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Sunflower Growers' Guide

National Agricultural Research Organisation

1996

Introduction

Sunflower production in Uganda is expanding and could play a vital role in reducing vegetable oil imports. Although valued for its oil, it can also be an important source of protein meal.

Varieties

New Sunfola is the current improved and open pollinated variety.

To maintain seed purity of this open; pollinated type it is advisable for farmers in the same locality to grow the same variety and to keep beehives near the fields to facilitate pollination.

Land Preparation

Ploughing is done twice. The soil should not be over worked during the preparation of the seed bed to avoid water run off and it may also reduce water air and nutrient uptake.

Seed Rate

Use 4 kg/ha of seed.

Planting

The planting date should be selected to allow harvest time coincide with dry conditions. This reduces the risks of stem rot and head rot which are more prevalent during heavy rains.

Spacing should be 75 cm between rows and 50 cm between plants. Plant 3-5 seeds per hole at a depth of 5 cm and later thin to 2 plants per hole after first weeding.

Weeding

Early weed control is essential because the greater yield losses occur during the first three weeks after emergence. Two or three weedings are necessary in hand hoed fields.

The herbicides which can be used are: Paraquat (Gramaxone), EPTC, Lasso chloramben as pre-emergence and Round-up as post emergence.

Fertilizer Application

Fertilizer recommendations are based on the level of available nutrients in the soil.

Apply up to 45 kg/ha of Nitrogen or Potash avoiding direct contact with the germinating seedlings

Maturity

Sunflower matures in about 105 days.

Yields

The yields of local varieties are lower compared to improved varieties like 'New Sunfola'. Oil content for the local varieties ranges about 40% while for improved varieties is over 40%.

Harvesting and Drying

Harvest when the stem and the back *of* the head have turned brown. If birds are not a problem you may leave the crop in the field to further dry before harvest. Thresh immediately and dry seeds to low moisture content (12%) before storage to avoid deterioration. At harvest leave the stalks in the field and return the threshing to the field to restore soil nutrients.

Pests

Birds and rodents are the major pests. Control is by scaring of birds and baiting of rodents with rodenticide. The surrounding of the field should be kept clear. Do not plant in fields which are near breeding, areas or birds.

Diseases

These include Wilt, Stalk rot and Head *rot.*

Control: Stalk and head rot can be controlled by having the crop mature during the dry spell.

Wilt is controlled by proper crop rotation.

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