

Small farmers get govt agro loans, insurance

By Prossy Nandudu

Small scale farmers who have been having trouble getting loans to buy farm inputs can now access credit for it from Rabbo bank.

This was revealed by Carol Kakooza Kyazze, head of an agricultural information service project code-named, MUIIS which is partnering with the bank to identify the beneficiaries of the loans.

MUIIS, which is Market-led User owned ICT4 Agriculture Information service, provides a number of services which include agro-insurance, weather information, market information and good farming practices to the farmers. The beneficiaries are farm organisations registered with the MUIIS service bundle.

The loans for agro-inputs were added to the services this year during the first planting season.

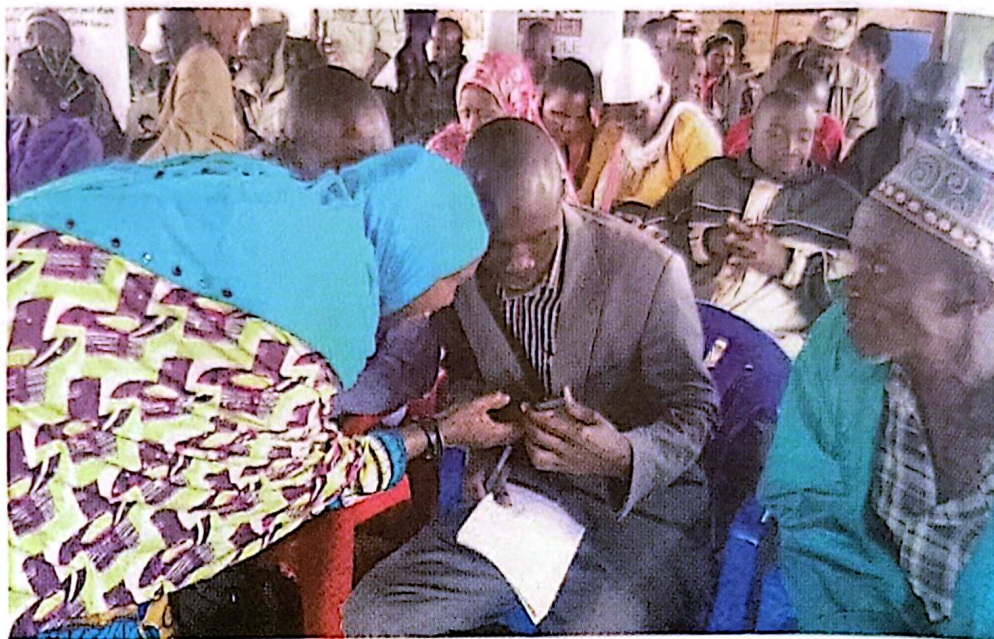
Kyazze, was speaking on Tuesday during the function in Lwengo district to pay out insurance compensations to 41 farmers whose crop failed due to the dry spell last year.

The farmers who were paid were in Kigaragi LC1 in Kasambya, Lwengo district.

A total of 220,000 farmers in 52 districts who are registered with MUIIS, have been earmarked for compensation. Some have already received their money.

Loans

Speaking about the loans, Kyazze said the farmers have been constrained in getting financial help but with these loans, they can produce and pay back when they harvest their crops. At least 5,000



Farmers checking their phones for a payment message at a meeting in Lwengo

farmers have already applied to get the inputs.

Rabbo Bank has injected sh1b which will afford farmers with agro-inputs such as fertilisers, seeds and storage.

She explained that the smallest farmer should have an acre of cultivated land for which they would get inputs worth sh200,000.

The largest five acres, which would get inputs worth sh1m.

"We are channeling these funds through the actual inputs to ensure that they are used for the right purpose," Kyazze said.

The farmers access the inputs through identified genuine suppliers of the selected products," she added.

How insurance works

MUIIS which is supported by the Netherlands Government through CTA, its organisation that supports rural agriculture

BETWEEN THE LINES:

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transformation in Africa and the Caribbean, is praised by the beneficiary farmers.

Another Netherland's organisation, the Environmental Analysis and Remote Sensing (EARS) to collect data from the farmers' fields and calculate the loss due to drought.

EARS data analyst Joost Van der Woerd said: "We use satellite data to look at the fields, analyse how dry the area is, how much rain there is, then calculate the loss and how much should be paid to a farmer."

He added that the sum

insured for each acre is sh290,000. Van der Woerd said while the calculations are done in the Netherlands, the Government of Uganda pays the affected farmers through the Agro Insurance consortium.

Farmers respond

Godfrey Mayambala, the chairperson Zirowe Agali Awamu Farmers Association said the insurance package has restored hope to farmers.

"We have been trying out other insurance providers. We register but none has come back to tell us when they will pay or if we qualify or not. But through this project, we shall encourage more people to join and insure their crops," Mayambala said.

Wilson Kato who received compensation said with the sh40,000, he will buy drugs for pests.