



foodfirst

NEWS

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FOOD LOSSES AND WASTAGE: THINK. EAT. SAVE.



Plan Food Production, Plan Produce Storage, Prohibit Food Waste *Regina Kayoyo*



panded further than this single level. The processes of wasting food have been tracked by various actors as occurring along the entire food chain that is – from production to the actual consumption of the food. On the other hand, critical to this dimension, is waste through the mismanagement of the productive resources used to produce this food.

Profiling the ways in which food is lost and wasted at these different stages is of vital importance and should be seen as a measure of curbing food insecurity at the household level in Uganda. Strategies including raising awareness through campaigns, information, training, and measuring waste have been applied by different organizations but these should be ongoing. Essentially, how do we utilize produc-

It has always been a widely held misconception that food wastage occurs at the household consumption level or the consumer level. Discussions around the concept of food wastage

conjure images of food being thrown away by families at the end of a meal, during holidays and other such gatherings. Although this is true, the concept of food wastage ought to be ex-

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Word from the Editor

I am more than delighted to speak to you once again as I present the 4th edition of the FoodFirst News. This issue covers the period October to December 2015. This is an instrumental semester of the year as every actor touches the peak of action and grows the desire to crown itself with mega celebrations characterized with feasts of wining, dining and merry making. On the other hand the semester marks the end of prominent actions on soils for food security as 2015 was dedicated to be the International year of Soils as we usher in a New Year of Pulses. Foodfirst News too wishes to crown it with this issue on food wastes and food security aiming at drawing your attention to marking the peak action with maximum caution not to put any food whatsoever to waste as preparing you to embrace the coming year of Pulses.

It is a common tendency to farm, harvest, feed and forget. At production levels although standards have been put in place on inputs to be used per unit area of production of a particular crop or animal, access to and compliance to these standards especially in the developing and struggling farming systems has remained a night mare.

Under such circumstances lots of production resources including land and water go to waste. To say something about food losses and wastes as a result of post harvesting handling is a redundant reminder as several statistics have been put on record numerous times. Let's take a rare mention of food that goes to waste at consumption. This is a rare mention because

the circumstances at this level hold no cause to worry as food is in abundance and what seems to be waste is a positive indicator of hard work, status, choice, abundance, merry making and or celebration. Such moments filled with thrills, joy, satisfaction leave no room to reflect on the number of people going hungry with desire of only having access to 1% of what has gone to waste to save their diminishing lives.

Everyone indeed deserves a feast after a whole year's work but as we sit to serve, we should recall that one-third of the food produced in the world for human consumption is either lost or thrown away; together with the natural resources used for its production 900 million people go hungry. We need therefore to examine the causes and impacts of these food wastes to livelihoods, economies, natural resource sustainability as these losses occur at all stages of the food supply chain.

As 2015 folds away, it is FRA's sincere hope that you individually and institutionally have gained substantial awareness and understanding of the importance of soil for food security and essential ecosystem functions. There is no better way of closing such a year than looking at the minimal options of only producing food and put it to maximum utilization to save the soils for yet another generation.

Although it is difficult to put food waste to a complete stop, let's target to reduce it to zero. Planning production including food preparation, service and eating will save numerous



qualities and quantities of food to be served the next day without stressing the production resources across the chain.

