

Govt should give coffee attention it deserves

After reading the comment about the importance of coffee in economic development in this paper recently, I add that coffee has been the largest export crop and second foreign exchange earner in the country for the past two decades. But given all this contribution, coffee has not been accorded critical attention. The government looks timid and the UN is committed to overhauling the sector despite written ideal plans of each produc-

tive target of 20 million bags by 2020. The plan is still valid, but the prevailing situation characterised by lack of practical commitment renders it unideal.

Increasing coffee production does not start with closing substandard coffee factories. Rather, by devising strategic practical plans to counteract the unsupported on farm agronomic practices such as poor and less productive seedlings, pests and diseases, lack of fertilizers and

by extension farmer's ignorance.

Uganda has five million coffee farmers each with an average of 0.33ha. These farmers produce an average of 370kgs/ha against experimental yield of 3,500kg giving a yield gap of 3130kg. This means that if government supports coffee farmers, we can produce 50 million metric tonnes in four years time.

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