Long dry season, schools re-opening affects bean prices

The country has been experiencing a dry spell since the last rains in November last year. This has had an impact of the market for major staples such as beans. **Tom Brian Angurini** writes

Beans are a regular fixture in the diet of most Ugandans homes and on the menu in institutions such as schools, hospitals and prisons.

But as the prices of beans continue to rise due to effects of the dry season, it is becoming hard for both traders and consumers. The former to transact business and the latter to buy.

A case in point is Kabusu market in Rubaga Division, Kampala. A kilo of yellow beans is between Shs3,000-Shs3,200 while Nambale beans are in the range of Shs2,800-Shs3,000 while the Masavu type has the highest price at Shs3,800-Shs4,000. Others such as white beans go for Shs3,500 and Kanyebwa at Shs3,700.

According to Mama Yanga, a trader there, the reason why they are selling Masavu expensively is because it is good quality and does not contain dirt and stones so one does not go through the hassle of sorting.

At the wholesale level, a 50-kilogramme bag goes for Shs380,000.

The trader usually buys the beans from Kafumbe Mukasa, Owino and Kisenyi markets. Most of them come from Kabarole, Kasese, Kibaale, Mubende and Kabale districts.

Generally, the business is now slow as there are fewer customers during this period.

Also, the price of beans has gone up because of long dry season which has destroyed the crop in the gardens. On the other hand, rising fuel prices push up cost of transportation.

Barbra Naomi, a retail trader in Nakawa market, says they buy their beans from wholesalers who get them from Kiryandongo District.

They have been selling a kilo at Shs3,000 since the festive period. Before that, the price fluctuated at Shs2,500-Shs2,800.

She predicts that prices will rise further to Shs3,500 as schools re-open in February.

The contributing factor will be schools purchasing such food items in bulk. This leaves those who buy a sack or less to bear the brunt of scarcity.

In Kabalagala market, Precious Namara, a trader, sells a kilo of beans at her shop for Shs2,900-Shs3,000 depending on the type.

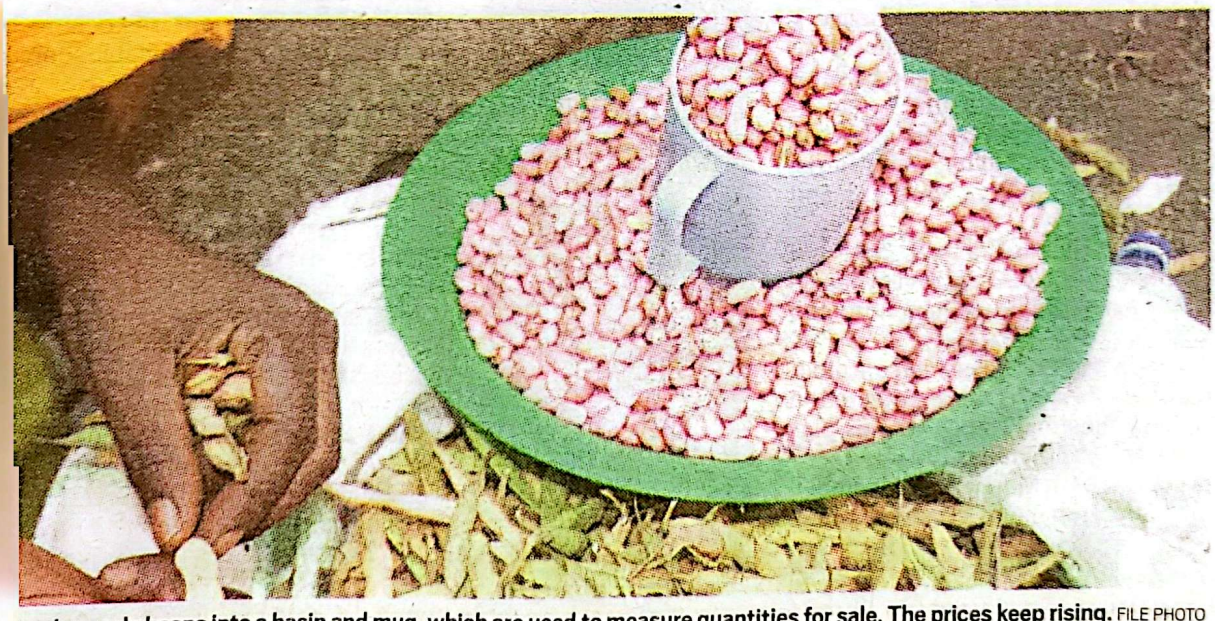
The one she sells at Shs2,900 is what is bought wholesale at Shs120,000 a sack while the type sold at Shs3,000 is at Shs135,000 a sack.

She adds that most consumers prefer the one at Shs2,900 which they view as being cheaper yet there is only a Shs100 difference.

According to her, business has slowed since the end of the festive season as the customers tend to buy in lesser quantities as they have lower purchasing power.

4,000

THE HIGHEST PRICE IN SHILLINGS FOR A KILOGRAMME OF BEANS



A trader peels beans into a basin and mug, which are used to measure quantities for sale. The prices keep rising. FILE PHOTO

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