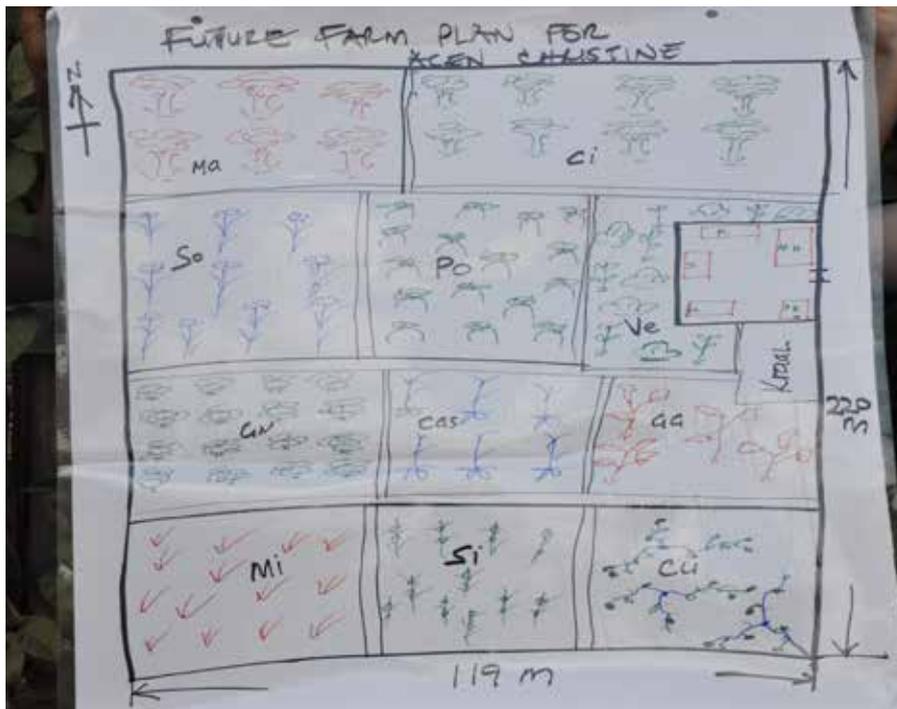
Wonderful celebrations should be marked with minimal amounts of food thrown away in quality and quantity as we save to care for the hungry and malnourished. A world free from hunger and malnutrition is possible provided we minimize the food wastes in honour of food and means of its production. Policies, legislations but above all practice by everyone is more than needed in a responsive manner to meet the targets.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Agnes Kirabo', written over a light-colored background.

Agnes Kirabo
Executive Director



Plan Food Production,.... Cont. from page 1



soil and water conservation, and water needs of particular crops (rain-fed and irrigation for vegetables). This proper appropriation of land has maximally leveraged this resource for the betterment of these societies.

Testimonies from different farmer groups that FRA and her partners are working with have confirmed the success from this smart appropriation of this productive resource. The success registered from these methodologies have aided in securing the full utilization of land for the production of food. In so doing, this practice insures a more secure future for many families. *“Separation of food for household consumption and food for the market right from production to consumption makes me value every small grain of my green grams”* says Akiror Grace an FRA model farmer in Asuret sub-county, Soroti district.

The concept of planning production goes up to planning for harvesting, storage and eventually consumption. Farmers who previously suffered from household food insecurity due to wasteful practices of managing their production and produce are testifying the comfort, peace, security and hope for the future as they look at separated secured stocks of food for both marketing and household food security.

To Akiror, it is the value of every single grain of green gram and in context, she cannot afford wasting it ■

tive resources like land to their fullest capacity to avoid food wastage, and in doing so, curb food insecurity?

Planning for food production and consumption is one of the food security models implemented under the project; *“Promoting the right to food and nutrition security as a measure of reducing vulnerability to child trafficking”*.

This project, implemented by FRA and her field partners War on Want NI (WoWNI), Soroti Rural Development Association (SORUDA) and Wera Development Association (WEDA), is supported by the Independent Development Fund (IDF). The goal of this project is to increase appreciation of the right to food and nutrition security as a measure of addressing social-economic challenges including child

vulnerability to trafficking in Katakwi and Soroti district. In this model, food waste is a core valuable of food security and an aspect of production across the food chain.

Traditionally, the farming practice of these beneficiaries has been to plant crops and separate the produce to cater for household food consumption and sale. Although during the initial interactions with the project beneficiaries the concept of partitioning gardens was not well appreciated by smallholder farmers, this perception has been gradually altered.

The methods used for farm planning have included visioning, mapping, selection of food and cash crops of high and nutritional value for good health. The methodology also sought to create awareness on soil improvement,



Exposing the Injustice of Food Waste

Matilda Nakawungu

Every day humanity wastes food on a colossal scale. A stroll through any of our food markets or round the back of many grocery stores and supermarkets will turn up bins and pits of food that has gone bad. This is to be expected but surely it leaves one thinking; isn't there something more sensible to do with food than waste it?

