

# The National Agricultural Extension Symposium

21-22 MARCH 2019

## INTRODUCTION

Uganda Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (UFAAS) together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Agricultural Extension Symposium 2019 on 21st & 22nd March 2019 at Kati-Kati Africa in Kampala, Uganda. The theme of the Symposium was *"Making Extension and Advisory services a transformative force in Uganda's Agriculture: What are the bottlenecks and game changers?"*

The objectives were to: 1) identify the game changing interventions and propose actionable recommendations to bring them to scale, 2) enhance capacities of AEAS actors (individual and organizations) to better respond to emerging needs in agriculture and rural transformation 3) deepen networking amongst AEAS actors and stakeholders, and, 4) provide a platform for youth engagement in agricultural extension. The symposium was attended by a total of 214 participants (73 females, 141 males) from over 24 organizations offering Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (AEAS).

Partners that supported the event were: Sasakawa Global 2000; Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns; Makerere University; Farmers Media; Access agriculture; Marula Consultancy Services; USAID Feed the Future Technoserve; and the Swiss Agency for development and Cooperation (SDC).

## COMMUNIQUE OF THE NATIONAL EXTENSION ACTORS

### IT WAS RECOGNIZED THAT:

1. While the agricultural sector recorded a decline from 2.46 % to 24.2 % contribution to national GDP in 2016/17 and 2017/18 respectively, an agricultural commodity (coffee) was the largest export.
2. Empowering agricultural extension services is key to economic transformation in Uganda. The government has made great strides towards provision of regulatory reforms such as: the National Agricultural Extension Policy (NAEP); National Agricultural Extension Strategy (NAES); Code of ethics; improvement in the ratio of extension staff to farmers from 1:5000 in 2014/15 to 1:1800; in 2018/19; and improved access to mobility by providing 126 Vehicles and 1,061 motorcycles to Local governments for effective service delivery.



The AEAS actors who attended the National Agricultural Symposium in March 2019. The Honorable Minister Vincent Bamulangaki Sempijja graced the event

3. Despite the government efforts, there is limited attention towards the engagement of extension service providers / actors in addressing the bottlenecks and scaling up of practical game changers.
4. The promotion of the pluralistic agricultural extension has not unveiled opportunities for inclusive and profitable engagement of the bulk of the unemployed youths in the sector.

### IT WAS NOTED THAT:

5. There is inadequate emphasis on knowledge and information management systems, low levels of extension service provider capacities, inadequate funding and low levels of motivation amongst the service providers / actors with unregulated and uncoordinated pluralistic extension system. All these coupled together hinder effective service delivery.
6. There is limited funding for internet access to facilitate e-interaction between extension service providers and farmers, low levels of digital literacy among extension workers and farmers. This undermines the ability of the extension services to use ICT to broaden outreach through media.
7. The challenges of poor quality inputs coupled with the limited engagement of extension in the management of input distribution results in low yields and market related challenges for agricultural products arising from abuse and misuse of agricultural inputs. A case in point is where Ugandan horticultural products are being threatened with a ban on the EU market due to pesticide residues.

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*The Honorable Minister Vincent Bamulangaki Sempijja addressing participants*



*Some of the participants during a plenary discussion session*

## THEY WERE CONCERNED THAT:

8. While agro-industrialization offers highest promise to address the challenges of unemployment especially among the youth and reduction of the rural to urban exodus; the position of agricultural extension has not been adequately prioritized
9. The isolated extension service providers / actors have limited access to information, linkages to regional and global markets; the aging farming population; and Women disempowerment, pose a challenge of limited capacity and inability to meet the requirement for agro-industrialization. Consequently, many agro-processing factories do not have the required volumes and quality of produce to operate optimally.
10. Limited mechanization does not offer much leveraging for improved value chain maximization and profitable value chains.

## THEY CALLED UPON GOVERNMENT AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE THAT:

1. Ensure that the regulatory frameworks and policies are implemented through civic education, awareness creation and translation of policies into local languages for better understanding by all stakeholders.
2. Facilitate and speed up the process for registration and accreditation of AEAS providers in order to promote their professionalism, accountability and ethical conduct for increased efficiency and effectiveness of the agricultural extension system.
3. Lobby government to increase budget allocation to extension work; to increase the facilitation of underfunded e-learning, farmer institution

development and scaling up of innovative problem solving models especially with self-financing component

4. Develop the capacity of the Extension Service Providers / actors through facilitated Private-Public Partnerships and providing cutting edge Information, knowledge and skills towards innovative and demand driven agricultural extension service models.
5. Ensure that the school curriculum has appropriate content validated by the extension officers and higher technical authorities in addition to earlier extension exposure of students in their education stages.
6. Train extension service providers through Training of Trainers to scale up use of e-agriculture. The e-extension component should be evaluated during appraisal as part of the job description in extension service provision so that it is part of their ToRs not as an added responsibility.
7. Prioritize youth engagement in agricultural extension through supporting role models and champions to encourage youth engagement in all stages of the agricultural value chains and their empowerment in use of mechanized equipment as this provides a great opportunity to absorb youths' in the sector.
8. Test and scale promising game changing models such as: Farmers organized in clusters based on key commodities and applying innovative climate smart business models with a self-financing component for sustainable effective agricultural service delivery.
9. As a major game changer, working closely with communities to promote socio-cultural transformation of the mindset, gender norms and attitudes.

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