NARO
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESERACH ORGANIZATION

RWEBITABA ZARDI
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08





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Editor's Word

Getting Tea onto Uganda's main agenda

Some of **Uganda's Tea estates** date as far back as 1912

Uganda's Rwenzori region also known as the Western Highlands Agroecological zone (WHAEZ) is a gem in the entire country because of it's unique weather. This goes as far back as the earliest colonial times when tea was introduced as a cash crop in Uganda with a focus on the area. Some of the estates in the area were started as early as 1912.

Yet with all this wealth of Uganda's 5th best agricultural forex earner, little had been invested in researching on tea especially after the collapse of the then East African Community in 1977. That's where the establishment of Rwebitaba Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute (ZARDI) comes in.

In this newsletter you will see the picture of tea production in Uganda, commercial clones plus all that is being done to imropve quality and price.

Discover also how to make a fortune in fish farming through simple in-pond breeding techniques, the interventions that are making quality seed of beans and potatoes available to farmers in the Rwenzori region and much more in this maiden Institute Newsletter.
Nice reading.

ABRAHAM AHABWE
Development Communications Officer
NARO - RWEBITABA ZARDI

NARO

NARO RWEBITABA NATIONAL Mandate

To generate and disseminate tea technologies in Uganda

NARO RWEBITABA ZONAL Mandate

Carrying out applied and basic research as well as technology promotion & outreach in Uganda's Western Highlands Agroecological zone (Rwenzori Region)





Director's Word

Establishing Uganda's center of Excellence in Tea Research

BY DR. ROBOONI TUMUHIMBISE
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH - RWEBITABA ZARDI



NARO'S Top management team with the leadership of Rwebitaba ZARDI signalling a focus on tea as a commodity

One of the lead Development Programs in Uganda's third National Development Plan is Agro industrialization. Its aim is to increase commercialization and competitiveness of agricultural production and agro-processing. To foster a sustainable agro-industrialization agenda in Uganda, the ten commodities that have been prioritized include; coffee, tea, fisheries, cocoa, cotton, vegetable oil, beef, maize, dairy and cassava.

As Uganda's lead institute in Tea research, NARO-Rwebitaba ZARDI is doing all to ensure that it supports the attainment of the above goal. This includes developing high productive and climate-smart specialty tea varieties, and value added tea products like Tea Oil and ready-to-drink Tea beverages.

That aside, we are also in constant engagement with tea-sector players and National Curriculum Development Center to come up with a first ever Tea Curriculum for Uganda. These coupled with sensitization of farmers to inculcate in them a spirit of quality control at plucking will sustainably increase tea production.

We believe that in a few years, as funds will permit, we will be able to release new superior tea varieties to the farming communities to replace those released in 1960s and 1970s. We welcome all partnerships that will support our efforts and/or move with us to grow into Uganda's Center of Excellence in Tea Research.

However, as a ZARDI, we also involved in solving the crisis of seed in Rwenzori region as part of our efforts to increase food security and household incomes. We are extensively producing foundation seed for beans as well as potatoes that we avail to Local Seed businesses that have been created and strengthened in partnership with the Integrated Seed Sector Development project.

Other agricultural commodities that we are working on are Fish, Bees (including stingless bees), bananas, agroforestry, fruit crops, livestock as well as the attendant social economic issues around them. We are pleased that the government has put in place supporting infrastructure like an office block, labs' block as well as a state-of-the art conference facility. Work on the outside finishing around these blocks at the Rwebitaba TRC is going on. Our gratitude goes to the Institute advisory committee members and all partners who have made this possible, individuals and institutions, local and international as well as the Local governments in the zone we are mandated in.

Finally, I thank the Development Communications Office of Rwebitaba ZARDI and the entire staff of the institute whose efforts have made the production of this newsletter possible. Together, our efforts will lift agricultural production and household incomes in the Rwenzori region and the nation.

Uganda's Tea Sector FACTS & FIGURES

1,000,000

The approximate number of people who derive their livelihood from tea production in Uganda. Numbers have since increased with Kigezi and Buhweju coming on board.

1957

The year that the Tea Research Institute of East Africa (TRIEA) was established at Rwebitaba in Kyenjojo, Uganda to carry out research work on tea in Pre-Independence Uganda.