When people talk about the global hunger and malnutrition challenge, we immediately think of the need to increase global food production to feed the nine billion people expected on the planet by 2050. Ironically, statistics show that we are currently producing much more food than we actually need to feed the world. One-third of the food produced in the world for human consumption is either lost or thrown away, together with the natural resources used for its production. It has been deduced that if half of this food that is lost or wasted was recovered, it would be enough to feed the world. In fact, just a quarter of it could feed the 795 million undernourished people around the world who suffer from hunger today.

For a long time, Freeganism- a practice of reclaiming and eating food that has been discarded- was associated with the poor and homeless. However with the ongoing global campaign against food wastage, it has become a concept that is effectively exhibiting the injustice of food waste. It brings to light this one selfish act of humanity; that we take food off the market that hungry people could survive on, and throw it away.

We are straining the earth's ecological



limits, cutting down forests, extracting water from depleting water reserves, only to grow more and more food and then throw away so much of it. This is not a rational use of global resources, especially when you think of the billion hungry people that exist in the world.

The idea of food loss and wastage isn't just about good, fresh or leftover food that is being thrown away. It's also about the food that we let go bad because we harvest or we buy way more than we need. Food is wasted if it is discarded or prepared but left uneaten. This may be accidental or intentional, but ultimately leads to less food available for all.

In Uganda, we lose food at different stages between the farm and the plate, and quite often even after that. It can be from a lack of infrastructure, refrigeration, pasteurization, grain

stores or even basic preservation mechanisms. It is quite baffling how on one end of our country people lose their lives to starvation while on another, food decays in public markets.

It gets one questioning whether it really is a food shortage that's causing the existing hunger challenge or, a glitch in our systems.

We all need to tackle these issues if our goal of achieving food security is to be realized. There is a lot that Government can do to achieve this goal particularly in parts of the country like Karamoja region that face chronic hunger. These can range from the long term solutions of building water reservoirs and supporting the revival of a mandatory granary system; to empowering farmers with the knowledge and skills to practice climate smart agriculture. However, there is also need

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Exposing the Injustice... *Cont. from page 4*

to put in place systems and infrastructure that enable transportation and sale of food from regions of surplus to regions of scarcity. These are critical to reducing food losses since food often gets spilled or spoiled before it reaches its final product or retail stage.

Government together with Civil Society need to raise awareness on the impact of food wastage and addition-

ally lobby for and set policy standards, market / price mechanisms, as well as institutional and legal frameworks that will change the “throw-away” mindset of Ugandans especially those living with surplus.

It would be unrealistic to think that we can live in a waste-free world as there will always be an allowance for inevitable waste. However, we can aspire

to a world where food supply allows for a good, stable, secure and nutritious diet for every person. Let’s lobby and advocate for systems that will make it socially unacceptable to waste food on a vast scale both at household level and along the market chain especially by retailers. It is possible to stop this disastrous waste of resources. The best thing we can do with food is to eat it and to stop wasting it ■

Time to wage war against food waste

Food loss and waste refers to the edible parts of plants and animals that are produced or harvested for human consumption but that are not ultimately consumed by people. In particular, “food loss” refers to food that spills, spoils, incurs an abnormal reduction in quality such as bruising or wilting, or otherwise gets lost before it reaches the consumer. It is the unintended result of an agricultural process or technical limitation in storage, infrastructure, packaging, or marketing. On the other hand, food waste refers to food that is of good quality and fit for human consumption but that does not get consumed because it is discarded—either before or after it spoils. This is usually the result of negligence or a conscious decision to throw food away.

