

# **The development of Organic Cotton in Uganda**

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# Summary

- General Organic Agriculture in Uganda
- The organic cotton journey in Uganda
- Challenges
- Critical factors for further development

# General Organic Agriculture in Uganda

- OA is among the fastest growing subsectors in Uganda
- Formal (certified) OA started way back in 1993, as a response to unfolding market opportunities especially Europe, and later USA and Japan
  - Suitability and compatibility to smallholder farming systems
    - Closer to and utilizes most traditional farming practices
    - Relatively low risk ,given production and resource constraints
    - low market entry barriers compared to conventional fruits and vegetable exports
  - Increasing global demand for organic products and associated premium prices, contributing to improved household incomes in the rural communities

## Organic in Uganda contd....

- Rapid development largely driven by trade
- A very well coordinated organic private sector  
(The founding of NOGAMU in 2001, that has united and coordinated all actions from all actors (producers, processors, exporters, NGOs etc)
- Favourable climate (weather and soils)

## Organic in Uganda contd....

- Low use of artificial fertilisers (1kg/ha per yr compared to sub Saharan average of 9kg/ha per yr, or just less than 5% of all artificial fertilisers used in East Africa)

# Organic in Uganda contd....

- Currently
  - Over 200,000 certified organic farmers (40,000 in 2004)
  - 36 certified export companies (12 in 2004)
    - coffee, cotton, sesame, cocoa, fresh and dried fruits, vanilla, chillies, ginger, shea nuts & butter, textile, etc*
  - volume of exports growing at an average of 60% p.a. in the past 3 years
  - A National organic certification body (Ugocert), in addition to 6 other international certifiers operating in Uganda

## Organic in Uganda contd....

- The Uganda Organic Standard and now the harmonised East African Organic Products Standard (EAOPS) are in place

## Organic Cotton production in Uganda

- Organic cotton production started in 1994, in the lango area in northern Uganda, with one project covering about 200 farmers
- In the last 4 years, organic cotton projects have increased from 1 to 8, all in northern Uganda, and representing close to 114,000 small scale farmers either fully certified and 54,000 under conversion.
- Production is expected when majority of farmers complete conversion

## Org. Cotton prodn in Uganda contd...

- There are two textile companies; one fully certified and exporting (Phenix Logistics Uganda Ltd), and the other starting the process (Southern Range Nyanza Ltd)

# Challenges

- Despite the huge potential, productivity at the small holder farmers level is still low (average 300 - 400 kg of seed cotton per acre)
  - Insufficient public and private sector farmer extension arrangements that focus on productivity
  - Little /no focussed research into organic cotton technologies

## Challenges contd....

- a fully harmonised government support programme for organic cotton production is still not in place

## Critical factors for further development

- Increased involvement /support by the actors in the upper levels of the chain (manufacturers/retailers/brands) to the issues related to increasing farm productivity and sustainability
- Strategic focus on research into organic friendly technologies and solutions
- Need for Government to speed up finalization of policies that support organic production and trade

## Critical factors contd...

- Re-organise and strengthen the extension arrangements, to focus not only at organising farmers for certification, but also on issues of increasing farm productivity at farm level
- Strengthen the consolidation of marketing of all products coming from organic cotton farmers , including the rotation crops



***Thank You for Your attention***

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