

280,000 coffee farmers in Busoga decry lack of market

Justification. The farmers say the company, which took over their union, is more interested in storage of maize and sorghum and not coffee.

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JINJA. More than 280,000 coffee farmers in Busoga Sub-region are stranded, saying Agroways Limited, which took over Busoga Growers Cooperative Union (BGCU), lacks capacity to address their market needs.

BGCU was established in 1954 with the aim of bringing coffee farmers in one pool, increasing their productivity, bargaining power and offering market penetration. However, due to mismanagement, the union was in 2015 acquired by Agroways Limited.

Now, farmers say Agroways spe-

cialise in providing storage facilities for cereals rather than promoting coffee growing, the main aim of BGCU.

According to the farmers, Agroways does not help them during the post-harvest period and that it has for the meantime restricted its activities to Buwenge.

Mr Isaac Kasadha, a coffee farmer in Namulesa, Mafubira Sub-county, says they are missing BGCU.

"Agroways deals mainly in barley, maize and a bit of sorghum. The trickle-down effect to the farmers is greatly compromised because the area communities were into coffee production, which Busoga Growers used to store in bulk," says Mr Kasadha.

"Also, collective bargaining BGCU on behalf of the small holder farmers had led to their economic empowerment since they got the best prices out of their produce," he adds.

ABOUT UNION

In its hey days, Busoga Growers Cooperative Union owned a number of commercial and residential houses in Jinja, a coffee processing plant in Namulesa on the outskirts of Jinja and a cotton ginny in Kaliro District. The assets have since been sold off.

ting large scale farmers who sell in bulk while small scale farmers are at the mercy of middlemen who sell to the company.

Mr David Wankiya, 59, a resident of Bufluula, Mafubira Sub-county, Jinja District, says the acquisition of the union by Agroways is a setback to farmers.

"Can you believe this union was supplying coffee to then Coffee Marketing Board premises at Bugolobi?" he says.

Mr Joseph Oryama, the manager of the Agroways plant at Namulesa, admits that they are more into storage of grains than coffee.

"While Busoga Growers mainly concentrated on coffee, Agroways is more into storage of grains, notably maize and sorghum. We have about 3,000 tonnes of maize stored in four

briefly

Alcohol ban issued

JINJA: Jinja District authority week banned the sale and consumption of alcohol in bars before 10pm. The resolution was passed at a council meeting presided over by speaker, Mr Michael Musinguzi. The councillors argued that the consumption of alcohol was a major cause of laziness and culpability in the people's property. The council also found that the hours will be reduced. [A...]

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