Abi ZARDI | West Nile Farming Systems and Livelihoods at a glance

Facts & Figures

West Nile Agro ecological zone lies between altitude of [700Ms above sea level to 1,600Ms above sea level and covers a total land area of 15,476.5 km2 of the total 241,548 km2 of Uganda, which is about 34.7% of total land in Uganda. It has a population of 2,661.000 Million people (UBOS, 2014).

This zone lies in North Western part of the Nile river covering the present districts of; Adjumani, Moyo, Yumbe, Koboko, Maracha, Arua, Nebbi and Zombo

Sub Farming Systems in West Nile Region

West Nile AEZ has three sub zones that make up the farming systems, viz.; the High altitude (>800m a.s.l), the Low altitude (<700m a.s.l) and the mid altitude (700 – 800m a.s.l) subzones.

Highland-Perennial System covers the high altitude areas in the zone lying between 1200 ms up to 1,600 ms above sea level and receives with two rainy seasons with peaks in May and October

Annual Cropping- Livestock System is practiced in the medium altitude zone (between 700ms – 1,000 ms above sea level) with bimodal rainfall pattern.

Agro-Pastoral-Fishing System is practiced in the low altitude zone in the region (below 700 ms above sea level).

Peri-Urban System is practiced in the peri urban areas across the districts in the entire zone.

Food insecurity impedes Uganda's endeavour to realize the second Sustainable Development Goal [SDG 2] which is to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030.

Food security particularly in West Nile affects the rural households whose livelihoods [99%] are dependent on rain-fed crop and [87%] livestock production

The five major livelihood sources in the region; Food crop production [99%], livestock rearing [87%], trade [25%], causal labor [17%], Fish farming [12%] and [9%] are earn salary

The majority [47%] have no access to agricultural support services, [27%] of the support received is inform of seeds, [13%] is in form of tools, [11%] is extension and trainings services and [2%] of the support is attributed to livestock

Major agricultural shock experienced in the region is climatic change [erratic weather (53%)], Loss of harvest due to high level of plant diseases [22%], loss of harvest attributed to pest alone is [17%] and other shocks contribute [8%]

Major food Crops grown in the region include; Cassava, maize, beans, sesame, millet, groundnuts, sorghum, rice, potatoes, banana and coffee

Other non food crops grown in the region include; Tobacco, mirra (Catha edulis) and cotton

The crops that are seriously being abandoned included Moniga (black simsim), Sungu (Bambara nuts), Gurunya (yams), Olujo and Lokodi, Opiosunga (a type of climbing bean) and others

A livelihood comprises capabilities, assets including both material and social resources and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Source: IRPS, 2012 cited in Chambers & Conway, 1991).

District	Household size (mean)	Area cultivated per household per season (mean)	Proportion of households in farmer groups (%)	Proportion of households with iron roofed houses (%)	Proportion of households using organic fertilizers (%)	**Proportion of households using inorganic fertilizers (%)
Arua	8.63	2.0	68.6	3.9	16.6	2.0
Maracha	8.73	1.9	60.8	19.6	16.6	9.8
Koboko	7.26	1.1	66.0	4.0	16.2	12.0
Yumbe	8.79	2.3	75.9	6.9	9.4	10.3
Moyo	7.66	1.9	61.4	11.4	14.3	2.3
Adjumani	8.32	2.4	70.5	9.1	14.3	9.1
Nebbi	7.74	1.7	87.0	17.4	7.5	13.0
Zombo	55.38	1.8	43.8	25.0	5.2	12.5

Emerging Cross-cutting Issues Affecting Agriculture in the Region

Some of the emerging issues and related challenges affecting the communities in the regions include but not limited to:

Complex land tenure system often characterized by fragmented plots that do not support large scale production and increased cases of land grabbing and conflicts related to land selling are on the rise.

Indiscriminate cutting of trees for charcoal, brick burning and wood loads as source of major fuel, has continued to expose the region to vagaries of changing climate.