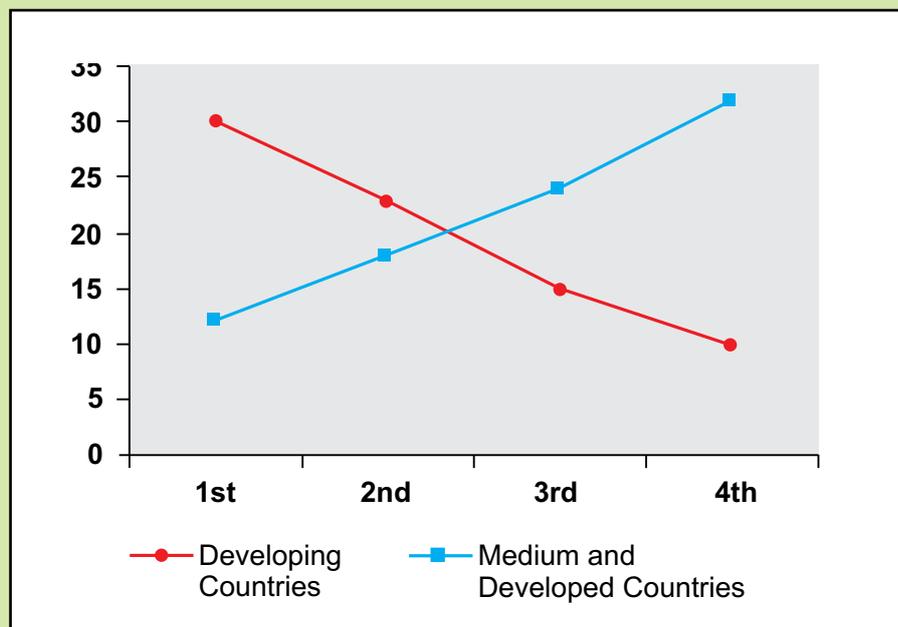
Food loss can either be attributed to reduction in the volume or weight of food available for human consumption or, to a loss in the nutritional, caloric value and edibility of crops. The latter are more difficult to assess.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates

that 32 percent of all food produced in the world was lost or wasted in 2009, an estimate based on weight. When converted into calories, global food loss and waste amounts to approximately 24 percent of all food produced. Essentially, one out of every four food calories intended for people is not ultimately consumed by them. In developing countries, more than

40% of losses occur at the postharvest and processing stages, while in the developed countries, more than 40% of losses occur at the retail and consumer levels. The total food waste by consumers in industrialized countries 222 million tons is almost equal to the entire food production in sub-Saharan Africa (230 million tons. (FAO study 2011).

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The figure above is illustrative of the losses as the value chain progresses



Time to wage war against food waste

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No.	Commodity	Percentage KCal lost/Wasted
1	Roots and Tubers	63%
2	Fruits and Vegetables	42%
3	Cereals	26%
4	Fish and Sea Foods	24%
5	Meat	19%
6	Milk	18%
7	Oil Seeds and Pulses	10%

The figure above shows the percent of kcal lost or wasted for each food commodity.

Sources: WRI analysis based on FAO 2011

Food loss and waste have many negative economic and environmental impacts. Economically, they represent a wasted investment that can reduce farmers' incomes and increase consumers' expenses.

Environmentally, food loss and waste inflict a host of impacts, including unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions and inefficiently used water and land, which in turn can lead to diminished natural ecosystems and the services they provide.

Roots and tubers experience the greatest amount of loss and waste—63% on a caloric basis. 42% is the rate for fruits and vegetables, and about a quarter of cereals and seafood produced are lost or wasted.

As earlier noted, there is a difference in the nature and magnitude of food loss and waste between developing and developed countries as they occur along the stages in the value chain. For developing countries, more losses occur early in the value chain especially at production and post-harvest handling.

In developing countries, poor storage facilities give room for many fac-

tors that affect food availability both qualitative and quantitatively. These include among others warmth/ humidity that can cause rot in fruits and discolouration in grains; rodents that consume part of the produce; fungi that create poisons like aflatoxin in the grains; poor packaging that can cause physical loss during transportation and retail of food; poor infrastructure and transportation that cause damage to the food and food spoilage especially for fresh foods due to delays; inadequate market facilities; and unsanitary, crowded and poor refrigeration.

In developed countries, more losses happen in the later stages of the value chain. Food is normally discarded as a result of failure to adhere to standards and during manufacture at sorting, trimming and transportation stages.

At stores, extreme or unfavourable temperatures cause significant losses in fruits and vegetables. Many times food is still safe to eat at the best before date indicated on its packaging but it is thrown away once the date reaches. Additionally, many households in developed countries throw away a lot of food as left overs because of excesses during cooking, preparation and serving.

Big inefficiencies suggest big savings opportunities. It is estimated that if the current rate of food loss and waste were cut in half by the year 2050, the world would need about 1,314 trillion kilocalories (kcal) less food per year than it would in the business-as-usual global food requirements scenario.

