

EDITORIAL

Cart
Uga

Planting season is here: Prepare now for the harvest you deserve

The first rains have softened the soil across Uganda. Farmers are once again stepping into their gardens with hope. Planting season is not just about putting seed in the ground. It is about preparing for the harvest long before the first shoot breaks through the soil. Too often, we celebrate the rains but neglect the planning. Then, when harvest comes, we scramble for storage, complain about low prices, or watch produce rot by the roadside. The difference between a good season and a great one is rarely luck. It is preparation.

Good harvests are built on well-prepared fields. Clearing early prevents last-minute panic when the rains intensify. Proper ploughing loosens the soil for root development, improves water infiltration and reduces competition from weeds. Where possible, farmers should break hardpans, incorporate organic matter and level their fields to prevent waterlogging. Land that is hurriedly prepared almost always produces hurried results.

Quality seed is not an expense; it is insurance. Whether planting maize, beans, coffee or vegetables, certified seed increases yield and reduces vulnerability to pests and disease. Farmers who recycle poor seed year after year should not expect miracles from the soil. Government initiatives such as the Parish Development Model and advisory support exist to help farmers access better inputs and knowledge. But information only changes lives when it is acted upon.

Every planting decision should answer one question: Who will buy this? Maize prices collapse when everyone harvests at the same time. Tomatoes flood the market and are sold at giveaway prices. Yet the same crops can fetch far more in the off-season. Farming can no longer be treated as guesswork. It must be approached as a business. That means organising in groups, exploring contract farming, studying market trends and planning sales well before harvest.

The weather is no longer predictable. A heavy downpour followed by weeks of dry spell can wipe out a season's effort. Mulching, water harvesting and small-scale irrigation are no longer luxuries; they are necessities. Healthy soil is a farmer's real bank account. Composting, crop rotation and careful

fertiliser use protect long-term productivity. A farmer who exhausts the soil without restoring it is borrowing from the future at a punishing interest rate.

Uganda continues to lose a significant portion of its produce after harvest because of poor handling and storage. Simple measures such as proper drying, improved granaries and timely harvesting can preserve both quality and profit. Harvest planning should begin on the day of planting. Where will the produce be stored? How will it reach the market? What price justifies selling, and when is it wiser to wait?

Planting season is a season of hope. But hope alone does not fill granaries or bank accounts. Preparation does. The seed selected, the soil prepared, the market studied and the storage arranged today will determine the story told at harvest time.

The issue:

Farming.

Our view:

Healthy soil is a farmer's real bank account. Composting, crop rotation and careful fertiliser use protect long-term productivity. A farmer who exhausts the soil without restoring it is borrowing from the future at a punishing interest rate.

Our commitment to you

We pledge:

- To be accurate and fair in all we do.
- To be respectful to all in our pursuit of the truth.
- To refuse to accept any compensation beyond that provided by Monitor Publications Ltd. for what we do in our news gathering and decision-making.

Further, we ask that we be informed whenever you feel that we have fallen short in our attempt to keep these commitments.

Managing Director Susan N. Nsibirwa General Manager Editoria
naki