

## Farmers register low production

**SOROTI**

By Emmanuel Alomu

Agricultural experts say non-application of fertilisers in Soroti district highly affected yields this year.

Moses Okello Eekku, the acting Soroti District Agricultural Officer, said: "Management of nutrients in the gardens is not perfect. We need to train the farmers to manage the soil fertility because our soils are becoming exhausted and we need to improve on them, by using fertilisers and manure."

Eekku has encouraged the farmers to use organic manure for small pieces of land and inorganic fertilisers for large acres of land.

Dr Patrick Eryudu, the Soroti District Production Officer, said farmers should adopt the use of organic fertilisers, to improve soil fertility.

"A farmer can get only seven bags of groundnuts from an acre which is not fertilised, compared to 10 bags from the same piece of land, if manure is used," Eryudu said.

He said farmers would realise 20-50% increase in yield if they applied fertilisers in their crop gardens.

Esther Amuso is a farmer in Soroti. She said they lack the means to buy inorganic fertilisers for their gardens.

"Due to lack of fertilisers, I harvested only a half bag of soya beans, instead of over two bags from an acre," Amuso said. Julius Akuru, a farmer in Kamuda sub-county, said he has benefited a lot from his small garden, because he applies chicken and goat droppings as well as cow dung.

Daniel Eigu, the Kamuda LC3 chairperson, said many people cannot afford fertilisers at sh150,000 per bag. Enos Enock Egriru, the Lale parish chief, promised to ensure that farmers are educated on the use of fertilisers.

## MBARARA

By Adolf Avoreka

Iovans Tunwine Kahara, a resident of Mabira village in Rwanyamahembe sub-county, Mbarama district, is a happy woman. With a new dam in her area, she says she will grow crops all-year round. And she is not alone.

Farmers in Rwanyamahembe sub-county are optimistic that the sh10b Mabira dam will lead to increased production from their gardens.

Tunwine said once the dam is handed to the community, they will plant high value vegetables, such as cabbages, green pepper and tomatoes throughout the year, unlike before, where they would plant in only two seasons in a year. The Government, through the water and environment ministry, is constructing the dam.

Tunwine, however, noted that the Government needs to sensitise farmers on how irrigation farming can be practised in order for them to register economic transformation.

"When the Government finally hands over this project to us, our livelihoods will not remain the same," Kato Kwodide, a farmer in Mabira village, said.

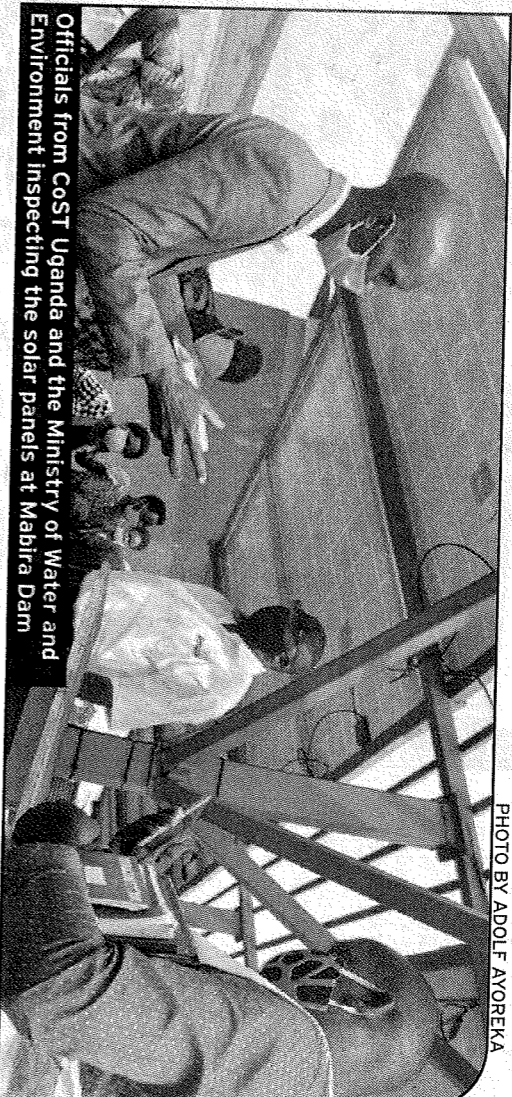
According to the project scope, the embankment on the existing water source, spillway abstraction system and a water reservoir tank for 1,200,000 litres will be constructed. The dam is expected to supply water for irrigation to over 300 households in the sub-county.

Last week, the Ministry of Water and Environment officials, in partnership with CoST Uganda, under the Office of the Prime Minister, held a community baraza at the facility, to sensitise residents on the benefits of government projects and the role of residents in ensuring sustainability of such projects.

Gilbert Sendugwa, the senior regional manager for CoST Uganda, said they do quality assurance

# Farmers to reap big from sh10b dam

PHOTO BY ADOLF AVOREKA



Officials from CoST Uganda and the Ministry of Water and Environment inspecting the solar panels at Mabira Dam

### WHAT OTHERS SAY

**MILTON MAKUBA, COUNCILLOR OF RWANYAMAHEMBE**  
I think the project will not have much impact because I have realised that it will be expensive. I cannot imagine buying water pipes to cover a banana plantation of about 10 acres with this low price of matooke. Maybe if we change and focus only on high-yielding food crops.

