



Mr Gibling Econi a technician of Proul Uganda Ltd, demonstrates use of the various seed planters during farmers sensitization meeting in Pader district Northern Uganda. Photo credit: Lominda Afedraru

Seed planters ease the sowing pain

By Lominda Afedraru

SINCE time immemorial, the majority of small-scale farmers in Uganda have used the rudimentary hand hoe for planting - a painstaking activity that involves one moving back and forth digging up holes, dropping in seeds and covering them with soil.

Now, local farm machinery dealers are stocking seed planters, which enable farmers to do the same amount of work in a much shorter time using considerably less energy.

Gibling Econi, a technician at Proul Uganda Ltd, says the seed planters come in different types and are cost-effective, suited to sowing the big-size

seeds such as beans, groundnuts, and maize and are easy to operate.

There is also a machine for planting the seedlings of vegetatively propagated crops like fruits and vegetables.

Proul Uganda also sells a wide range of agromachinery used in processing of farm produce, value addition and harvesting.

Potable seeder

It has a capacity of accommodating 2-3 kg of seed which is pressed to the ground manually using its handle. Pressing the springs enables the seed cap to open and release the seed into the hole.

The hole is covered automatically when pulling the lid out.

It contains a regulator which holds the number of seeds to be planted per hole depending on the crop, and costs about UGShs200,000.

A farmer can use the potable seeder to plant between one and two acres in a day depending on experience operating it.

The sowing parts can be replaced if they break down or fail to work.

Hand push seeder

This tool on wheels comprises of chambers where both seeds and fertiliser are fed.

While using it, a farmer is required to have a bag containing seed and fertiliser which are fed into the seed and fertiliser chambers.

The chamber for seed can accommodate 1kg of seed.

It is important to ensure the land is prepared well to enable easy movement.

The double chamber machine has an added advantage because it will create a hole both for seed and fertiliser application. Once the farmer rolls and pushes the lid to the soil, it will drop seed in one hole and fertiliser in the other.

The double hand push machine costs Shs750,000 while the single handle seed planter goes for Shs700,000.

Transplanters

These are tools used in planting seedlings of vegetatively propagated plants. These include seedlings of

tissue culture banana, coffee, oranges, mangoes and trees species such as Eucalyptus. Vegetables such as cabbages, eggplant, red pepper and sweet pepper can also be planted using a transplanter.

A farmer is required to place one seedling in the seed chamber at a go. The machine costs Shs250,000.

Farmer uptake

Mr Econi says farmers can purchase these machines as individuals and as farmer associations.

He says uptake is, however, much higher among farmers who deal in seed processing and seedling multiplication.

Farmers who buy the machines as a group normally have the tools kept in the association stores, with each member accessing it through the stores' management. Each farmer pays a maintenance fee every month.

“

The double chamber machine has an added advantage because it will create a hole both for seed and fertiliser application. Once the farmer rolls and pushes the lid to the soil, it will drop seed in one hole and fertiliser in the other.

”



Plastic hand push seeders that are being used by farmers in Uganda for seeds planting. Photo Credit: Lominda Afedraru