

Title Market-led banana technology and adoption in central and western districts of Uganda
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Abstract

Eighteen demonstration sites were selected in six districts of Uganda known for growing bananas. Two districts were chosen from the following production categories; Low productivity (Luwero and Mpigi); Moderate productivity (Masaka and Rakai) and high productivity (Mbarara and Bushenyi). In each district three demonstration sites were established to show the effect of high input and low input farmers' practice in banana production. Technologies selected for promotion were those already on shelves and included clean planting materials, use of organic and inorganic fertilizers, mulch and proper crop husbandry practices. In collaboration with private sector, commercial entrepreneurs involved in both local and export banana trade were identified and formed part of the study team, providing an assurance of buying the bananas with right quality and in economical volumes. After one year, fields under rehabilitation showed a significant improvement in the performance of banana plants and banana bunch weights progressively increased from an average of 10 kg to more than 35 kg. While newly established gardens using tissue culture plants quickly established and within a period of nine months, began to flower. The assurance given to farmers by the buyers stimulated their adoption rate and were able to increase productivity by harvesting two bunches of approximately 45 kg/mat/year. There was an increased demand for agricultural input and thus stimulated investment in rural agro-input stockists. Because of increased production and farmers getting more organized in groups, there was an increase in the number of buyers contacting the farmers than before. Farmers through their executive members improved their management and negotiation skills, and were able to get better prices. It was therefore concluded that, banana production is still possible in the traditional growing districts and that technology dissemination among farmers should always consider buyers and intermediary players within the crop product value chain.