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Egypt to start wheat farms in northern Uganda

[1](#) Published: 19 May 2009

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The New Vision | 19 May 2009

Robinah Basalirwa and Francis Kagolo

Kampala — The Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation is planning to set up model farms in Uganda. So far, one site of 200 hectares suitable for wheat growing has already been identified at Labora, Koro sub-county in Gulu district.

"The farm will be used for research and production to demonstrate and train extension workers and farmers in wheat growing. It will be a joint farm between Uganda and Egypt," Dr. Attia El Gayar, an international expert at the Soil, Water and Environment Research Institute, said in an interview in Cairo recently.

The site in Labora was identified in November last year after a technical team from Egypt and Uganda carried out a feasibility study on large-scale wheat production in Uganda. During the study the team assessed the suitability of wheat production and export.

Dr. Attia said the team also visited Masindi in western Uganda and Kapchorwa in the east. At Masindi, suitable sites for wheat growing were identified at Kihonda and Kinumi, while another was found at Kaptokwai in Kapchorwa. In Gulu, studies were also done at Patiko. "At the end of the study, Labora was found most suitable," Attia said.

The Egyptians will provide technical and financial assistance, send experts and provide seeds to the farm. Uganda will provide the required infrastructure, irrigation equipment, local staff and labourers.

For the last two years, there has been a decline in the global wheat production that has triggered a steady rise in the prices of wheat and its products such as bread.

In Kenya, for instance, reports show that the decline in output led to a rise in prices. A 90kg bag of wheat rose from sh1,800 to sh3,000. The Food and Agriculture Organisation also reported that by end of January 2008, the global prices of wheat were 83% higher compared to the previous year.

In Uganda, the demand for wheat flour has been increasing with the growth of the bakery industries. Uganda imports more than 90% of the wheat consumed, according to Okaasai Opolot, the commissioner for crop production and marketing in the agriculture ministry. Wheat is grown on a very small scale in Kapchorwa and Kabale districts only.

Opolot said nucleus farms of between 10 and 30 hectares would be set up in various areas, once the partnership between the two governments is formalised, to popularise the growing of the crop. The nucleus farms will be used as testing grounds for wheat varieties as well as marketing centres for the cereal, said Opolot. Local farmers would be employed on the nucleus farms as outgrowers, where they will also receive training in better wheat farming practices.

"We are studying areas where weather conditions can favour wheat growth. We want to produce enough wheat for home consumption and export," Opolot explained.

Meanwhile, another model farm for crop cultivation and animal production will be set up in Yumbe district. The site was selected after a team of experts visited the area in 2005. Engineer Mohamed Abd El Aziz Mandour, the general director for Africa Cooperation, said a proposed agreement had been sent to the Uganda Government for consideration. He said work on the farm would begin after the signing of the agreement later this year.

He said similar farms set up by Egypt in Zambia for maize growing and animal production, in Niger for rice and Zanzibar for vegetables, have been successful.

Uganda is also benefiting from training programmes offered by the Egyptian International Centre for Agriculture in Cairo.

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1. birungi gilbert
19 May 2014

i liked the development so much, I was requesting the technical team to come and do some survey in other districts like kabarole and kyejojo, thx

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