32

The total number of tea factories in Uganda as of 2018



450

The number of clones in Uganda's Tea Gene Bank at Rwebitaba Tea Research Center that are yet to be fully characterised.

93%

The percentage of Uganda's locally produced tea that is exported making it one of the great forex earners for Uganda. Only 7% gets consumed on the local market.

2012

The year tea research was resumed in Uganda with the creation of NARO Rwebitaba ZARDI to take over preliminary efforts at revamping research work on tea that was being done by NACRRI Namulonge.

4th

The position Uganda's tea holds with regard to the price it fetches on the East African market. Uganda is trailing behind Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi because of the poor quality green leaf it produces

5th

The position tea holds among Uganda's agricultural export earners, behind Coffee, Fish & Fish products, Dairy & Horticulture. For 5 years todate, gold has been Uganda's leading export.

59,000

The number of metric tonnes of made tea produced by Uganda annually. This is behind Malawi (55,000) and Kenya (295,000), putting Uganda in the 3rd place in tea production in Africa.

1977

The year Tea Research collapsed in Uganda together with the East African Community. This research work was taking place at Rwebitaba as a Tea breeding center for East Africa

$104

Millons of dollars are what Uganda earns annually from its 59,000 metric tonnes of Tea produced most of which gets exported.

Information provided by **RONALD KAWOOYA** (TEA RESEARCH OFFICER- RWEBITABA ZARDI)

Making Uganda's tea more competitive in regional markets



Left, a research field at the Rwebitaba TRC. Below, inside the Rwebitaba Tea Nursery



The most recent figures indicate that Uganda's tea continues to attract the lowest price compared to other East African member states that sell the commodity through the Mombasa Auction.

Data from the Mombasa Auction shows that Uganda's tea sold for lower than that of Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi.

According to the January 12 and 13 auctions, a Kg of Uganda's tea went for $1.3 (Shs4,810), far below Kenya's $2.38 (Shs8,806). This was also lower than $3.23 (Shs11,951), which Rwanda earned per Kg and $2.47 (Shs 9,139) for Burundi. Tea export receipts, according to data from Bank of Uganda, have also slightly declined by 4 per cent.

According to Bank of Uganda annual performance for the period ended November 2020, Uganda earned $84.2m (Shs311b), which was lower than the $87.6m (Shs322b) earned in the same period between 2018 and 2019.

It is the grim picture above that NARO Rwebitaba Tea team is working hard to change through these interventions:

Quality Planting materials

According to a Turyaheebwa Vereriyano a Tea Technician at Rwebitaba, the institute has a nursery at the Rwebitaba Tea Research center in Kyenjojo where farmers and even estates can get quality plantlets of high yielding clones to propagate. He says that through these interactions with farmers, the team emphasizes standardization especially in tea production to ensure quality green leaf. In some instances, farmers are encouraged to gradually replace their old tea bushes with new ones which are clonal, high yielding and high quality.

Sensitization on the two leaves and a bud

According to a Turyaheebwa Vereriyano a Tea Technician at Rwebitaba, the institute continues to carry out several sensitization of farmers through their estate and or factory groupings. In these meetings, Turyaheebwa says that the farmers are told the importance of the rule of harvesting two leaves and a bud while plucking as well as keeping a correct table for the tea plantations. He says that many farmers ignore that rule in their struggle to get more volumes of green leaf to the factories so that they can earn more. He says that in other nations, the rule is enforced so that their tea can fetch a better price.

The push for Uganda's Tea Policy in Uganda

Although Uganda is the third tea producer in Africa behind Kenya and Malawi, the nation has no definite policy regarding producing it. According to Ronald Kawooya a Tea Research officer at the insitute, the Policy is in draft form and at Cabinet level. He says that the policy will enable creation of a regulatory body to handle issues in the tea sector. He however adds that some quality control enforcement work is already taking place in farmer groups and at estate or factory level in some of Uganda's 32 tea factories.

Uganda's five (5) Commercial Tea Clones

Rwebitaba ZARDI has been extending these clones that are highly productive and of high quality to nursery operators and through the NAADS program. To have volumes and keep the quality, farmers are encouraged to establish their fields with at least 60% high yielding clones and 40% high quality clones.