The world faced an analogous failure of efficiency in the 1970s with energy. In the face of record oil prices and growing demand, the world waged war on energy wastefulness and significantly improved its energy efficiency. Yet a "war on waste" has yet to be waged when it comes to food. With food prices recently hitting historic highs and global food demand continuing to rise, now is the time.

This non-exhaustive list hints at the spectrum of approaches that could be available across selected stages of the food value chain to reduce food loss and waste. We shall high-light some of them in our subsequent newsletters. ■

James Kaija Amooti
Food Talk Uganda



Reaping the rewards of Planning Farm Production

Emily Kennedy

The final FRA project monitoring visit for the year 2015 took place during the week of November 23rd, thanks to the Independent Development Fund (IDF) for the financial support.

Solving problems and addressing challenges more often calls for actions. In a bid, urge and drive to address poverty, hunger and malnutrition challenges, action comes faster than reflection. It's a rare action for the object and subjects of change to put down tools of action, reflect and take stock of what has worked, what has not worked and celebrate the change. As such, reflection, learning and sharing was the thing for this end of year monitoring visit to project communities in Katakwi and Soroti.

The visit was a follow up on the progress of trainings on farm planning and crop separation, and included two farmers groups –AjepetOtuu Farmers' Group in Asuret and Damasiko Community Youth Savings and Loan Group in Gweri sub-county.

The conversations with both groups indicated that both still faced challenges – including flooding, drought, and pests and diseases, to name a few. However, they also showed that the trainings were starting to pay off. Several of the participants spoke of the benefits of farm planning, and crop separation in particular. By dividing their gardens into two parcels – one for household consumption and the other for sale – group members shared how this helped them to better determine the purpose of what they produced. This allowed them to



not only designate a stable source of food for their households, but in some cases even decreased the instances of domestic violence.

Taking it one step further, a few of the group members from both areas talked about the benefits of storing some of their “for market” crops for the off-season. The result of such a practice was increased profits. By gaining higher incomes from the off-season sales, those who stored were able to pay for school fees, improved equipment, additional livestock and land, and in one case even begin to plan for the construction of a new home!

These positive outcomes of this shift in practice show the importance of these trainings and follow-up visits not because it looks good on the FRA and her members, but because it highlights the appreciation of those on the receiving end. And, the learn-

ing process does not end at the groups receiving these workshops, either. One member of the Damasiko farmer group revealed that he saw a need in the surrounding communities, as well. In his spare time, he has spent free time sharing the information on farm planning and crop separation with those near his village so that they can benefit from the same knowledge he was given.

The need to continue these trainings and monitoring visits was certainly apparent. The positive feedback, testimonies and even the continuing challenges faced by these farmers were evidence to that. Those receiving the past trainings have shown that they are putting what they've learned to good use – proving that they have a positive outcome that improve their livelihoods and futures of those who participate in them ■



Has the single spine extension system taken root? NSAs and MAAIF staff take a learning route on AEAS

Agnes Kirabo



With support from Action Aid Uganda, FRA and officials from Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries set off on the first ever Learning Route on the week of 27th November. The focus of this weeklong trip was to establish the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the Single Spine Agricultural Extension system since its approval by cabinet in 2014. Whereas a year may seem too short to measure efficiency and effectiveness, it is again too long to neglect tracking

the implementation and delivery of such a critical service.

The learning route also included members of the Non-State Actors Working Group on Agricultural Extension (UNFFE, CSBAG, Jenga Africa and the media).

The route that covered districts of Amuria, Ngora, Kumi, Kaberamaido, Pader, Nwoya, Amuru, Apach, Gulu Namutumba, Kapchorwa, Katakwi and

Soroti provided a platform for engagement between farmers, Local Government officials and other stakeholders with officials from MAAIF regarding the Single Spine. The route further gave an opportunity to the learners to have interactions with selected farmers to have the practical experience of agricultural extension service delivery. Among the key observations made was that the conceptual description of the Single Spine is far different from

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Has the single spine extension system taken root?

