



N e w s R e l e a s e

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Processing Plant set to boost Uganda's cassava production

Following tremendous increase in the productivity of cassava over the last four years after years of decline, the Ugandan Government is set to open a cassava processing plant on the 19th of January 2006 in Nakasongola district. The State Minister for Micro-finance, Hon. General Salim Saleh, will officially launch the Plant.

Amongst the beneficiaries of the processing plant will be members of a local farmers' association, the Nakasongola District Farmers Association (NADIFA). The association received funding from FARM-Africa's Maendeleo Agricultural Technology Fund (MATF) in 2003, to promote cassava varieties resistant to the *African mosaic virus*. The result has been remarkable improvement in productivity from 3 metric tonnes per hectare to over 16 metric tonnes per hectare within 2 years. Over 1,500 farmers have had access to improved varieties such as NASE 1-12 and TIME 14. The Plant, to be managed by NADIFA, comes at an opportune time for the farmers of Nakasongola district, whose cassava produce will find a ready market.

Speaking about the launch, NADIFA project co-ordinator Ronald Magado says, "The Plant is the culmination of lots of hard work from NADIFA members and support from MATF. Its operations will boost the economic wellbeing of Nakasongola farmers not only through buying their cassava crop for processing, but also other produce such as maize."

Despite the development of new farming technologies, most smallholder farmers still employ inferior and often inappropriate production and post-harvest technologies. This results in low productivity and low incomes for rural families, perpetuating poverty.

Since 2002, MATF has played a key role in promoting the dissemination and uptake of agricultural technologies similar to the cassava project throughout East Africa. This has been through the support from The Kilimo Trust and The Rockefeller Foundation. So far, 51 projects have been supported in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania to the tune of over £2 m, continuing to improve the welfare of many small-scale farmers.

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Note to editors:

1. The Maendeleo Agricultural Technology Fund (MATF) aims to improve the livelihoods of farming communities in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya by providing competitive grants to projects which promote the transfer and adoption of new agricultural technologies and increase the productivity of smallholder farmers.
2. MATF is a regional initiative established in 2002. It is jointly funded by The Kilimo Trust and The Rockefeller Foundation and is managed by FARM-Africa. The MATF secretariat is based in the FARM-Africa Kenya Country office in Nairobi.
3. Notable guests at the cassava processing Plant's launch will include the district council officials, FARM-Africa's Uganda Country Director Sarah Ossiya, MATF's Monitoring Officer Monicah Nyang' and members of NADIFA led by their officials.
4. The Plant is located in Nakasongola district, central Uganda.

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