Livestock production across Uganda remained under considerable strain during March 2025 due to persistent dry weather. Pastures and water sources continued to diminish, particularly in cattle-rearing regions of northern and northeastern Uganda, leading to poor grazing conditions, reduced livestock productivity, and lower milk production, especially in Karamoja and parts of West Nile. The cost of animal feeds for poultry, pigs, and dairy cattle remained high, reflecting sustained raw material shortages, while livestock prices stabilised slightly as post-festive market demand softened. In the Ankole-Masaka dry corridor, severe heating from January and February further stressed pastures and water access, significantly affecting raw milk yields among traditional farmers. Nonetheless, modern dairy enterprises such as Lato, Jesa, and Fresh Dairy mitigated the impact on consumers by maintaining processed milk supplies at subsidised prices, thereby stabilising urban market availability despite challenges in primary production.

● Market Prices

Food prices remained high in March despite the limited harvesting of late second-season crops carried over from December 2024. Scarcity of staple crops such as beans, maize, and groundnuts kept retail prices elevated across most markets. In regions where planting activities were delayed, demand for food supplies increased, further fuelling price pressures. Prices for perennial crops like bananas remained high due to previous cumulative moisture stress and limited supply improvements. Livestock product prices, while stabilized compared to the festive season highs, remained above pre-Christmas levels due to prolonged pasture scarcity and sustained high feed costs.

● Inflation Trends

Uganda's annual headline inflation rate eased to 3.4% in March 2025, down from 3.7% in February, according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). This decline was primarily attributed to a decrease in annual core inflation, which stood at 3.6% in March, compared to 3.9% in February. Annual food crops and related items inflation also decreased to 3.1% in March from 4.3% in February, largely due to significant drops in prices of onions, matoke, fresh cassava, and mangoes. However, energy, fuel, and

● Food Security

The combination of delayed rains, high food prices, and ongoing dry conditions placed further strain on household food security across Uganda. In bimodal areas, although food stocks from the previous harvest provided temporary relief, delayed planting raised concerns about future food availability. In unimodal areas such as Karamoja, food insecurity worsened as households exhausted their food reserves and faced difficulties preparing land for the next planting season. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes persisted across Karamoja, with poor households struggling to meet basic food needs amid limited livelihood opportunities and rising market dependence. In response to the worsening situation, China announced plans in February 2025 for an additional consignment of 1,610 metric tonnes of rice, scheduled for delivery in March, aiming to bolster humanitarian efforts and prevent further deterioration of food security in the region.

Average Farmgate/Wholesale and Retail market prices of selected commodities for March 2025

Commodity	Kampala (Owino/Kisenyi)		Mbarara		Mubende		Arua	
	WSP	RP	FGP	RP	FGP	RP	FGP	RP
Beans Nambaale (Kg)	4,600	5,000	4,000	4,200	4,000	4,000	3,600	4,000
Beans Yellow (Kg)	4,700	5,000	4,000	4,200	4,000	4,200	3,600	4,000
Maize grain (Kg)	1,100	1,300	900	1,000	1000	1,200	650	1,000
Millet (Kg)	4,500	5,000	4,200	4,500	4,200	4,500	3,500	4,000
Groundnuts (Kg)	5,800	6,500	5,000	5,500	5,000	6,000	5,000	5,500
Cow peas (Kg)	5,100	6,000	5,200	5,800	5,200	5,600	4,500	5,200
Rice (Super) (Kg)	4,000	4,600	3,600	3,800	3,800	4,000	3,520	4,000
Bananas (Medium)	32,000	36,000	22,000	30,000	24,000	30,000	22,000	28,000
Fresh cassava (Kg)	1,100	1,500	950	1,200	1,000	1,200	900	1,000
Irish potato (Kg)	1,600	2,000	1,200	1,600	1,400	1,800	1,200	1,600
Sweet potato (Kg)	1,400	1,800	1,000	1,400	900	1,100	750	900
Fresh Milk (Litre)	1,600	2,000	1,000	1,400	1,400	1,600	1,300	1,600
Coffee Clean (Robusta)	140,00	-	14,000	-	14,00	-	-	13,000
Beef (Kg)	14,000	17,000		16,000		16,000		16,000
Goat Meat (Kg)	17,000	20,000		18,000		18,000		17,000

