

Farmers earn more from soybeans, cassava

Farmers increase income by making bagiya from soybeans and cassava, writes Fred Muzale.

Few farmers know that making bagiya snacks by adding value to soybean and cassava flour is a profitable business.

Because of this, many farmers, who grow cassava and soybean, sell it without adding value to the produce, and hence earn little.

However, Henry Matovu, a farmer and resident in Kabimbiri village, Kaswato sub-county in Mukono District has discovered that he can earn twice from his produce, when he makes bagiya snacks from his cassava and soybeans.

The 50-year old Matovu says, he has been making bagiya snacks since 2000. "Previously I would grow cassava and soybean on my five-acre piece of land and sell them to buyers who would pay me peanuts. I got frustrated and went to Iganga Town where I got training in how to make bagiya snacks from an Arab-African man," he says. Tony Kasujja of Matugga is another farmer who earns double from soybean. Kasujja says he embraced value addition after attending a workshop



Matovu (C) and his employees displaying the product. PHOTO BY FRED MUZALE

organised by Prof Charles Kwesiga of UIRI in 2016. "UIRI provided everything I needed to start this processing venture. I used to sell a kilogramme of soybeans at Shs3,000 but today I earn about Shs6,000 from the same kilogramme," says Kasujja who entered into a partnership with Vishal Anjali to process bagiya and other snacks such as muffins and cakes.

Process

Kasujja explains that he roasts

the soybean before taking it to a mill machine, where he is charged Shs300 per kilogramme. The dry cassava is also milled into cassava flour. He buys wheat flour and two kilogrammes of ghee and salt.

He mixes the cassava and soybean flours. He also adds some little wheat flour. He then gets clean water in which he adds common salt and melted ghee.

The salt should neither be too much or very little, he stresses. The mixed flour is then put in the water

12m

AVERAGE PROFITS IN SHILLINGS MATOVU MAKES PER MONTH

and kneaded properly into light dough. When the dough is ready, it is then placed onto a plastic plate with many holes. While here, it pressed using hands to go through the holes to form elongated pastes.

The pressing process is carried out on top of a frying pan with already boiling cooking oil. That is to say, the elongated paste drops directly into the boiling cooking oil and is deep fried. The frying takes about five minutes and fried noodles are removed.

It is then pressed onto a holed plate so that the cooking oil drains out. After this it is put into a store to cool and then packed in polythene bags. Kasujja reveals that he packs bagiya snacks in strips of 13 packs. He sells the 13 packs of bagiya at a wholesale price of Shs5,000 and in return the traders sell each pack at Shs500 and make a profit of Shs1,500 from each strip.

CHALLENGES

Matovu says the biggest challenge he faces is the high cost of cooking oil with a 20 litre Jerry can now at Shs100,000. This, he says, reduces his profits. He also points out that the prices of the ingredients are ever increasing hence reducing his profit margin.

ACHIEVEMENTS

According to Matovu he has been able to build a good house and also buy more land on which he has plan to grow more cassava.

Sales

Matovu who also processes the bagiya says in a week he makes earns Shs3m and in a month he makes Shs12m. However, when he deducts all the expenses he remains with about Shs8m as profits.

Market

He sells his product to supermarkets and retail shops in Mukono, Kayunga, Luweero, Kampala and Wakiso districts. He sells twice a week. To transport his product, he bought a van which he uses to take the snacks to his customers.