Dear Readers!

Welcome to yet another edition of “The Grain News”! Due to unavoidable circumstances, we were not able to produce the August update but have merged it with the September update.

The articles in this edition cover activities that took place during the August and September. However, others are updates that affect the grains (pulses and cereals) directly or indirectly. You are all urged to provide feedback and please feel free to provide input to the next edition.

Happy reading.

Editor

Announcements:


3. TGCU Member Annual subscription for 2017: We remind you to renew your member subscription for 2017 accordingly

In Uganda, the fall army worm infestation wiped out about 12% of the produce in the last crop season. The worm is known to feed on more than 80 plant species including maize, millet, sorghum, rice and wheat, as well as legumes, cotton and pasture grass varieties like Rhodes grass, Kikuyu grass, Lucerne and others that are used as cattle feed in the country. Crops such as cotton, soybean, beans, peanut, potatoes, spinach, tomatoes, sweet peppers, cabbage and tobacco have also been found to be unsafe.

While Uganda produces close to 4 million tons of maize annually, Agriculture Minister Vincent Sempijja said that the impact of the armyworm infestation could be responsible for the loss of at least 450,000 tons of maize or $192.8 million worth of maize exports which heightens the potential loss to the economy.

Uganda Bureau of Statistics data shows that maize contributes to the livelihoods of over 3.6 million households in the country, and is a staple for over 300 million people on the continent.

Most of the affected countries were still grappling with the effects of the 2016 drought which led to widespread food shortages and starvation when the army worm struck.

According to Food and Agriculture Organization, about 18 million people in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti and South Sudan are severely food insecure following consecutive depressed rainfall leading to crop failure, widespread pasture and water shortages, reduced opportunities for rural employment, increasing livestock deaths and rising food prices. (........../cont’d on page 2)
On 5th September 2017, death robbed the nation of Mr. Omar Kassim, former chairman of the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System Authority as well as newly elected chairman of the East African Business Council. He was a board member many other organizations as well and was a big promoter of The Grain Council of Uganda. We shall miss him greatly. May his soul rest in Eternal peace.

Experts from the African Union said that Genetic plant resources should be preserved and new crop varieties developed in order to increase agricultural productivity and ensure food security. This was in Kigali during the African Union Regional Workshop on the Implementation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA).

The workshop attracted officials from African Union countries and beyond, coming ahead of the member countries’ seventh session that will be held in Rwanda from October 30 to November 3. Up to 144 countries are signatory to the treaty. The experts called for development of crops that can withstand effects of climate change and diseases in order to address rampant hunger and poverty facing the world, and Africa in particular.

Improvement in crop yields is needed to feed the growing world population projected to reach 10 billion people in 2050. One of the ways would be to address access to improved varieties that can resist climate change and disease.

Countries bound by the treaty should be able to share tested varieties instead of investing in new research whose results can come maybe after five years.


The report said climate change effects, especially drought, and violence were the main causes of increased hunger.

Africa has the highest hunger rate in the world as, on average; hunger affects one-in-four people on the continent compared to the global rate of one-in-10 people.

Please join us to welcome SeedCo as a new member to the council. The company boasts of wide range of maize seed varieties.
Coffee producers, processors and distributors who compromise the quality of the country’s leading cash crop should be held liable by law, the coffee regulator has said.

The current law, Uganda Coffee Development Authority Act 1991, according to Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA), is not broad enough to deal with the current sector challenges. That is why they want the current law replaced with the Coffee Act.

The proposed law stipulates proper crop management methods in addition to punishing those who harvest immature coffee beans and use improper drying methods, which contribute to poor quality of the cash crop.

UCDA was established by law as a public authority to:
- Promote and oversee the coffee industry, support research and promote production.
- Control the quality; improve coffee marketing to maximize foreign exchange earnings for Uganda and payments to the farmers.

Meanwhile, the new board of directors for the Authority (UCDA) has been tasked to improve coffee exports so as to enable the country to achieve its target of exporting 20 million bags of coffee by 2020.

Speaking on behalf of Government, the minister of state for Agriculture, Hon. Christopher Kibazanga said that manufacturers and distributors of agricultural machinery and technologies need to start training farmers on how to use farm equipment before selling it to them. After sale services are no longer enough, therefore before the transaction happens, farmers must be properly taught how to use the tools. This will lead to proper use of the machines as well as add value to what they do; ultimately increasing the commercial value of the commodities they produce.
For a long time, traders in Uganda have had difficulties accessing relevant information on exportation, importation and transit processes. However, this will not be so after the memorandum of understanding (MoU) that was signed recently between the ministry of Trade and Trade Mark East Africa-Uganda (TMEA-U). This will spark off the start of the implementation of a trade information portal, an initiative that has already sparked interest among private sector players. The initiative is funded by TMEA with support from its partners such as UNCTAD and the International Trade Centre to the tune of about $500,000 (Shs2 billion) for two years.