WSP = Wholesale Price, **FGP** = Farm Gate Price, **RP** = Retail Price

Projected Outlook - April 2025

● Bimodal Areas:

April 2025 is expected to bring sufficient rainfall across all bimodal regions, enabling widespread planting activities. Farmers who began early planting in March, particularly in areas like Bunyoro and Tooro, will focus on weeding during April as their crops establish. In most other regions, the onset of consistent rains will allow farmers to complete land preparation and plant their first season crops fully. With favourable rainfall forecasts, April will mark the peak of the planting season, and by the end of the month, most farmers are expected to have finished planting for the first season of 2025. Agricultural labour opportunities, especially for land preparation and weeding, are anticipated to increase, offering temporary income for poorer households.

● Unimodal Areas:

In unimodal areas, particularly Karamoja, March marked the end of field preparation activities. April will signal the start of the main planting season, contingent on the arrival of the rains. Farmers are expected to commence sowing of key crops such as sorghum and millet once sufficient moisture is available. Although access to planting materials remains a challenge for many poor households, the onset of rains will create opportunities to engage in farming activities and improve future food availability. However, given the dry conditions experienced earlier, recovery will depend on the timeliness and consistency of April rainfall. Households will continue to rely heavily on market purchases and humanitarian food assistance until the next harvest, which is anticipated later in the year.

CONCLUSION:

March 2025 was marked by prolonged dry and hot conditions across Uganda, delaying the start of the first rainy season and affecting agricultural activities. In bimodal areas, planting was delayed in most regions, although isolated rains in Bunyoro and Tooro allowed some farmers to commence planting and weeding activities. Pasture and water sources remained strained, impacting livestock productivity, especially in northern and northeastern Uganda, and in the Ankole-Masaka dry corridor. Despite these challenges, processed milk supplies from major producers helped stabilise dairy availability in urban areas. In unimodal areas such as Karamoja, dry weather continued to hinder field preparation activities, exacerbating food insecurity as households relied heavily on market purchases and humanitarian aid. As Uganda moves into April, the onset of rains is critical to enable widespread planting and support seasonal recovery efforts across both rainfall zones.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

General Recommendations:

1. Expedite final field preparations and commence planting immediately upon onset of rains to optimise the growing season.
2. Strengthen access to quality seeds and planting materials, particularly for vulnerable farmers, to support timely planting and better crop establishment.
3. Promote water conservation practices such as water harvesting and moisture retention techniques to mitigate the impacts of future dry spells.

Advocacy Recommendations:

1. Advocate for local governments to expand agricultural extension support, focusing on advice for delayed planting and moisture management practices.
2. Push for timely provision of subsidised inputs, especially seeds and fertilisers, targeting farmers in areas heavily affected by dry conditions.
3. Support efforts to scale up humanitarian assistance in Karamoja and other vulnerable regions to cushion households during the critical planting period.

REFERENCES:

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- [3] Uganda Bureau of Statistics. (2024c). National Population and Housing Census 2024 – Final Report. <https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/National-Population-and-Housing-Census-2024-Final-Report-Volume-1-Main.pdf>
- [4] Food and Agriculture Organization. (2024). Uganda. <https://www.fao.org/hand-in-hand/hih-IF-2024/uganda/en>





About Advocacy Coalition for Sustainable Agriculture (ACSA)

ACSA is a legally registered national network of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) which works with smallholder farmers to promote sustainable agriculture, agricultural market development, and environmental conservation and undertakes research and advocacy. ACSA has membership of 29 CSOs spread country wide in 46 districts with Mission “to Empower civil society organizations (both church and non-church actors) working with smallholder farmers to advocate for favorable agrarian policy environment for sustainable communities” and a Vision of “Smallholder farmers living in a Sustainable Environment”. ACSA’s focus areas are; Advocacy and Lobbying, Research and documentation, Capacity building of member organizations, Capacity building of ACSA secretariat, Networking and partnership Building, which are undertaken under the overall Goal of: **“Relevant agriculture policies and services for Small Holder Farmers (SHFs) are implemented to foster profitable sustainable agriculture enterprises”**.

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