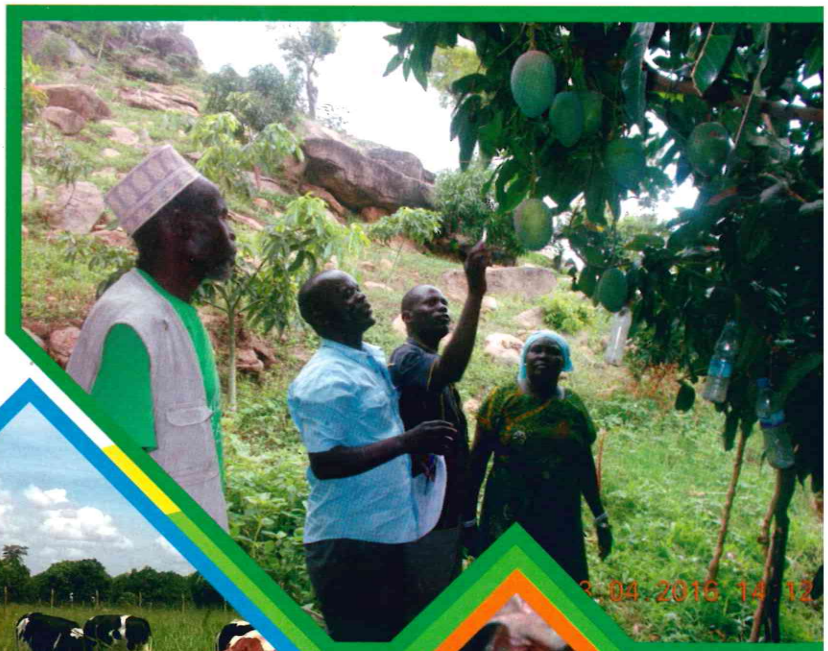
Common incidences of sicknesses such as HIV-AIDS, ulcers, diabetes, typhoid and hepatitis cases possibly because of the burgeoning population, rapid urbanization and porous borders with the neighboring countries. This situation is further exacerbated by the recent influx of Southern Sudanese refugees.

Agricultural production has been left mostly for women as most men are over taken up by over drinking of alcohol and chewing of mirra by the most productive age group.

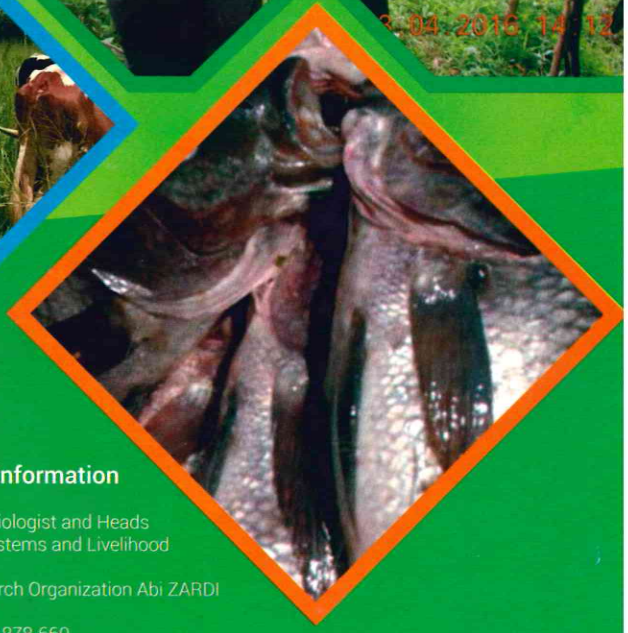
Increased cases of animal diseases e.g. foot and mouth disease, swine fever black quarter, menge mostly observed in Adjumani, Moyo and Yumbe districts respectively.

High population standing at 2,661,000 Million people (Source: National Population Census Report, 2014) with decreased per capita land availability for commercialized agriculture in addition to increased influx of the refugees in the region.

Dry season bush burning is a common practice which has continued to result in destruction of crops in the field.







Recommendations

a)More viable perennial crops with commercial potential for example coffee, bananas, Tea, should be introduced a long side the traditional grown crops.

b) Agro processing inputs to enhance value addition for cassava and fruits priotized in the 08 different districts of the region since cassava has been promoted into large scale production and is the main staple food crop and availability of plenty fruits across the region.

c) Oil can be processed from available avocado fruits and sesame that are doing well in the region

d)Potential for promotion of fish farming, coffee and cotton, beans, Irish potatoes, rice, and sorghum, avocado can also boost income levels of the people and create more employment opportunities for the region.

Contacts for further information

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