

Bunyoro gets community seed bank

HOIMA

By Robert Atuhairwe

The National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), with support from Biodiversity International and Climate Change Agricultural and Food Security (CCFAS), has built a community seed bank in Hoima district.

The facility that cost sh55m, will be used for preserving indigenous seeds, so as to make them available to farmers who may need to grow a particular variety.

Dr Ambrose Agona, the director general of NARO, said the seed bank demonstrates their commitment to conserving biodiversity.

He was speaking on Saturday during the launch of the seed bank in Kibaale village, Kyabigambire sub-county. The seed bank is located about 13km from Hoima town.

"We can generate new technologies from the local varieties using biotechnology. Also, there is still scepticism that as a result of improved varieties, the traditional crop varieties would become extinct," Agona said.

Dr Sylvester Dickson Baguma, the director of research at Bulindi Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute (BUZARD), said the seed bank would ensure that a variety of seeds is conserved for posterity.

He said farmers would benefit from the seed bank by crossing their varieties with those in the facility to generate high-yielding ones that are



Dr Ambrose Agona (second-right) with officials from Biodiversity International during the launch of the community seed bank in Kibaale, Hoima district on Saturday. Photo by Robert Atuhairwe

The seed bank is expected to help farmers cope with climate change

the farmer is expected to return the same variety and the quantities he took, for sustainability.

Baguma said they had received a donation of 30 local varieties from farmers in Mutike, Kyobote, Tintina Basezi, Murungi, Kahunde, Kanyebwa and Kalyongolyongo, among other areas.

Baguma said the seed bank would benefit eight districts including Hoima, Masindi, Kibaale, Bulisa, Kikuube, Kagadi, Kakumiro and Kibaale, that constitute BUZARD

had shelves that are well maintained are at a low temperature to keep the seeds from going bad. Construction of the seed bank started in January and

ended in June. However, Baguma said they were yet to install electricity and cooling systems to ensure the longevity of seeds.

"We plan to acquire a generator to address the constant power fluctuations. Once the seeds are well maintained, they can last for even 10 years," he said.

The head of the Plant Genetic Resource Centre at NARO, Dr John Wasswa Mulumba, said farmers would be trained in the use and keeping of the seeds in the bank.

Kadiri Kirungi, the Hoima district LC5 chairperson, said the new seed bank would help tap specialised seed needs, since they taste different.

He praised the initiative, calling it a foundation for food security and agriculture transformation.

"If we are to tackle any future food challenges, we need to invest in such initiatives," Kirungi noted.

Catherine Kaija, the Hoima district agricultural officer, said the new seed bank would help farmers access a diversity of organic seeds.



UGANDA COOPERATIVE SAVINGS AND CREDIT UNION LIMITED (UCSCU)

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE 44th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) ON 28th SEPTEMBER 2018

Notice is hereby served to the members of UCSCU, and to the public, that the AGM of UCSCU will be held on **28th September 2018 at CEDAT Conference Hall, Makerere University, starting at 8:00am**

Only fully paid up UCSCU member Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) are invited to send 1 DELEGATE who MUST be a member of the Executive Committee.