Information provided by **Vivian Namutebi** (A TEA RESEARCH OFFICER- AT RWEBITABA ZARDI)



CLONE 303/577

This is a narrow-leaved Assam (Indian) type of tea clone that with good management can produce an average of 7,817 Kgs per hectare annually. It has many shoots and it spreads and so is able to have a wider table. It is a high yielding type.

CLONE 6 / 8

This is a broad-leaved tea clone that grows erect. With good management can produce an average of 4,441 Kgs per hectare annually. This is a High Quality clone for Black tea.

CLONE 108 / 82

This is a High yielding clone for Black tea. With good management, this clone can produce an average of 5,329 Kgs per hectare annually.

CLONE 100 / 5

This is a High yielding clone for Black tea. With good management, this clone can produce an average of 5,238 Kgs per hectare annually.

CLONE 31 / 8

This is a high quality clone for black tea. With good management this clone can produce an average of 5,049 Kgs per hectare annually.

Why are **women** the **preferred tea pluckers**?



For purposes of quality control at tea plucking level, women are preferred as labourers in this labour-intensive activity. According to Vivian Namutebi a Tea Research Officer at Rwebitaba ZARDI, women care more to pluck only two-leaves and a bud as they are attentive to detail.

Although some use machine pluckers, it is hard to achieve quality with the machine if especially the tea table is not even. Keeping a strict table would help especially the machine plucker to only harvest the leaves above the table. In the absence of this precision, women are preferred to men in this activity, the latter, in effort to increase volumes, being more predisposed to harvesting other leaves that downgrade the quality of processed tea.

Rwebitaba certified to produce Hass Avocado



Institute staff in the Agroforestry nursery assessing the Hass Avocado Seedlings. The Institute Nursery has been certified to produce that variety in the Rwenzori region and the nation.

In the Rwenzori region, there are only two nurseries that are certified to produce the now fast popularizing Hass Avocado seedlings and they are; Rwebitaba ZARDI Nursery and the Royal Plants Nursery in Kyenjojo.

According to the Agroforestry Research officer at the Institute Boaz Mwesigwa, the certification took place in October effected by the Avocado Cooperative of Uganda. This he says puts Rwebitaba at the forefront of helping the farmers in the region to tap into the growing market for Hass Avocado seedlings. Mwesigwa says that Kabarole and Bunyangabu are Uganda's leading producers of Hass Avocado.

Mwesigwa says that the Agro forestry team has done extensive technical backstopping for fruit tree farmers in the region who include the RDC of Ntoroko Elijah Biryabarema. Biryabarema's farm that extensively produces mangoes in Bigodi, Kamwenge is a lead supplier for fruits to the hotels around Kibaale Forest National Park.
He says that the agroforestry team has also supported a one Sabiiti, who has set up a 250-acre Hass Avocado orchard in Kanara, Kitagwenda District.
According to Alfred Afeku, the Institute Agroforestry technician, work is ongoing among coffee farmers in Kasese through the AGRILED project train them in sustainable natural resource management practices. Rwebitaba ZARDI is doing these interventions through the Kasese District Production office.

Commodities with seedlings in the Institute Nursery



Passion Fruits



Paw paws



Hass Avocado



Guavas



Citrus oranges



Musizi tree



Caliandra

NARO Rwebitaba shines at the Rwenzori Investment Expo



Tea Technician Vereriyano (L) explaining to show goers



President Museveni near the NARO stall

Team Rwebitaba shone in the late January 2020 Rwenzori Investment Expo that took place at the main Campus of Mountains of the Moon University in Saaka, Fort Portal Tourism City.
The expo was graced by President Yoweri Museveni as the chief Guest. Also present was the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries Vincent Ssempijja who in his talk commended NARO for supporting food security in Uganda and beyond with technologies like bean and maize varieties.

The team exhibited Uganda's premier Green Tea brand made by Rwebitaba ZARDI as well as the technologies that support tea growing in Uganda. Other technologies included the Cassava Chipper, Hapa-in-pond breeding of fish, Bee venom harvesting and honey processing.



