

Different services that farmers urgently need

Farming is not a one-man's-job, much as some people believe it is not a skilled occupation. It is not enough to purchase land and tools and begin farming. It requires a lot more to become a successful farmer. Farmers need constant guidance and consultation with different technical people in the course of their work.

It is an occupation with a lot of challenges that cannot easily be overcome single handedly. Take livestock production, for example. If a farmer chooses to rear pigs or to keep poultry, sometimes he needs the services of a veterinary doctor when the animals and birds fall sick.

It is important for every livestock farmer to have the phone contact of a veterinary doctor in the neighbourhood to consult in case of any emergence. He or she makes prescriptions of drugs and how to use them. They carry out artificial insemination and they vaccinate livestock against some killer diseases.

Farmers also need the services of agricultural extension officers to advise them about what steps to take to fight stubborn weeds, pests, and diseases. The farmers need technical advice on what fertilizers to use and

how to apply them.

They need guidance on soil conservation measures, post-harvest practices, and mitigation of climate change hazards. Agricultural extension officers usually assist farmers with seed selection and where to go for good quality planting material. Extension officers organize training workshops for farmers to sensitize them about any predicted calamities like dangerous pests, long droughts, and floods. They can be of immense help to the farmers if they want to make cooperative societies.

They give advice to farmers that want to begin new agricultural ventures such as fish farming and bee keeping



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Farmer's Say

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which were not much practiced in Uganda in the past. They may also train the farmers how to keep farm records.

The farmer needs the services of mechanics who can repair farm tools and machines. Water pumps, spray pumps, wheelbarrows and trucks sometimes get issues that are beyond the farmers' capacity to fix. Some farmers have to hire machinery such as tractors or to survey land and plan its usage and agricultural extension officers are there to assist them if requested.

Farmers need banking services. Banks do lend money to some farmers to use for buying inputs and pay back the borrowed money after selling their farm products.

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