**PETERSON KAKURU LC3 CHAIRPERSON, RWANYAMAHEMBE**  
This is a mega project that we expect to benefit about 300 homes and we think the Government will, in the near future, extend the same to other areas. If the community welcomes it, it will increase their income.

### CHARLES RUTARO, CHAIRPERSON OF NYAMIHANGA SMALL-SCALE IRRIGATION SCHEME FARMERS ASSOCIATION

This scheme will greatly change our lives because we used to plant only sorghum and wait for eight months to harvest and get money. But with the irrigation scheme, we can farm all-year round.

process on major projects been implemented. He said the under implementation by the findings are later disseminated to Government, to ascertain whether the beneficiaries at a baraza. what was entailed in the contract Sendugwa told residents that and bills of quantities is what has the project was delayed due to a

land conflict where the water tank reservoir was to be constructed. The contract was awarded in July 2014, but actual works started in 2017. "If people had been sensitised well, then the issues of land would not have come up to delay the project. The delay increased the cost of the project from sh8b to more than sh10b. As a result, the capacity of the reservoir was also reduced from two million litres to 1.2 million litres," Sendugwa said.

He said the Government was supposed to hand over the irrigation scheme to farmers in March this year, but due to the COVID-19 lockdown, it was delayed.

The team also held another baraza at the Nyamihanga solar-powered small-scale irrigation in Bulinda sub-county, Rukungiri district, where the government last year handed over an irrigation scheme to farmers.

## Dokolo gets agric mechanisation centre

**DOKOLO**

By Peter Okiine

The Government has launched a regional agricultural mechanisation centre at Acan Owilo village in Agwata sub-county, Dokolo district. It is hoped that the centre will enhance agricultural production and productivity.

State minister for agriculture Henry Aggrey Bagire launched the regional centre on Friday. It is expected to serve northern and eastern parts of Uganda.

The heavy earth moving equipment at the centre is expected to help farmers construct or rehabilitate dams, construct

valley dams and aquaculture facilities, as well as clearing bushes and constructing farm roads.

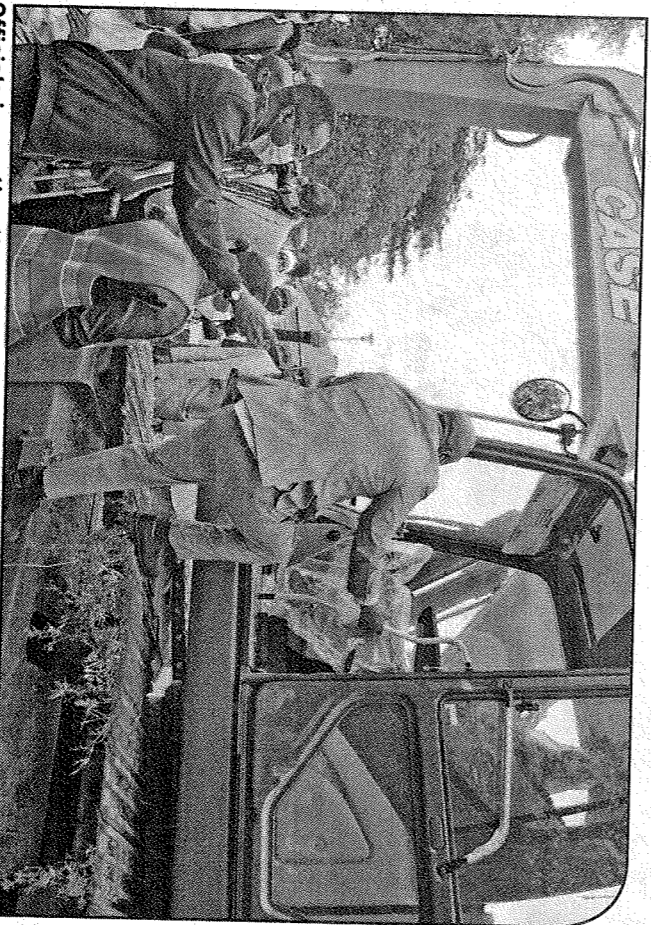
According to the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Agricultural, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Prus Wakabi Kasajja, the equipment will also be used for land grading, transportation of agricultural materials and for any agriculture-related works.

The equipment at the mechanisation centre are 10 bulldozers, 14 hydraulic excavators, three wheel loaders, three motor graders, three vibrating rollers, seven water bowsers, seven dump trucks, two low bed carriers, two hydraulic drilling rigs and three mobile workshop vans.

He said individual farmer groups, the community or institutions are expected to benefit from the machines at the centre.

The Dokolo district chairperson, Fredrick Dicken Odongo, Resident District Commissioner Lawrence Egole, MPs Felix Okoi Ogoni and Paul Amoru witnessed the commissioning of the centre. State minister for disaster Musa Eweru, who was in the district to assess the damage caused by floods, also attended the ceremony.

The district production coordinator, Dr Richard Eryang, said the centre is expected to help farmers increase production of rice and engage in commercial farming.



Officials inspecting the equipment at the mechanisation centre