

DISASTERS SUCH AS FLOODS AND LANDSLIDES MAY OCCUR, RESULTING IN LOSS OF LIVES AND PROPERTY

By Gerald Tenywa and Desire Amanya

# Farmers told to plant, March-May season expected to be favourable

The showers in different parts of the country is part of the early onset of the March-May rainy season which is likely to be favourable for farming activities across the country, according to Dr Festus Luboyera, the executive director of the Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA).

Luboyera advised farmers to prepare for early planting, saying the rain will become established in most parts of the country in March. He said farmers should procure agro-inputs ahead of the favourable planting season.

The rain in most parts of eastern and northern Uganda is expected in early March.

"There is an increased probability for near normal rainfall over much of Uganda, except the western sector of the country which is expected to receive normal to above normal rainfall," Luboyera said.

He was speaking yesterday at the Uganda Media Centre in Kampala as he presented the seasonal climate outlook for March-May of this year.

Luboyera also said: "It should be noted that the onset of the seasonal rain is expected to be characterised by severe thunderstorms and hailstorms over several parts of the country."

### What farmers should do

Luboyera said farmers should start securing inputs and prepare the gardens early to allow timely planting.

**Godfrey Mujuni, the manager of data centre and applied meteorology at UNMA, Lillian Nkwenge, the principal public relations officer and Luboyera after a press conference at the Uganda Media Centre yesterday.**  
Photo by Wilfred Sanya



In all regions, farmers have been advised to plant long maturing crops such as millet, sorghum, rice, maize, cassava and sweet potatoes. He also said they should plant quick-maturing crops such as legumes, root tubers and vegetables.

Luboyera advised farmers to use soil and water conservation

practices such as digging trenches, mulching, minimum tillage (ripping, raised beds, planting basins) and enhanced surveillance of crop gardens for pests and diseases.

In addition, he said farmers should carry out good agronomic practices (proper spacing, fertiliser usage and weeding). He advised farmers

to plant livestock pasture-fodder at the onset of the rains, deworming and moving livestock to higher grounds to prevent foot rot as well as pneumonia.

He said farmers should harvest water using ditches and trenches that do not require a lot of money. In addition, rainwater harvesting could also include dams and valley tanks

for livestock and sustaining crop production.

### Disaster management

Luboyera said as the season progresses, disasters such as floods and landslides may occur. This may result in loss of lives and property. He also highlighted strong gusty winds and lightning thunders that are

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He particularly cited mountainous areas as some of the sites where disasters are expected to occur.

"The disaster committees at sub-county and district levels should immediately report any emerging incident associated with weather and climate hazards to the concerned authorities." They should also call the National Emergency Co-ordination and Operations Centre, Office of the Prime Minister on toll free line 0800177777."