

A farmer (R) in Omoro District runs the soybean threshing machine PHOTO JULIUS OCUNGI.

Oil seeds improve farmers incomes

Beatrice Akumu has never looked back since she abandoned rice farming for oil seeds such as soybeans and sunflower, writes JULIUS OCUNGI.

Beatrice Akumu, a resident of Agwayugi Parish in Parabongo Sub-county, Amuru District, has been growing rice for more than 15 years. However, come harvest time, she said the returns were always disappointing.

"My family has been growing rice for years, although we always anticipated getting bigger returns, we were always disappointed with the harvests since our crops sometimes are affected by sunshine," Akumu said.

Journey

In 2013, Akumu and her husband, abandoned rice for soybean and sunflower after joining a village group *Gang Ber Ki Mon*, where she was taught oil seed farming.

Sh3.2M

MONEY AKUMU EARNED ON HER FIRST ATTEMPT IN OIL SEEDS FARMING

The group basically encourages the growing of sesame, sunflower, soybeans and groundnuts.

"My family did not know that soybeans and sunflower were marketable and high value crops. Our first attempt was towards the end of the year in 2013, we planted soya beans and sunflower on two acres of land and after harvest, we got 11 bags from each of the crops," she said.

She said the first harvest earned them Shs3.2m after selling soybeans and sunflowers seeds as well as cooking oil processed from sunflower.

Akumu said to date, she grows vegetable oil seed crops adding that the proceeds from farming have enabled her pay school fees for her children besides buying a plot of land.

Vicky Ajok, is another successful farmer whose venture into growing vegetable oil seed crops has given her hopes to return to school next year.

Ajok completed her O-Level education at King James Secondary School in Lira District, but could not further due to school fees challenges.

Frustrated, she returned to her village in Acet Trading Centre, Lalogi Sub-county, Omoro District where she joined Pur Ber youth group a village youth farming group.

"After training, I took to soybean farming," said Ajok.

She noted after three months, she harvested her soybeans and got eleven bags (1,030kilogrammes) of soybeans, which she sold to Equator Seeds Ltd at Shs3,000 a kilogramme adding that she realised Shs3m from the sales.

Investments

Alex Okeny, the chairperson of *Pur Ber* youth group, said over the last two years, the group has succeeded in acquiring numerous agro-inputs. He noted that they were able to purchase 10 motorised sprayers at Shs3m, two maize threshers and one soybeans thresher machine at Shs21million. Okeny says the group is able to raise Shs20,000 daily by hiring to farmers the soybean and maize thresher machines.

"We have received training in saving money, been trained on how to save money, our village saving group has helped in transforming the livelihood of farmers, particularly youth," said Akeny.

SOYBEANS FACTS

Control weight

Soybeans have been known to suppress the appetite, helping people eliminate the chances of overeating that leads to obesity and other health related risks. Also, soybeans provide considerable amounts of protein, which can lead to weight gain when taken in large quantities. The weight obtained from soybeans could protect the individual from chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes.

Improve sleep

Soybeans have a high content of magnesium, which is a mineral that is directly linked to improving the quality, duration, and tranquillity of sleep. Soybeans also help regulate the metabolism, to help reduce sleep disorders and the occurrence of insomnia.

Improving oxygenation

Soybeans are rich in copper and iron. Both are essential for the red blood cell formation. Increased red blood cells increases oxygen to the cells.

Organic.com

trending now> SOLAR MILK PASTEURISER TO PROLONG MILK SHELF LIFE

A new milk preserving technology using a solar milk pasteuriser for smallholder farmers seeking to minimise milk losses along the marketing chain especially in the arid and semi-arid lands has been developed by the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation.

The new technology will help milk farmers and business vendors prolong the shelf life of milk and hence improve market- ability and generate more income.

Milk marketing is an important income earning opportunity for people in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) of Kenya.



For a long time, farmers have been using limited firewood to boil the milk hence placing intense pressure on the forests and destroying the environment.

The solar milk pasteuriser consists of a flat-plate water heating solar collector and a stainless steel cylindrical milk container. Water in the solar collector is directly heated by the sun and the hot water produced used for pasteurising milk.

According to Marsabit KALRO officer F. Wayua, the abundant solar energy in ASALs can be used to pasteurize milk.

A simple solar milk pasteuriser can be made locally with the aid of jua kali artisans.

The materials required for fabrication include a flat plate solar collector, a stainless steel cylindrical tank, connecting pipes& valves and insulating materials (fiber glass, cotton, wool and saw dust).

The materials can be obtained from native hardware shops close to the farmers' residence.

The device is recommended for producers and milk traders in arid pastoral areas as they have limited access to grid electricity but have plenty of solar radiation.

Milk pasteurisation makes milk safe for human consumption besides extending the its life shelf.

CamScanner