

Govt asked to promote innovations in farming to fight climate change

By: Prossy Nandudu

Government has been asked to increase the promotion of innovations and technologies in agriculture to address the challenge of food security as effects of climate change continue to manifest in agriculture.

The call was made by the chairman of the Africa Innovations Institute (AfrII), Prof. George William Otim Nape, during a press conference last week.

Currently, the agriculture sector is grappling with the effects of climate change such as reducing soil fertility, changing rainfall patterns, and increase in temperature, among others.

Low soil fertility leads to low yields, increase in temperature leads to the drying of seed, evaporation of moisture from the soil increase pests and diseases among others.

According to Nape, one of the innovations that will help farmers get higher yields is through the collection of data about the soils in

Butambala soils lack most of the nutrients needed for production, which calls for interventions to make the soil fertile

the country to find out their fertility status.

This is being done under vital signs project stationed at AfrII, where research scientists are using the technologies such as GPS mapping to establish status of soils and their fertility levels to have information that will guide farmers on what to do with their soils.

Stephen Kwesiga, a bio-physical

scientist at AfrII said they have so far mapped six landscapes of Kisoro, Butambala, Mbale, Otuke, Budongo and Yumbe to get information on the status of soils.

Information collected will be given to the Government and policy makers for action and the farmers in need of such information.

"When we collect soils, we analyse the quality, fertility, nutrient content and even advise on what kind of crops to plant, nutrients that are lacking and advise how to make them better," Kwesiga said.

Out of the collected samples according to Kwesiga, Butambala soils lack most of the nutrients needed for production, which calls for interventions to make the soil fertile and more productive again, he added.

Such soils can be revived with the best agriculture practices such as the use of organic and inorganic manure, planting in time, planting quality seeds, application of organic matter, fertiliser and anything that can help the soil to maintain its

fertility among others, said Nape.

Climate situation

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) higher temperatures and increasing frequency in weather-related disasters are affecting the farming communities. And yet the global population is steadily growing and is expected to reach 9.6 billion by 2050.

"To meet such demand, agriculture and food systems will need to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and become more resilient, productive and sustainable," said FAO said.

It also means reducing food losses before the final product or retail stage through a number of initiatives, including better harvesting, storage, packing, transport, infrastructure, market mechanisms, as well as institutional and legal frameworks.

This is why our global message for World Food Day 2016 is "Climate is changing. Food and agriculture must too."



Patrick Odele

NGO manager has case to answer over sh1.5b, court rules

By Edward Anyoli

The Anti-Corruption Court has ordered the former finance manager of African Centre for Global Health and Social Transformation (ACHEST) charged with embezzling sh1.5b to defend himself, after evidence was presented against him.

Justice Margaret Tibulya sitting in Kololo, Kampala yesterday ruled that Patrick Odele must explain the loss of sh1.5b that came to his possession by virtue of his employment.

"I have perused all the evidence on record. I also read all the submissions of both the defence and the prosecution. I formed a view that the accused has a case to answer on each count. He is, therefore, put on his defence," Tibulya said. Odele is to start his defence on November 7.

One of Fort Portal's oldest secondary school chokes on debts