

Cassava farmers receive sh270m for value-addition

NEBBI

By Benedict Okethwengu

The Government has announced a sh270m matching grant to each farmer group engaged in cassava growing in the West Nile region.

Stephen Ojangole from the agriculture ministry said the grants will take effect this financial year.

He said the grant is an initiative by the Government to boost the capacity of cassava producers in increasing value-addition.

Ojangole said smallholder farmers engaged in growing cassava shall also be provided with a sh680,000 cash subsidy input to enhance production through an electronic voucher system.

He said the grant is part of the \$248m Agriculture Cluster Development Project (ACDP), a six-year project supported by the Government and World Bank. The project focuses on five priority crop commodities: maize, beans, rice cassava and coffee.

The project is being piloted in five districts, with Nebbi piloting cassava, beans in Iganga, coffee in Ntungamo, Kanungu and rice in Amuru.

It aims at raising on-farm production, productivity and

marketable surplus for the selected crops.

Daisy Eresu, the officer in charge of cassava at the agriculture ministry, said it is one of the viable crops the Government is promoting in order to transform people's livelihoods.

The grant is to boost the capacity of cassava producers to increase value-addition

She said an acre of high-yielding cassava plantation will generate sh1.8m per harvest.

In the past two decades, the Government released 10 high-yielding and disease-resistant cassava varieties to boost production to meet demand, with the latest being NASE14 and NASE19.

Nebbi passed an ordinance to adopt cassava growing as a commercial crop.