

Projections on cotton production are illogical and misleading

I read the Harvest Money pullout of December 29, 2015 and was surprised to learn that the Prisons boss, Dr. Johnson Byabashaija, was comfortable with the prisons' plan for cotton production. The headline of the article was, "Uganda Prisons Service targets to produce one trillion bales of cotton annually". First, according to Byabashaija, Government has in the current financial year, allocated sh39m for cotton growing. This alone makes me wonder how a paltry sh39m could constitute something positive to talk about!

From the article, if it is to be believed, an acre would yield 1,200kg or at worst 800kg. Let us take the middle ground of 1,000kg

yield per acre. To ease our calculations let us also agree that a bale is equivalent to 226kg; implying that from an acre one would produce four bales in a season. Therefore, to produce one trillion bales, the Uganda Prisons Service will require 250 billion acres or 390, 625,000 sq km of land. Now remember that the total land area of Uganda stands at 241,551 sq km. Moreover, land alone including mountains, forests and towns accounts for 200,523 sq km. So, how did Byabashaija compute the figure of one trillion bales of cotton? The best we can do is to assume that he was misquoted.

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