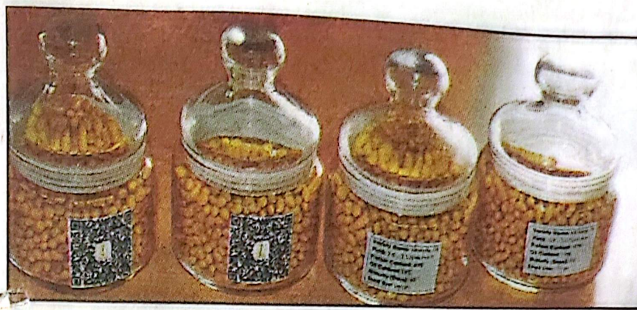




Some of the new high-yielding varieties such as Maksoy 7N for soybeans under the programme

HOW NATIONAL OILSEEDS PROJECT IS CURBING VEGETABLE OIL IMPORTS

BY PROSSY NANDUDU

Uganda has been relying on vegetable oil imports valued at \$300m annually, but through the National Oilseeds Project (NOSP), this is set to change.

The project is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and the Ministry of Local Government, with support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development (OFID). It has embarked on farmer mobilisation through co-operatives to grow oil palm fruits in Uganda, so as to process the vegetable oil within the country.

Implemented across nine sub-regions – Karamoja, Teso, Bugisu, Bukedi, Busoga, Mid-Western, West Nile, Acholi and Lango – covering 81 districts, NOSP has invested in productivity, input systems, market development, research, infrastructure and financial inclusion.

Although the target is to reach 4,600 farmer groups and 120,000 households, over 70,000 smallholder households have already been reached. To support the farmers in growing the oil seeds, 162 motorcycles have been distributed to extension workers across 81 districts to improve service delivery. Climate-resilient seed has been distributed among the farmers, including drought-tolerant seed varieties. From the distributed seed – for soybeans, for example – yield per acre has increased from 300 to 600 kilogrammes, while groundnut production has increased from 400 to 700kg/acre and sesame from 200 to 500kg/acre.

For quality seed, the project also supported the development of new high-yielding varieties such as Maksoy 7N for soybeans and NARONUT 3R, 4R and 5R for groundnuts, while sesame and sunflower breeding programmes have been taken to multi-location trials.

To ease access to seed from breeders, 200 Local Seed Businesses have been established, multiplying seed across 81 districts.

