



**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND
FISHERIES**

THE SECOND CROPPING SEASON (AUG TO NOV, 2024)

Advisory Message to Farmers

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By

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**MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES**



1.0. Introduction

- 1.1 Fellow Ugandans and most especially our distinguished farmers, I thank you for your tremendous efforts to contribute to the Socio-Economic Transformation of Uganda through the Agriculture sector amidst the increasing unpredictable weather conditions.
- 1.2 In a special way, I continue to appreciate our crops, livestock, Apiary and fisheries' farmers that have sustained production in Uganda and have supplied the food, fibre, and raw materials for own consumption, processing, for local, regional and export markets, as well as to obtain the cash requirements for the population. Uganda is generally food secure.
- 1.3 The weather conditions for the first season of the year 2024, were largely unfavourable for agricultural production. The rains were unreliable. Distribution was uneven. The rains stopped early in most parts of the country before most of the crops reached physiological maturity, especially cereals like maize. Consequently, the expected production volume of Maize is estimated to be lower than that of the previous seasons. Maize production estimate for 2023 season B, was 5.2 Million Metric tonnes. Harvesting of maize planted in the first season of 2024 is just being concluded by the farmers that planted late. Production estimates are still being compiled.
- 1.4 Due to weather distortions, the rains came earlier than expected. In some regions of Uganda, heavy showers were experienced in July and have continued to date, hence, overlapping the cropping seasons of the year 2024.
- 1.5 The purpose of this message therefore, is to remind, advise and encourage our farmers to intensify agricultural activities in this second season of the year 2024. According to the seasonal rainfall outlook for August 2024 released by the Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA) on 3rd Aug 2024, and the seasonal rainfall outlook for September to December (SOND) 2024, enhanced rainfall was expected in most parts of Northern

(Nile, Acholi, Lango and Karamoja sub-regions) and Eastern Uganda (Mt. Elgon, Bukedi, and Teso sub-regions). However, in contrast, suppressed rainfall was expected to be experienced in most parts of Southwestern, Central and Western Uganda during August 2024. As forecasted, Northern and Eastern regions of the country received fairly good rainfall in August. But Southwestern, Central and Western Uganda received low and unevenly distributed rainfall. The September, October, November, December 2024 outlook indicates more rainfall in most parts of the country. This signifies the beginning of the second season.

- 1.6 In the context of the available weather forecast therefore, the farming activities that need to be emphasized along the various value chains are explained below.

2.0. Activities for Seasonal Crops Production

2.1. Preparations for Planting

For the regions of the country that are still experiencing suppressed rainfall such as Central and Western Uganda, preparations of the seed bed (gardens) should begin before planting when the rains intensify. The ongoing rains should be used to open land, that is; to plough and replough fourteen (14) days after first ploughing (for tractor ploughing), in preparation for sowing.

Farmers in the regions that are receiving enhanced, regular and well distributed rainfall like Northern and Eastern Uganda, the second season is usually your major cropping season. You are advised to start sowing in the already prepared seed beds. These rains mark the beginning of the second season.

2.2. Planting

Planting of crops such as Cereals (Maize, Upland Rice, Sorghum, Millet), Pulses (beans, ground nuts, soya beans, peas), Root crops (Cassava, Potatoes, Yams), Vegetables (tomatoes, cabbages, onions, egg plants, pepper, amaranth) should start if not yet done at the onset of rains in August.

For those farmers that did not plant at the onset of August rains, you are advised to finalise land preparation, acquire the right inputs (seed, planting materials, fertilisers, herbicides, pesticides) from the nearby recommended stockists and plant immediately. You are advised to plant fast maturing and drought tolerant crop varieties such as Vegetables, Maize (varieties like:- WEMA-WE2115 and Champion, Bazooka, Longe-9 and Longe10UH5053, UH5051, UH5355), beans (NARO-Bean 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12 C, 15 and16) as well as drought resilient crops like Roots, Tubers and Bananas.

2.3. Management

For the farmers who planted early, you should concentrate on weeding, controlling pests and diseases.

3.0. Activities for Perennial Crop Production

3.1 Establishment

Farmers who have not yet established plantations for Perennial crops such as bananas, coffee, cocoa, tea, cashew nuts, Orchards (citrus, mangoes, vanilla,) at the onset of August rains, are advised to finalise farmland planning, land preparation, acquire the right inputs (seeds/planting materials, fertilisers, herbicides, pesticides) from the nearby recommended certified nursery operators and plant immediately.

Farmers are advised to establish perennial crops only when rains have stabilized and plant before or at the peak of the rains to avoid rotting of the seedlings.