Boaz Mwesigwa (c) talking on the NARO cassava chipper



Alituha Moreen exhibiting honey processing for TV crew



David Mununuzi (L) explaining fish technologies

Breed fish and become wealthy

Rwebitaba ZARDI is establishing a **commercial pond** to demonstrate **profitable fish farming** in the Rwenzori Region



David Mununuzi (R) demonstrating how to riase fish seed using Hapas

Fish farming is one of the agricultural activities that's relatively a recent in the Rwenzori region and one that can economically empower farmers to improve their livelihoods. According to David Mununuzi the Rwebitaba ZARDI Aquaculture Technician, unlike other enterprises, fish farming can use small space and even land that could be considered unproductive.
It also can be integrated with enterprises like poultry and vegetables. He says that water from the ponds could irrigate farms because it contains good organic manure that gives all the nutrients required by your plants so you can increase yield.

He says that raising seed from Tilapia or Cat fish just for sale at a commercial level is not like raising them to be adult fish that reach table or market size. As opposed to producing seed from Cat fish, Tilapia seed can easily be generated within the ponds using Hapa in pond Techniques.
Mununuzi says that the institute is currently working on a commercial pond to demonstrate some of these technologies to fish farmers.
This method, he says, minimizes on wastage of resources and makes monitoring and supervision easily as well as controlling against predators like snakes, birds etc.

Using hapas, one is able to manage their population, manually sex them (easily identify and raise the different sexes from their Hapas) and so be raised independently. Hapas can contain seed that covers all the demand of the farmer. Any time he requires seed, the Hapa approach can avail him a required population. They are maintained in the Hapas and availed to those who want at a fee. Size off course dictates price.
The smaller the size of the fingerings, the lesser the amount. Prices range from 300-500 sh each. A case of a Hapa containing 200 seed or fingerings each costing 500 Sh can get you Sh 100,000. If you have 5 Hapas, you can therefore get 0.5m even while you are operating from a small area.

How to raise fish seed in Hapas

In order to raise the seed, a farmer would need some technical help from an expert to guide them in the areas of selecting and managing the quality brood for breeding, manual sexing and water quality parameters.

The required husbandry practices like feeding at proper time and in appropriate quantities would also require some training.

It takes appropriately three months to go over the process and have seed that would be available for sale or stocking in the pond.

The farmer would need well prepared ponds, preferably two of 10m x 20m each and a reliable source of good quality water in sufficient quantities. He also needs at least 3 Hapas and brood stock of healthy adult fish obtained from a recognized supplier.

He also needs to acquire high protein pelletized fish feeds (with relatively 40-45% crude protein content) to stimulate growth and maturation of the gonads for the reproduction process.

Such feeds are available among agro-input dealers but a technical person could guide the farmer on how to use locally available materials to prepare equally helpful fish feeds.

The parent stock is then brought together after three months of preparation and through mating generates enough seed for you. This parent stock is later taken out of the Hapa for rest and preparation for another reproduction cycle.

The fish fingerings in your Hapa, if well maintained would be ready for sale after two months. An aquaculture technician could guide you on how to take care of the young ones till they are ready either for sale or restocking ponds.

Handled very well, the farmer can have at least three cycles in a year. With increased knowledge of healthy living the demand for fish is high. The farmers who get trained at the institute are able access the existing demand for fish fingerings in the region and beyond that has become inexhaustible.

The farmer needs to be on the lookout for thieves who may come and vandalize his ponds because of the business. There's also a risk of predators like snakes, monitor lizards, otters and other birds.

He also needs to look out for quality of water to avoid contamination especially from shared water sources.

Empowering Rwengaju to be a model

Interventions by **NARO Rwebitaba ZARDI** in its host subcounty are making it truly a **Presidential model area**





A cleared pond belonging to Ruth Rukwebe (right) a resident of Mbagane cell in Rwengaju Subcounty

Ruth Rukwebe, a resident of Mumbagane in the Presidential Model Sub county of Rwengaju in Kabarole District now has reason to smile. From a deserted and bushy ponds, she will soon be hosting a lead demonstration for fish farming in Rwengaju Sub County, thanks to the interventions by NARO Rwebitaba ZARDI through the Agro-industrialization Local Economic Development (AGRILED) Project.

A team from NARO led by the Institute aquaculture technician David Mununuzi that started visiting Rukwebe in November 2020 was able to clear the bushes around her ponds and revive them. Rukwebe has four ponds that she had abandoned because of lack of skills and resources.

