

Preliminary findings about the Cassava Value chain in Buliisa, and Hoima District:

Ethical behavior and quality standards practices observed included (i) farm gate sellers educating buyers of cassava stems on the varieties they offer for sale and allowing them to replace stems that appear unhealthy or unwanted before concluding the purchase transaction; (ii) over 60% of farmers observing the respective maturity periods per



variety (about 8-9 months, though there are some tubers which could be harvested at maturity of 6 months) for a quality product; (iii) using clean water and containers to wash soil off tubers destined for the fresh market; (iv) using traditional hoes to gently pull root tubers out of the ground to minimize damage; (v) using clean knives to remove any unwanted parts on the tubers; (vi) washing and drying cassava under improved hygienic conditions such as using clean water, operating within enclosures, drying on washable surfaces like tarpaulins and sanitizing employees or visitors entering the processing area.

Unethical and poor standards practices witnessed included: (a) mixing overstayed cassava root tubers with fresh ones, (b) deliberate inclusion of unhealthy stems and root tubers in sale consignments, (c) negligence to replace worn out tarpaulins which would then let in sand /soil, vermin and grit in the course of drying.

Factors frustrating efforts to observe quality standards and ethical behavior included: (i) insufficient investment capital to pay for, - (improved) infrastructure like solar drying equipment, replace worn out tarpaulins or to pave /cement the floors of drying houses

and yards; (ii) limited access to extension services that promote ethical business behavior and quality standards; (iii) poor attitude of value chain actors to lean so much on informal trading which makes traceability very hard.

AGRI-QUEST thus recommends: (1) increase support to farmers to build low cost cassava drying facilities; (2) District local governments should include dissemination of ethical behavioral conduct & quality improvement knowledge in the district production plans and activities of extension workers; (3) local governments and farmer associations intensify the drive to include bottom of the pyramid value chain actors in to the formal business sector.

Researcher Team:

1. David Katamba, **Lead Researcher**
2. Dr. James Ssemwanga
3. Assoc. Prof. Christopher Wickert (PhD)
4. Ms. Janet Namuddu (Esq)
5. Mr. Andrew K. Seruma,
6. Mr. Denis Kikonyogo,
7. Ms. Thecla Nakibuuka,
8. Dr. Cedric M. Nkiko,
9. Ms. Elizabeth Ssemwanga,
10. Ms. Catherine K. Tindiwensi



Contact:
 Tel: +256 752794612, +256 774972532
 Email: info@agriquestuganda.com,
 Website: www.agriquestuganda.com



Strengthening
 Agribusiness Ethics,
 Quality Standards,
 & ICT Usage in
 Uganda's Value Chains

FOOD & BUSINESS APPLIED RESEARCH FUND (ARF)



A project mainly financed by:

Implemented by:



AGRI-QUEST Project description

Problem statement: There is a considerable lack of attention to these two issues in agribusiness value chains in Uganda: (i) Ethical behaviour, & (ii) Quality standards with respect to accelerating transformation, competitiveness, & sustainability of a vibrant food security program and agri-business.



Purpose: AGRI-QUEST aims at addressing a fundamental question: How can we have a better business climate in Uganda that fosters a permanent and positive gradual change in practices & attitudes in agribusiness towards ethical behaviour and quality standards in food security and agri-business initiatives?

Research methodology: AGRI-QUEST uses these engagement processes: capacity building of farmers/value chain players, wide consultations & stakeholder engagement to ensure buy-in, uptake of research outcomes and knowledge exchanges.

Impact Activities

1. Generated 7 Research Briefs, 5 Policy Brief and 1 Fact Sheet Series (available at F&BKP website)
2. Facilitated student exchange with VU University and MUBS (1 Intern, 7 master students) to finish their research guided by AGRI-QUEST methodologies

3. Facilitated, presented & participated in various agribusiness Stakeholder engagement workshops organised by AgriProFocus Uganda & other agric. networks.
4. Compiled a Fact Finding Mission Report (FFMR) that shows the state of the issues we are researching about.
5. Developed online change facilitation platforms (developed website: www.agriquestuganda.com; and, Social Media, - Facebook and LinkedIn)

Preliminary Results

- 1) With the exception of UNBS which is the standards body in Uganda, most of the Stakeholders interacted with (AgriProFocus, Netherlands Embassy, Directorate for Ethics and Integrity, NOGAMU, etc.), have an idea of agricultural related standards (though not necessarily by their technical names). However, they have never thought of defining ethical practices in the context of the value chains we are researching on.
- 2) Promising though, the Agribusiness & Value Chain players interacted with so far (in Buliisa, Butaleja, Bugiri, Kapchorwa, Mbale, Pallisa, Sironko, Hoima - all being some of the districts in Uganda targeted by AGRI-QUEST), feel that it is important to have ethical agricultural practises and voluntary in 'house quality standards' E.g., how to store rice & keep it safe from Rats habitation., How to dry maize and beans without stepping in them, etc.
- 3) Most agribusiness & Value Chain players at the lower levels of value chains studied, are not aware that they are part of the international food and agriculture Value Chains. Some farmer groups in the districts we target, had contribute to the sharing and learning of good agricultural practices, though the farmers did not follow them.

Opportunities:

- 1) An increasing need in Uganda to popularize ethical business behaviour
- 2) The knowledge platforms (esp. AgriProFocus Uganda) are very receptive i.e., over engaging AGRI-QUEST.

- 3) AGRI-QUEST intervention is seen as a breakthrough in to the neglected aspects of agribusiness (ethical practices).
- 4) A sensitization drive of AGRI-QUEST aims and objectives with the stakeholders has proved necessary so as to expedite their full engagement and a clear understanding of expectations

Challenges:

- 1) Time allocated (budgeted) for the field visits to collect data, interact with project targeted audiences has proved inadequate especially in parts which are far from Kampala, the project head office.
- 2) Most stakeholders and project targeted respondents, expect AGRI-QUEST to meet their costs incurred for participating in our research project, E.g., for giving us data, Transport them to workshops, buy for them airtime, buying seed drying materials (for quality improvement) like mats, racks; buy for them mobile phones that are internet enabled especially ahead of our ICT App and Farmer-to-buyer platform to be developed. Failure by AGRI-QUEST to meet these blocks window for other upcoming innovation projects.
- 3) Language barrier since we gather data from a variety of districts in Uganda. This makes dissemination of results difficult.
- 4) Farmers don't immediately see the short and medium term value of committing ethical practises.
- 5) Prevalence of Corruption which impacts heavily on Integrity and Transparency in value chains.



Rice packaging as a family business in Bugiri District, Nankoma sub county

A project mainly financed by:

Implemented by: