



Fig. 1. Young consumer appreciating the size of the OFSP root in Teso, Uganda (credit Farm Africa)

## The Sweetpotatoes for Prosperity Project

has 720 small-scale orange-fleshed sweetpotato farmers in Teso, Uganda attracting domestic and international buyers.

### What is the problem?

Poverty and malnutrition are widespread in Teso sub-region in north-eastern Uganda. Although poverty is in decline across the country it remains stubbornly high in Teso, with 53% of the population living below the poverty line of \$1.90 per day, compared to the national average of 20%. The problem is even more acute in rural areas, where most households rely on farming for subsistence and income. As the region recovers from the civil conflict which affected large parts of the north, displacement-related disputes over land are exacerbated by poverty and food insecurity, making long-term increases in incomes difficult to achieve. Furthermore, Teso's recent turbulent history has resulted in little investment in, and limited support for, small and growing businesses.

Vitamin A deficiency (VAD) in Uganda is high, affecting approximately 38% of children under five and 36% of women under 45 years of age. VAD is the leading cause of preventable blindness in children and increases the risk of disease and death from severe infections. In pregnant women, VAD causes night blindness and may increase the risk of maternal

mortality. A key cause of VAD is poor diet, lacking in appropriate micronutrients.

Sweetpotatoes are a popular food in Uganda, grown and consumed by 44% of households. Traditional white-fleshed varieties lack pro-vitamin A, while orange-fleshed sweetpotatoes (OFSP) contain high levels of beta-carotene, which the body converts into vitamin A.

### What do we want to achieve?

Farm Africa is working to improve livelihoods and incomes of farmers in the Teso sub-region of Uganda through developing the production and marketing of OFSP by:

- Increasing farmers' access to high-quality sweetpotato vines from farmer-run vine multiplication demonstration sites
- Delivering training in good agricultural practices
- Increasing the quantity and regularity of high-quality OFSP roots that farmers produce and sell through using improved planting, harvesting and post-harvest management practices
- Helping farmers add value to the OFSP they produce through processing and marketing

### Partners

1. Ajahma Charitable Trust (ACT)
2. Guernsey Overseas Aid Commission (GOAC)
3. Soroti Sweetpotato Producers and Processors Association (SOSPPA)

## How are we making it happen?

Through our local partner, the Soroti Sweetpotato Producers and Processors Association (SOSPPA), Farm Africa has:

- Established 10 multiplication gardens: three in Nyero sub-county, two in Kyere sub-county, two in Kamulogyo village, one in Amese village, and two in Kumi. These gardens will rapidly multiply high-quality OFSP vines (“seed”) to supply local farmers. A reliable source of healthy planting material is the critical foundation of a stable local value chain.
- Trained 720 (364 women, 356 men) beneficiaries in Good Agronomic Practices (GAP) such as staggered planting, weeding, pest and disease control, observing recommended spacing, crop rotation and fertiliser application, and post-harvest handling (PHH) and processing. PHH training helps farmers reduce post-harvest losses and increase their saleable volumes of OFSP.
- Produced an OFSP Production Guideline for use as a training tool for farmers. Copies have been distributed to SOSPPA farmer groups, other OFSP farmer groups and district agricultural officers.
- Trained SOSPPA staff and the processing centre management staff on OFSP production and processing, with the expectation that they will train others.
- Facilitated fitness tests of OFSP products and certification by the Industrial Research Institute and assisted in the setting of standards established for OFSP products to be accepted in both local and international markets.
- Supported SOSPPA to improve its business development and governance. SOSPPA has now been formally registered by the registrar of

companies and awarded a TIN (Tax Identification Number) from the Ugandan Revenue Authority.

- Supported two product development experiments for OFSP-blended bread by Jonisa Bakery (a local partner). Maganjyo Millers, Rihamu and Britannia Industries have also expressed interest in OFSP blended bread.
- Supported the upgrading of an OFSP processing centre and 150 metric ton warehouse in Kyere.

## What have we achieved so far?

- ✓ Reduced the number of children and women under 49 suffering from inadequate Vitamin A intakes (*mid-term evaluation currently on-going*)
- ✓ Increased farmers’ incomes from OFSP production by 15%
- ✓ Increased staggered production: farmers are registering increased yields by following the GAP training and have reported reductions in post-harvest losses
- ✓ The OFSP flour produced by the project has met or exceeded the minimum standards required, meaning that it (and products produced using it) can be accepted by both local and international markets. This has attracted an international buyer from the USA demanding two metric tonnes of OFSP flour per week
- ✓ SOSPPA is now attracting both private and public local buyers

## What are the next steps?

SOSPPA desires to meet ISO-level standards for product certification and we will facilitate that. We plan to finalize the mid-term evaluation and build on lessons learned.



**Fig. 2.** Traditional sweetpotato root drying method (credit Farm Africa)



**Fig. 3.** SOSPPA Solar drying house for sweetpotatoes (credit Farm Africa)