According to David Mununuzi, NARO is establishing Rukwebe's place as a demonstration site for fish farming in the community. Mununuzi says that if Rukwebe's ponds were restocked



Rukwebe's pond had overgrown bushes before NARO intervened

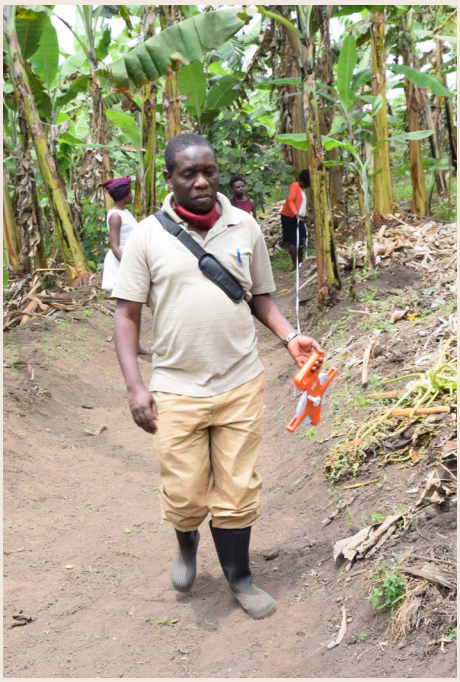
with at least 2,000 fish fingerings, with good management, she would be able to get between 10m -14m at harvest in eight months' time. Mununuzi said that he also hoped to have a number of trainings carried out for interested fish farmers in the Rwengaju community at Rukwebe's place. Rukwebe also has a poultry and dairy project at her home.

Dr Godffrey Suubi, the Head of Technology Promotion and Outreach program at the Institute says that these efforts are part of the institute's efforts of disseminating demand driven agricultural technologies that support government efforts towards commercialization of agriculture.

Suubi says that the choice of Rwengaju for these activities is to enable it live up to its status as a Presidential Model area as well as to improve the relevance of the NARO institute in its host community.

Other interventions in aquaculture that the AGRILED is effecting include excavation works for two mega ponds at the Kyembogo station of Rwebitaba ZARDI. The commercial ponds will be 1000 square meters each and one will be a reservoir. These will be adding to the 10-pond capacity at the institute that has supported research work in aquaculture at the institute and facilitated in-pond breeding work. They have also been a training ground for fish farmers in the region and an avenue for revenue generation. Mununuzi says that he has done training for close to 40 fish farmers at the ponds since the year begun.

The AGRILED Program is also supporting the establishment of demonstration sites for good agronomy practices in banana production and also pasture multiplication sites in the sub county and all the nine districts in the entire Rwenzori region.





Douglas Jjemba, an agronomist guiding a family in Rwengaju on best practices in banana production



A cleaned banana plantation of a farmer in Rwengaju assisted by Rwebitaba under the AGRILED Project

Tea Research in Uganda has a new home

A **three-block f**acility has been constructed by the government as part of **revamping research on Tea**



An aerial picture of Rwebitaba TRC showing the lab and office blocks (left) and Conference Hall (right)

Uganda's Tea Research Center that had lost her glory from the days of the East African Tea Research center under the 1970's regional cooperation body is now beaming with a new glow. Under the management of NARO's youngest institute- Rwebitaba ZARDI, the center is now home to a multipurpose Conference Center, modern labs and a spacious office block.

The Sh. 2.92bn worth phase one of the entire construction was completed in time for the handover in July 2020. Speaking after the final site visit of the phase, the Director of Research of Rwebitaba ZARDI Dr. Robooni Tumuhimbise thanked Excel Construction Company for giving life to what was just a dream. He said that completion works that included compound paving and other outdoor water works would be done in time to keep the integrity of the structures that had been put up.

He said that partners and visiting expatriates in Tea Research would also be able to find working space at the office.

Tumuhimbise was flanked by Ronald Kawooya- NARO's lead tea scientist who welcomed the over 300-seater Conference center as the new venue for the numerous trainings that are conducted by the



The office block at Rwebitaba TRC.



NARO staff and contractors at the handover of Phase I.
Work is ongoing for Phase II that include paving and fencing the facility

institute. He said that this was a great step in Rwebitaba's efforts to fulfil its national mandate of generating and disseminating tea technologies in Uganda.