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the structural layout approved by Government. The former is more inclusive, interactive and recognizes the contribution of various stakeholders to the provision and delivery of agricultural extension. The approved structure by cabinet on the other hand represents the traditional system of public provision and delivery of extension with an additional elaboration of the newly established Directorate at national level. The contradicting circulars regarding the recruitment of extension workers issued to local government during the year brought to the learners' attention the many gaps between the theory and reality of the Single Spine approach. Although there was general consensus that all districts received not less than 90 million to undertake recruitment, there was no consensus or harmonized approach undertaken among the visited districts. It was further learnt that many districts had not embarked on the recruitment five months to the end of the financial year.

The learners further learnt that although local governments had received money for recruitment, none of these has a wage bill to facilitate the recruited staff to reach out to farmers. This poses a risk of the duplication and replication of the challenges of the public traditional agricultural extension system that was disbanded

in 2000 citing challenges of poor outreach, inefficiency and ineffectiveness among others.

Another observation learners made was that farmers look at agricultural extension in a more holistic view to include production, natural resource management, forestry, indigenous knowledge, marketing, primary health care, knowledge and technology transfer and nutrition. With the absence of marketing, farmers do not have a feel of the value of agricultural extension.

The farm visits too provided a mixture of learning experiences although there was considerable visible increase in production and productivity, access to agricultural extension was never cited as a priority contributing factor. The farmers who have had previous experiences and exposure based on interactions and strategic positioning with the previous NAADS appeared to be more progressive, beating the dynamics of production and marketing compared to their counterparts who have not had such opportunities.

Radio and fellow farmers were mentioned in high priority as key sources of agricultural extension followed by NGOs. The confusion between NAADS, Operation Wealth Creation and the Single Spine too seem to be growing instead of being addressed.

The learners broadly concluded that there is a distinctive disarray between the realities and the structure presented, approved and being implemented. It was further concluded that the gap between MAAIF, the newly created directorate and local governments needs to be closed in terms of communication, interaction, planning, financing and implementation. Furthermore, the approved structure of the single spine needs further review to make it inclusive and cover the most important aspects of agricultural extension as well as the multiple providers of agricultural extension. More questions regarding the NAADS secretariat and its relationship with the single spine were raised than answered. This was not different from the matters of Operation Wealth Creation.

The single spine agricultural extension system may have taken root following the approval of cabinet, establishment of the directorate and the start of the recruitment of extension workers. However, the root might be too blunt to touch the base (farmers) where it is needed most or the structure might be too hard to allow its penetration. There is therefore need to address the structural challenges of the system and the infrastructural bottlenecks around the system ■



A glance at the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference

SEATINI Uganda



The World Trade Organisation (WTO) was established in January 1995 following the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations and the adoption of the Uruguay Agreements in 1994 in Marrakech, Morocco. Twenty years later, the 10th WTO ministerial meeting was for the first time held in Africa in Nairobi - Kenya with very high hopes from Africa and other developing countries of addressing the systemic challenges facing them in the multilateral trading system.

The MC10 was concluded on the 19th,

of December 2015 after 5 days of intense negotiations. The “Nairobi Package”, as the outcome of the MC 10 has been dubbed contained mainly 6 major decisions on agriculture, cotton and issues related to LDCs. The outcomes have been variously referred to as “historic” while others have referred to it as “a package of hollow promises”.

The efficacy of the “Nairobi Package” from the LDCs and Africa’s point of view can be assessed from their

expectations and against the long standing commitments by developed countries to address a number of issues affecting developing and LDCs ■

THE “NAIROBI PACKAGE”



Life Story

“My name is Barbara Alupo. I am 29-year-old. I am a single mother of three, and a smallholder farmer. I live in Damasiko village, Soroti district, Uganda. For the past 10 years, I have sustained my livelihood through farming. I grow multiple crops such as rice, groundnuts, peas, cassava, sorghum, and citrus.

After receiving training from the Food Rights Alliance consultant and listening to the radio programs sponsored by FRA on the importance of crop separation, I started dividing my crops into two categories: those for market and those for my home consumption.

I now store the majority of my market portion for the off-season in order to gain higher profits. As a result, I have been able to get higher profits from which I have sent my children to school and I am saving to build a house.