The initiative will allow the ministry to control and manage a one-stop portal and it will enhance the environment for doing business in Uganda by reducing the cost and time spent looking for the information. The trade information portal is an online platform where all information regarding export, import and transit of goods in Uganda will be availed to traders, government agencies and all interested parties for free. It will provide the traders with all the necessary information to enable them undertake the transaction on e-Single Window. And this is why the two platforms that are complementary should be integrated. Establishment of the trade information portal is provided for within the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation, which Uganda ratified and came into force on February 22, 2017.

In her remarks, Trade minister Amelia Kyambadde said that for a long time, ministry has faced challenges accessing relevant and accurate information about export and imports. The trade information portal will therefore relieve us from that pressure. She added that she would make sure that this succeeds and the Permanent Secretary would ensure that the portal is monitored and properly managed and he would ensure that all necessary information needed to enhance trade is availed, including legislation and policies that were passed.

The implementation of good agronomics practices has seen a number of farmers in Tororo district move a big step in improving household income and fight poverty in their homes.

This came as a result of continued training and support extended by Sasakawa Global 2000, an organization supporting small-holder farmer groups. Following the registered progress, the organization has rewarded the best farmer groups to motivate members to scale up the practice and train other farmers. The prizes included spray pumps, tarpaulins and pesticides and they were handed over by the organization’s program officer, Ms. Rosette Jjingo.

The group members were encouraged to carry out internal competitions in agronomic practices and build capacity of other members who wish to have their support. All the other member groups and were urged to set up a target that will enable them to perform much better as they continue to practice farming as a family business.
What is Agribusiness Congress East Africa?

The 5th annual Agribusiness Congress East Africa is a high profile business networking event that offers a 2-day conference and live outdoor exhibition on 29th and 30th November at the National Crop Resources Research Institute (NaCRRI), Namulonge -Uganda.

This event brings together key industry stakeholders from both public and the private sectors to ensure that the region is positioned to take advantage of the opportunities presented and to strengthen Africa’s agribusiness networks.

Who attends?

Featured at the event will be: government officials, large and emerging commercial farmers, financiers and the banking sector, project developers, traders and retailers, food reserve and development agencies and solution providers from East Africa as well as other African regions and the world.

What will be discussed?

Topics up for discussion in the conference will include:

- Access to affordable finance
- Fast tracking the cycle from farm to fork
- Increasing productivity
- Increasing value addition
- Commodity markets
- Quality standards to increase production value
- Infrastructure developments
- And market access regionally and internationally in view to improve intercontinental trade

Why should you choose East Africa as your agribusiness destination?

The East African market is one with over 145.5 million consumers and its agriculture is valued at more than $147 billion. There is ample opportunity to establish East Africa as the continent’s agricultural hub however; the region's agriculture sector is not evolving fast enough to meet market demands due to the lack of commercialization, mechanization and access to information.

What to expect during the 2017 event

- Industry expert speakers.
- Local and international exhibitors and sponsors.
- 2-day high level conference.
- Training workshops.
- Farmers and key buyers.
- Commodity roundtable discussions.
- Agronomy consultations.
- Machinery demos
- Crop trials

PLEASE REGISTER TO ATTEND

www.agri-eastafrica.com
Maize

In spite of the fact that the army worm continued to destroy the maize crop, the price continued to drop over the two months and this was from about Ugx 1,500/kg beginning of August, up to as low as Ugx 700/kg in September.

Both urban and rural traders generated stocks of maize which many got stuck with as they expected a drop in supply and an increase in price. However, many stoked in anticipation of big contracts. The price drop can be explained by the harvest in Western Kenya as well as the importation of maize from Mexico by Kenya.

Rwandese traders bought maize in Kamwenge; however, a bigger number camped in Mubende where they expected more maize volumes.

At the Busia border, trading was slow but there was demand for good quality as compared to lower quality maize.

Beans:

Nambale and mixed beans were the most traded commodities at the Busia border. Nambale at Ksh.67/kg (Ugx.2312), Mixed beans sold at Ksh.54/kg (Ugx.1863) and red beans at Ksh.63/kg (Ugx.2174). There was some trading for maize, rice and beans at Mutukula border.