

Alibeihayo Chrispus

RCDP

NEWS REPORTER /PRESENTER

TOPIC

COCOA GROWING

What is cocoa?

- COCOA, is the dried and fully fermented seed from which cocoa solids, a mixture of non fat substances and cocoa butter can be extracted.



- Cocoa is a perennial crop that responds well in rainy tropical areas, with a maximum annual average of 30 - 32°C. It thrives under shades and in areas with annual rainfall between 1,500mm to 2,000mm.
- It grows in countries lying between 10 degrees north and 10 degrees south of the equator.
- It does well in soil containing coarse particles with a reasonable quantity of soil nutrients to a depth of 1.5m to allow the development of a good root system.

- Cocoa withstands water logging for a short time and since it is sensitive to inadequate water, it can easily dry up. During short dry periods, if not mulched or is planted in an open space where there are no trees to provide shades, it is also susceptible to drying. Uganda has an estimated 20,000 hectares of land under cocoa cultivation, mostly in the country's west and central regions, and the crop supports about 10,000 households.

- In Uganda cocoa is grown mostly in Bundibugyo, Mukono, Jinja, Kamuli, Buikwe, Kagadi, Masindi, Mayuge, Iganga and Kayunga districts on a small scale. It is estimated that only about 15,000,000 farmers are involved in cocoa growing in Uganda.
- With possibility of stamping cocoa trees ,one cocoa tree can exist on for 70 years

How to grow cocoa

- You need to get seeds that are still in the pod or those that have been stored properly after harvesting but they should be having roots. If the seeds dry, they will lose their credibility to be planted again, so in order to get good seeds place them in a wet towel and a temperature of 26 degrees until they start rooting.
- Use 4 inch pots to place the rooted seeds and cover the pots with a wrap that is plastic. Make sure the temperature is of about 80 degrees and fill the pots with a seed starter that is dump.

- The seed should be placed in the pot vertically and covered with soil and after 5 to 20 days, the wrap can be removed because at this time the cocoa has sprouted and it should be placed where it can easily access sunlight before being transplanted to the main plantation.
- When the trees are two feet tall, you can transplant them to the main garden which receives enough rainfall throughout the year.
- The cocoa tree flowers between four to five years and by then they will be over 5 feet tall.



Cocoa growing in Kagadi district

- Kagadi district is one of the districts in Uganda that do practice cocoa growing in sub counties of ;
- Kyakabadiima, Burora, Rugashali, Bwikara, Kyaterekera, Mpeefu ,Ndaiga Kiryanga and Kabamba to a small scale lands ,with 12000 farmers
- According to the district production department ,Kagadi received 2million seedlings requests from farmers by registration

- But government through operation wealth creation supplied 57,7000 seedlings ,meaning there is still inadequate support from government by seedlings
- Kagadi has development partners like ESCo Uganda limited ,Bunyoro cocoa farmers cooperative which support farmers together with the district in cocoa farming

- In projection of production, according to the development partners, e.g. ESCO Uganda limited Farmers are expected to produce 400 metric tones

COCOA HARVESTING

- Harvesting Cocoa involves removing ripe pods from the tree, and opening them to extract the wet beans.
- The ripening of the Cocoa takes 5 to 6 months although it should be noted that the ripening depends on various factors that is the climate, the location of where it is cultivated and the type of cocoa grown.
- The color of the pods changes for example if the pod is red, the color turns to orange and if the pod is green, the color changes to yellow when it is ripe.
- Pods are suitable for harvest for 3 to 4 weeks, after which time the beans begin to germinate. It is therefore necessary to harvest at regular intervals as the pods do not all ripen at the same time. The frequency of harvesting can have an effect on yield.

- For pods high on the tree, a pruning hook type of tool can be used with a handle on the end of a long pole. By pushing or pulling according to the position of the fruit, the upper and lower blades of the tool enable the stalk to be cut cleanly without damaging the branch which bears it.
- If the pods are opened in the planting areas the discarded husks can be distributed throughout the fields to return nutrients to the soil.