Barbara has shown how farm planning can influence a change in priority, which allows those who use this technique to afford things they wouldn't otherwise be able to.

“There is money in agriculture if you put your effort into it.” Barbara avows.



Food Security: An Issue of access over supply

Hilda Nabakooza Muyingo

The Uganda economy is agrarian and over 80% of the population is engaged in agriculture for both household consumption and marketable surplus. The majority of rural population relies on subsistence agriculture as a source of livelihood. However many times efforts of the farmers go to waste due to high post-harvest losses.

In Uganda the issue of food losses is of high importance in the efforts to combat hunger, raise income and improve food security in the country. Food losses have an impact on food security for poor people, food quality and safety, economic development and the environment.

Food is mostly lost during the production-to-processing stages of the food supply chain. Food losses are influenced by crop production choices, patterns, internal infrastructure and capacity, marketing chains, channels for distribution, and consumer pur-



chasing and food use practices. Irrespective of the level of economic development and maturity of systems in a country, food losses should be kept to a minimum.

Food losses represent a waste of resources used in production such as land, water, energy and inputs. Producing food that will not be consumed leads to unnecessary carbon dioxide emissions in addition to loss of economic value of the food produced. Economically avoidable food losses

have a direct and negative impact on the income of both farmers and consumers. Given that many smallholders live on the margins of food insecurity, a reduction in food losses could have an immediate and significant impact on their livelihoods. For poor consumers (food insecure or at-risk households), the priority is clearly to have access to food products that are nutritious, safe and affordable. It is important to note that food insecurity is often more a question of access (purchasing power and prices of food) than a supply.

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Food Security: Powering the Power of An issue... Advocating for food dignity

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Brian Wamboka

Problem of improving the efficiency of the food supply chain could help to bring down the cost of food to the consumer and thus increase access. Given the magnitude of food losses, making profitable investments in reducing losses could be one way of reducing the cost of food. But that would, of course, require that financial gains from reduced losses are not outweighed by their costs.

There should be effective communication and cooperation between farmers. Cooperation among farmers could reduce risk of overproduction by allowing surplus crops from one farm to solve a shortage of crops on another. Stagnation of growth in the agricultural sector could be partly attributed to inadequate and ineffective delivery of extension services. This has led to low adoption of appropriate agricultural production technologies which has in turn resulted into failure to transform agricultural production from subsistence to commercial farming ■

Addressing the challenges of hunger and malnutrition requires schooling in new knowledge and de-schooling of irrelevant skills. There are emerging underlying questions that call for new skills, new knowledge and new positioning. Food wastage is not a new issue but an emerging challenge. It has for years been a neglected fact and now a priority more than an option.

It is a routine practice for FRA to always equip its members- her battalion that scrutinizes, analyses, assesses all policies that impact on food availability and food accessibility. To better appreciate new emerging issues that must be addressed if the hunger and malnutrition question is to ever be answered, FRA with support from the US Alliance is implementing a project on enhancing the institutional capacity of the Alliance to effectively engage her membership and stakeholders to influence policy systems and practices. Through this project, capacity gaps are identified in regard to influencing policy processes that impact on food

availability, accessibility, stability and utilization at national and local level. Membership capacity building is one of the platforms the Alliance is undertaking to inform actions in addressing food loss and waste challenges by working closely with and through its members.

Furthermore, numerous organizations and networks have brought to the fore front these provisions and are involved together with other non-state actors in activities that inform policy, practice and programming in the agricultural sector. There has been considerable space for organizations involved in agriculture, food and nutrition policy related issues. Nevertheless the need to raise awareness among the primary producers of food is critical. Collaboration among CSOs and gaining an understanding of the related policy processes and support programmes is also needed to address the existing challenges ■

GONE TO VALUE BUT NOT LOST TO WASTE

The FRA family celebrates the value, contribution, and time that her first Program Officer, Mr. Gonzaga Mbalangu, spent with the Alliance. Gonzaga's journey in supporting the Alliance can be traced back to 2013. During his time with us up until December 2015, he has remarkably supported the technical and financial growth of the Alliance.

Gonzaga, while FRA is sad to see you leave. We are proud to share such a resource with others to build this country. FRA wishes you all the best in your future endeavors.



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