

WHY AGRICULTURE MINISTRY IS ADVOCATING FOR MECHANISATION IN NEW DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

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The increasing migration of especially the youth from villages where farmlands are located to urban centres, in search of better income-generating activities, has left many elderly people in villages without labour to prepare their land for farming. While addressing Chinese agriculture experts recently, the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Frank Tumwebaze, said adopting new farming methods is the only way all the research technologies being developed will be fully embraced by the farming community.

He said in Africa and in Uganda in particular, families depend on traditional farming methods, including manual labour and he called for support in the promotion of smaller farm machinery that can help smallholder farmers as well as large-scale farmers to remain in production amidst labour shortages.

So far, 1,045 tractors as well as 740 single-axle tractors with accessories were purchased and distributed to commercial and large-scale farmers in different parts of the country.

To operate the machines effectively, 2,000 operators, technicians, engineers and mechanics were trained. As a result, the number of acres of land opened every year has risen from 2,206 acres to 20,744 acres per year.

For the effectiveness of the machinery, the ministry has renovated five regional agricultural mechanisation centres in Buwama (Mpigi), Agwata (Dokolo), Sanga (Kiryandongo), Kigumba (Kiryandongo) and Bungokho (Mbale).

For the Bungokho centre, civil works are at 78% completion at the time this report was made. Other centres where construction works will take place include Nabuin Centre (Nabiatuk), which is at the land acquisition

phase; Namungaiwe Centre (Iganga) at 5%; and Kigumba Centre (Kiryandongo) at 50% completion.

Construction of a further 12 mechanised irrigation pilot centres in Rwampara, Kakumiro, Lyantonde, Kalungu, Bunyangabu, Rukungiri, Bukedea, Kyenjojo, Kassanda, Wakiso, Kazo and Katakwi is also ongoing.

In some areas, the machines have also facilitated the establishment of water-for-production facilities, such as dam excavation to provide water for irrigation.

According to the Ministry of Water and Environment, through their collaboration with the agriculture ministry, the number of hectares under irrigation now stands at 22,797ha, up from 15,147ha in 2017.

An additional 1,000 micro-scale irrigation schemes and 562 individual and communal valley tanks with a combined holding capacity of 9.64 million cubic metres have been established.

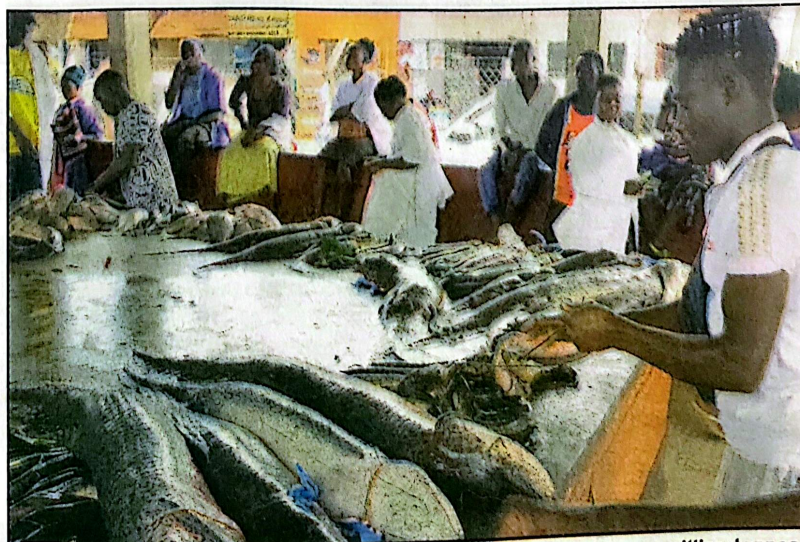
PROGRESS MADE UNDER IRRIGATION AND WATER FOR PRODUCTION

Having acquired machinery that can assist in land opening, some of the machines have been used for the provision of water by the Ministry of Water and Environment.

Through this partnership, 119 valley tanks, dams and fish ponds providing an estimated 4,302,515 cubic metres of water in various districts, primarily in the Karamoja, Eastern and Central Regions, have been constructed.

Under this arrangement, the cattle corridor districts have also been catered for. Due to recurring drought, three water bowlers were deployed to support farmers in the districts of Nakasongola, Kyenjojo and Kamwenge.

Through the Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers Programme, 568 demonstration units and 4,763 farmer-managed small irrigation systems have been



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