



Profitable. Traders pack cassava for sale in Lira District last week. Many farmers are reaping big from growing cassava in the district. PHOTO BY TOBBIAS JOLLY OWINY

Nwoya cassava ordinance pays off

Reaping. Nwoya District leaders passed a by-law requiring residents to plant cassava on two acres of land in 2013 to fight famine and household poverty. Four years later, the district is a cassava growing hub.

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NWOYA. In 2013, Nwoya District local government passed an ordinance that required every household to grow at least an acre plantation of cassava.

The passing of the ordinance was intended to promote food security to fight biting famine in the area.

Little did the local leaders know that their ordinance would in four years, see the district become a cassava growing hub in northern Uganda.

One of the cassava dealers, Mr Lawrence Opiru, who sales cassava in Apac District, says traders buy an acre of cassava plantation at between Shs1.8m and Shs2m. He adds that a sack of raw cassava costs about Shs50,000.

"I am able to get between Shs2.4m and Shs3.1m from the acre that I have purchased from a farmer," Mr Opiru boasts

"Over the years, we have been getting cassava from Apac District but Nwoya District is the new cassava destination," he says.

Ms Jacky Auma, a businesswoman, who sells cassava in Lira Town, says she often buys a sack of cassava at

between Shs60,000 and Shs80,000 and gets about Shs130,000 after sales. Ms Auma boasted that on daily basis, she averages sells two sacks.

"I was formerly dealing in tomatoes but I decided to venture into cassava trade since there is already a supply in Nwoya and a ready market here in Lira," Ms Auma says.

Mr Patrick Okello Oryema, the Nwoya District chairperson, says when the leaders passed the ordinance, they had to first sensitise residents about the importance of growing surplus cassava, which was well received.

"Besides the ordinance, we compelled every sub-county to make by-laws on the same and we are very happy, the people welcomed it. A preliminary survey early this

year showed that every household, on average, has a two-acre cassava plantation," Mr Oryema says.

"Whereas cassava, rice, potatoes, beans, peas and millet are the components that a family is required to produce, the survey prioritised cassava growing. Subsequently, Kochilii, Kochigoma, Longulu, Purongo, Anaka and Latoro sub-counties have been identified as the leading sub-counties in cassava growing," he explains.

"The influx of these buyers for our cassava means we must even work harder since it is fetching our farmers a lot of money. Yesterday I was in Lutuk and Kochigoma and I was impressed by the rate at which trucks ferried cassava destined for Arua, Kitgum, Lira, Apac, and other districts in the region," Mr Oryema added.

Speaking about the benefits of growing cassava in surplus, Mr Jackson Okwera, a farmer in Kal, Teolam, Alero Sub-county, asserts that he has been able to build a permanent house for himself and also pay fees for his five siblings.

"It has helped me to do a number of things and our NUSAF group alone has 61 acres of cassava that awaits marketing in November," Mr Okwera says.

He explains that he has been growing cassava since 2012 when he first planted two acres and he earned Shs7m, which cash enabled him to construct a permanent house.

He now hopes to get Shs15m from

Voices



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"We have the capacity to produce beyond demand because we have the land and the manpower. All we need is to rally government to support our people with improved breeds of cassava cuttings," SIMON OYET, NWOYA COUNTY MP

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the four acres that are to be harvested next month.

In a bid to add value to cassava growing business, a processing plant- Bukona Agro processing Ltd is being built in the district to process cassava.

The construction of the starch processing plant means a better market for the large quantity of cassava that has been grown in the district after the company last year signed an agreement with the district leaders.

Nwoya District now takes over from Apac District as the leading cassava growing district in northern region.

For the past two years, cassava production in Lango sub-region sharply fell after widespread bacterial and viral infection that pushed many farmers out of cassava production.

Mr Simon Oyet, the Nwoya County MP, says "We have the capacity to produce beyond demand because we have the land and the manpower. All we need is to rally government to support our people with improved breeds of cassava cuttings," he says.

CASSAVA GROWING

Benefits. Speaking about the benefits of growing cassava in surplus, Mr Jackson Okwera, a farmer in Kal, Teolam, Alero Sub-county, asserts that he has been able to build a permanent house for himself and also pay fees for his five siblings.

50,000

AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT A FARMER IS PAID ON AVERAGE FOR A SACK OF CASSAVA IN NWOYA DISTRICT.