

# BMAU Briefing Paper (5/12)



## BOOSTING FOOD SECURITY IN UGANDA: WHAT TACTICS SHOULD NAADS EMPLOY?

### Overview

Attaining food security to reduce the number of undernourished people in the world continues to be one of the serious challenges in current times. The Government of Uganda is striving in the next five years to achieve two main development outcomes in the agriculture sector: increasing rural incomes and livelihoods; and improving household food and nutrition security. One of the programmes to deliver these outcomes is the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS). The first phase of NAADS ended in December 2009 after 9 years of implementation. Phase II commenced in FY 2010/11. A significant proportion of funding in the agricultural sector is channeled to farmers through two types of grants under NAADS, namely:

- (i) Food Security Farmer (FSF) grant and
- (ii) Market Oriented Farmer (MOF) grant

The Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit (BMAU) was commissioned, in 2011, by the NAADS Secretariat to assess the Food Security Farmer Grant. The study assessed the effectiveness of the NAADS approach; adequacy of resources; and estimated expected impacts in FY 2010/11. To ensure regional representation, a total of 72 Higher Local Governments (60 districts and 12 Municipalities) were covered.

The study noted some positive contributions of NAADS to the food security crusade. However, a lot of improvements are required for enhanced effectiveness.

This brief proposes the key action areas for NAADS.

### Key Issues

- Although NAADS facilitated some food security farmers, the level of support was not aimed at achieving quantified levels of production.
- The funding for the NAADS programme to the Food Security Farmers is inadequate to provide the requisite comprehensive package.
- The scope of programme coverage is still very limited, both in number of farmers reached (34%) as well as the level of agricultural production supported.
- The institutional framework at the district and sub-county levels was inadequate to support effective implementation of the programme.

### Background

One of the key objectives of the NAADS is to promote food security, nutrition and household incomes through increased productivity and market-oriented farming. In the short run, the NAADS will provide improved planting and stocking materials to as many households as possible for multiplication, consumption and sale for increased incomes. To reach as many households as possible, this objective is being pursued through the Village Farmer Forum (VFF) where everybody in the household aged 18 years and above qualifies to be selected to receive agriculture inputs. Up to 100 farmers are selected per parish to benefit from the inputs' fund.

The technology inputs fund is a conditional grant from the center and is not co-funded by local governments neither the beneficiaries<sup>1</sup>.

A Food Security Farmer (FSF) should be 18 years and above, a practicing subsistence farmer with access to land or production unit. The support for food security farmers is, on average, US\$ 100,000, but ranges from US\$ 75,000 to US\$ 110,000 per farmer for crop based commodities. The support is mostly in form of seed (e.g. beans, maize, sorghum, millet, potato vines, cassava cuttings, banana suckers) and 2 hoes per household. Each beneficiary FSF is obligated to pay back to his/her group revolving fund, 100% of the value of the support received, in kind.

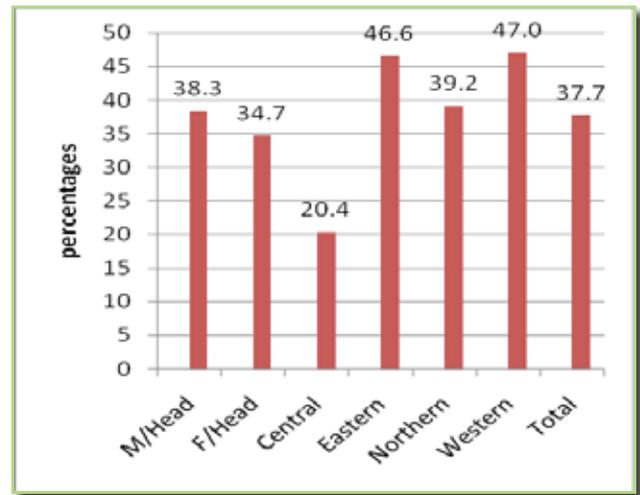
A Market Oriented Farmer (MOF) is an early adopter/innovator who demonstrates promising technologies to other farmers. The Parish Coordination Committee selects 8 farmers per Parish to be supported under this category. Each MOF, accesses on average US\$ 750,000 worth of inputs. The MOFs are obligated to pay back 70% of the value of inputs received into the group account.

## Study Findings

1. The NAADS programme was fairly effective in providing agricultural inputs and advisory services to address the key challenges faced by farmers. The Western and Eastern regions benefitted most (Figure 1). However, two challenges were noted: a) the bulk of inputs were distributed to relatively better off farmers b) the level of support was not aimed

at achieving quantified levels of production. This weakens NAADS resolve to reduce food insecurity if the quantities of the various foods to be produced are unknown.