3.2. Maintenance

Farmers who have already established perennial plantations and orchards are advised to:

- a) Prune the plantations and orchards.

- b) Make appropriate soil and water conservation structures (run off trenches, retention ditches), soil stabilisation bunds (fanya jjuus, fanya chinis), mulching, planting agroforestry trees for the required shade and legumes for soil fertility improvement.
- c) Control weeds using herbicides or through manual removal.
- d) Apply the appropriate fertilisers and manure.
- e) Identify and control pests and diseases.

4.0. Livestock

Livestock farmers are advised to:

- i. Maintain the livestock watering points such as dams, valley tanks through desilting and clearing water inlets.
- ii. Livestock farmers are advised to improve and maintain the quality of the pastures by planting legumes and grasses, weeding, manuring and pruning.
- iii. Make hay and silage for storage in preparation for the subsequent dry season.
- iv. Intensify vector and diseases surveillance as well as control.
- v. Treat and Vaccinate animals against diseases.
- vi. Seek professional advice from the nearest Veterinary Extension Officers on all matters related to livestock management.

5.0. Fisheries

5.1 The Fish farmers that are starting business are advised to:

- i. Seek technical guidance on pond site selection, pond water and soil testing, from the Fisheries Extension Officer.

- ii. Maintain the fish infrastructure (ponds, cages), ensure adequate water quality for the fishponds.

5.2 For fish farmers in areas where low rainfall is expected, the following should be noted:

- i. Ensure that reservoir ponds are established on the up-stream side to reserve enough water for the ponds.
- ii. Carefully manage water outflow to ensure there is enough water exchange while also minimizing avoidable evacuation of water from the ponds.
- iii. Do not dredge the ponds until the stocks are harvested or until water supply is assured.

5.3 For fish farmers in areas where high rainfall is expected, the following should be noted:

- i. Ensure proper drainage of the pond channels to prevent flooding and inundation of the ponds.
- ii. Build or raise the pond dykes to prevent rising water levels from reaching the ponds.
- iii. In case of fish cages, ensure that the fabrication structures and netting into the ponds enough to resist increased water volumes.
- iv. Mature fish stock should be harvested to minimize loss in case floods cause fish escapes.
- v. Slash around the ponds to control overgrown weeds and bushes which harbour predators and disease vectors.

5.4 For fishermen in general, the following should be noted:

- i. Always carry along with you, enough safety kits, notably safety/life jackets, fuel and buoys.
- ii. Ensure your fishing vessels/boats are in good seaworthy conditions.
- iii. Listen regularly to daily weather advisories delivered through electronic media statements.
- iv. Avoid overloading the boats under whatever circumstances.

- v. Farmers with mature fish in ponds should harvest to benefit from the current good fish prices. For capture fisheries, fishermen should take note of the prevailing weather conditions on the lakes and take maximum safety precautions.
- vi. Farmers are further advised always to consult the Fisheries Extension Officers.

6.0. **Record keeping**

- 6.1. Farming is a business thrives on sound and proper bookkeeping principles and maintaining good farm records. Farmers are therefore advised to record all their farming operations right from land preparations to marketing/consumption.

7.0. **Food and Nutrition Security**

- a. Farmers and the general public are advised to use the available food stocks sparingly and avoid waste in light of the forecasted enhanced rains.
- b. Plant early maturing crop varieties that are also drought-tolerant and famine-resistant food.
- c. For farmers that have not yet harvested, you are advised to observe proper harvesting and postharvest handling practices. Do not harvest and dry on bare ground. Avoid direct contact of cereals and pulses with soil. Harvest only mature crops especially cereals.
- d. Carry out proper primary processing like drying, threshing, sorting and storage.
- e. Farmers are also advised to add value to your food/produce to enhance shelf life, market access and profits.

For more details on this point, farmers are advised to contact your nearest Extension Agents-Veterinary, Fisheries, Entomology and Commercial officers.

In future, my Ministry will come up with a Cropping Calendar as a decision support tool to better guide our farmers in their farming activities.

8.0. Appeal

Please, distinguished farmers, I appeal to you to grow enough for own household consumption and for sale but after adding value.

I further urge you farmers to eat well and maintain healthy bodies. The healthier you are, the more productive you will be. I direct you farmers to produce food, feed and fibre and utilise the Natural Resources Sustainably.

I call upon you to produce massively for the population of Uganda, the Region and for Export.

I call upon extension workers, and leaders at various levels to disseminate this message extensively. In light of the changing weather conditions, several advisory messages will be disseminated from time to time. Let us work as a team to produce more safe, marketable food and fibre, for a healthy and prosperous nation.

Thank you.

For God and my Country
Kyakulaga Bwino Fred Maj. (Rtd) (MP)