

**EDITOR'S  
NOTE****Let us fight  
maize pests**

Maize is the most consumed cereal in the world. In many countries of Africa, for example Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, DR Congo, it is the staple food. In other countries such as Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, it is the second highest consumed food.

However, in recent years, maize has suffered from endless pest attacks that may render its production difficult. The biggest threat to maize production in Africa – the armyworm – has attacked again.

With this worm reported in over 30 districts at the moment, it means that the next maize and generally food production will be lower than expected. Hunger and famine will most certainly prevail in many parts of the country.

This is why this worm must be battled with all the efforts that the world can muster. If you compare it to human diseases, the destruction that the worm leaves behind is only comparable to what Ebola does to humans. They attack so swiftly and destroy farms in a few days. This means that governments must institute the same measures adopted against Ebola and similar epidemics in order to handle this scourge.

Otherwise without maize, the level of food insecurity will definitely be unmanageable.

**ANKOLE COFFEE FARMERS**

In a 10-part series, *Harvest Money* shall carry stories focusing on the success of aBi interventions countrywide. In the third story, **Andrew Masinde** explores the interventions in the coffee sector in Ankole sub-region

**A**t Nyakashambya Primary School in Sheema district, pupils are learning how to differentiate between good and bad coffee, plus the basics of mulching a plantation, among others.

The school has one-and-a-half acres of a well-tended coffee plantation that is cared for by the pupils with the help of their teachers. The coffee is inter-cropped with bananas.

The headteacher, Benon Murumba, says they got the idea of planting coffee from Ankole Coffee Producers Co-operative Union (ACPCU). He says pupils and staff were trained on spacing, fertiliser application, weeding and pruning.

"We were also taught about inter-cropping for food security. We inter-cropped coffee with bananas and for the past three years, we have been harvesting bananas for consumption at school and for sale," Murumba says.

From bananas, the school earns an average of sh4.8m per season. From the coffee, he says in the last season, they sold the crop to ACPCU and earned sh5m.

"We use the money to develop the school and improve the staff and children's welfare. ACPCU has helped renovate the school blocks which were dilapidated," he says.

Individual farmers too have benefited from ACPCU. Jenifer Kateeba is a farmer in Rushambya village, Mutara sub-county in Mitooma district. She says many people in her area were growing coffee, but were not making good profit.

However, ACPCU sensitised farmers on how they could improve their coffee to make handsome profits.

"They trained farmers on land selection, fertiliser use, how to dig holes for planting the coffee, pruning, cutting old trees to rejuvenate them, post-harvest handling and market linkages, among others," she says.

Kateeba was selected as a model farmer for the village and was facilitated with sh1.2m to set up a coffee demonstration garden in 2020 and many farmers now learn from her. Besides the demonstration garden, she has three acres of mature coffee trees from which she harvests every season.

**aBi**

**Nuwagaba inspecting coffee sacks ready for export**



**Some of the new ACPCU coffee storage facilities**

She also secured sh4m to start a briquettes business. This is to help her earn an extra income as she waits for the coffee harvest, which is seasonal. She was trained by those who supplied her the machine to make briquettes. She was also given free tarpaulins where she dries her coffee. In a season, she harvests 18 to 20 bags (80kg each) of dried coffee and she earns at least sh5m per season.

These are among the thousands of farmers and institutions that are benefiting from ACPCU.

**PARTNERSHIP WITH ABI**

John Nuwagaba, the general manager of ACPCU, says its growth is largely attributed to the partnership with The Agricultural Business Initiative (aBi) which dates back to 2013. aBi was jointly founded by the governments of Denmark and Uganda in 2010 as a social enterprise that channels development co-operation funding to agribusinesses and agricultural service providers.

aBi aims at building a competitive, profitable and sustainable agriculture and

**ABOUT ANKOLE COFFEE PRODUCERS CO-OPERATIVE UNION**

John Nuwagaba, the general manager of Ankole Coffee Producers Co-operative Union (ACPCU), says the co-operative is a farmers' organisation that was registered in 2006, but became operational in 2008. The co-operative was established to add value to coffee.

"Our initial capital was sh1.5m, contributed in terms of assets by different well-wishers. These included a weighing scale, tables, chairs and then paying rent and gradually, the co-operative has grown to a capital investment of sh26b and a turnover of sh25b," he says.

Nuwagaba explains that today, ACPCU is a second-grade producer organisation with membership of 26 primary co-operative societies and over 14,200 individual farmers.

He explains that ACPCU is certified by Organic, Fairtrade,

Rainforest Alliance (both are committed to tackling unsustainable production and market practices), ISO 22000, Naturland and Uganda National Bureau of Standards.

Stanley Maniragaba, the operations manager at ACPCU, says from 2008, the co-operative has registered a steady upward trajectory in both volumes of coffee purchases and exports, making it Uganda's leading farmer owned producer/exporter of green coffee.

He says ACPCU's footprint on the coffee industry is through its emphasis on quality improvement with an average cup score of 83% for fine robusta. "This has won us different awards, including Best of The Pearl 2021, UCDA Best Special Category 2018/2019, UCDA Most Compliant Exporter (Quality) 2012/2013," Maniragaba explains.



**Joshua  
Kato,  
editor**

jkato@newvision.co.ug