**Figure 1: Households that received NAADS inputs by sex of household head and region in FY 2010/11**

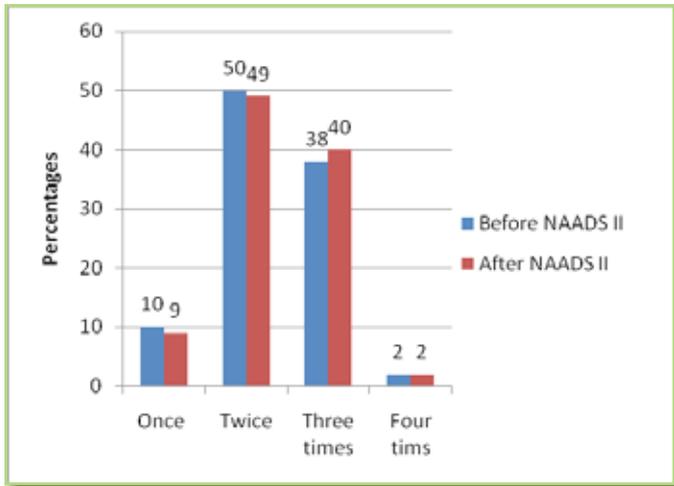


**Source: Field findings**

- The funding for the NAADS programme at the Local Government level is inadequate. For example, the main areas that were underfunded in FY 2010/11 included the FSFs, operations at district and sub-county level and programme monitoring. The problem of under financing is likely to become larger with the increase of parishes from 6,589 in FY 2010/11 to 7,404 in FY 2011/12.
- The NAADS programme had some, albeit limited, impact on food security among farmers. This was reflected in the reduction of households taking only one meal a day. However the scope of programme coverage is still very limited both in number of farmers reached (34 percent) as well as level of agricultural production supported. The supported farmers attributed only 25 percent of their production to NAADS interventions.

<sup>1</sup> MAAIF, 2011a

**Figure 2: Households by number of meals eaten by adults before and after NAADS phase II**

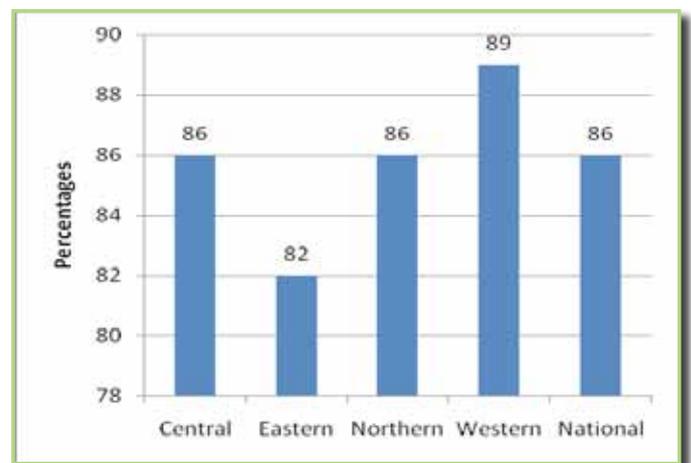


*Source: Field findings*

- The approach of distinguishing between food security and market oriented farmers does not seem very appropriate since agriculture has been equally commercialized. Although food security increased among both categories of farmers, among the food security farmers who were supposed to subsist, food security was attained partly from farm incomes. Rice and livestock products were mostly marketed irrespective of the household food security situation.
- All farmers noted improvements in household monthly incomes following NAADS interventions. However they also noted the limited impacts resulting from inadequate funding. It was noted that funding needed to be stepped up to allow for provision of comprehensive packages as well as cater for the inflation and high procurement costs. Food security farmers recommended a minimum of Ushs 300,000 per farmer.

6. The institutional framework was noted to be inadequate for effective implementation of the programme. This was largely because of limited facilitation of staff, inadequate equipment as well as limited personnel. Both district and sub county NAADS coordinators noted the inadequate funding of programme operations.

**Figure 3: Sub county NAADS coordinators reporting inadequate institutional capacity**



*Source: Field findings*

## Conclusions

The study showed that the NAADS programme of supporting Food Security Farmers is a good initiative. It contributed to the reduction of hunger in some households. It has also enhanced household incomes through which farmers can ensure better food security.

However, it has some teething problems resulting from both inappropriate design as well as weak implementation. If these issues are effectively addressed, NAADS has the potential of significantly contributing to Uganda's food security objective. The NAADS has to change tactics by adopting the following proposals.

## Policy recommendations

1. The programme should be redesigned with quantified production targets for the various supported agricultural produce. These should be the basis for the support given to the various farmers. The targeting should be guided by the agricultural zoning as well as national food consumption requirements.
2. The NAADS programme should be adequately funded to enable sufficient outreach of farmers for purposes of enhancing household and national food security. Areas that require additional funding include the FSFs programme, training/retooling the NAADS staff, equipment and financing the operations of the district and sub-county NAADS offices and officers. **For the farmer support, if the programme cannot raise adequate funds, the number of farmers targeted per parish should be reduced.**
3. For comprehensiveness of farmer support, the NAADS programme should enhance coordination with other key stakeholders in the sector. This includes the private sector and NGOs.
4. The differentiation between food security and market oriented farmers may be relegated in the programme. What matters is providing adequate support for targeted agricultural production since all farmers are commercializing agriculture. The NAADS support may be determined by farmers existing productive resources (land, machinery/equipment).
5. The institutional framework should be strengthened for enhanced effectiveness. Technical staff that are well motivated should be employed. However the operation costs must not be increased at the expense of actual service delivery.

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