Set in the immediate eastern neighborhood of Kibaale Forest National park (the worlds' primate capital), the Rwebitaba Tea Research Center is also home to the National Tea Gene Bank with over 450 tea clones which NARO is working hard to fully characterize.

The bank is part of the 69 hectare Tea plantation that comprises this center that supports and serves at least 32 tea companies in the region. The center is a substation of Rwebitaba Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute (ZARDI) which is NARO's foot in the Rwenzori region and whose main offices are at the Kyembogo Station in Kabarole District.

Solving the puzzle of seed in the Rwenzori's

How farmer groups producing **Quality Declared Seed** (QDS) are **flourshing** as Local Seed businesses (LSBs)



ISSD and NARO team together with Kamwenge DLG at the launch of Kamwenge Tukorere Hamwe store





ISSD Finance & Administration officer Robert Mbuku with a member of Katibani Mpora Group. Above Kaburisoke Seed Store

It is exciting seeing local farmer groups in villages competing with established Seed Companies to meet the seed demands in their localities.

These groups that have been constituted now as local seed businesses (LSBs) through the work of Integrated Seed Sector Development (ISSD) and NARO Rwebitaba ZARDI have grown capacity through producing seed at a newly created level in national seed production called Quality Declared Seed (QDS).

This kind of seed is produced through less rigorous means compared to the production of foundational seed. Through empowerment, some of the LSBs have now begun producing Foundation seed and are able to fully cover the requirements of the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) Seed inspectors.
Group members now boast of increased household incomes and profitable connections as well as great exposure that they have got in the process of producing QDS of especially beans and potatoes.

According to William Turyamureeba of Kinoni Bakyara nÁbaami Tukorere Hamwe, their group has been able to supply seed to NAADS, have benefitted from training in good agronomic practices and the welfare in their homes has greatly improved through seed business. This group is found

in Busiriba Sub county of Kamwenge District. Turyamureeba, a Seed Trainer in the group says that the store that ISSD has constructed for their LSB with some top up funds from their group will now work as their address. The group has 13 men and 19 women and is already registered with MAAIF and now moving to register with the Cooperative Alliance.
Other LSBs in Kamwenge include Kamwenge Tukorere Hamwe, Kaburisoke, Byabasambu and Katibani Mpora and others making a total of 11 LSBs in the district. There are other LSBs in Kyenjojo, Kyegegwa, Kabarole and Bunyangabu districts

For Constance Bangirana of Kamwenge Tukorere Hamwe Cooperative, the seed business has elevated her through exposures. She says that she has featured of Seeds of Gold program on NTV talking about her work in agriculture. From 12 members, the group has now grown to 60 and they get visitors from as far as Kenya coming to learn from them. She says that the seed business has enabled them to have food and live quality lives.

According to the Director of Research NARO Rwebitaba ZARDI Dr. Robooni Tumuhimbise, the LSBs have shown that once the people are empowered, they can ably get into large scale commercial agriculture.
Robooni says that some of the farmers who were getting 2 bags of beans per acre are now getting 8 bags, a 400% increment. Robooni says that the institute is now working hard to meet the demands of foundational seed from these LSBs that have been empowered to produce seed.



NARO team with KYEDFA an outscalling partner in Kyenjojo



NARO team in Nyankwanzi Coperative office, Kyenjojo





Right ISSD Cheif of Party Patrick Oyee. Left, Oyee with the Kamwenge DLG staff at the opening of Kinoni store

The prank & promise in Uganda's Herbal teas

Where do these contless **herbal tea producers** get green leaf in this **highly competitive** market?

The tea industry in Uganda is gradually attracting new players. In the ***take-your-food-as-medicine*** drive that fronts a nutrition-based approach to minimizing the burden of lifestyle diseases, tea is proving to be a vital ingredient. This is not unique to Uganda. World over, cubing lifestyle illnesses is forcing consumer behavior away from animal based and processed food towards herbal and vegetarian diets.
Food supplements could on account of this overtake traditional pharmaceuticals as health consumables. Specialty teas in particular have become preferred beverages of the new healthy lifestyles. This has presented a lucrative window for Uganda's agro-processors trying to tap into a market that had been formerly dominated by supplements and herbal teas from China, the U.S and other countries. FM Radio stations and Televisions are awash with adverts of one herbal tea or another or combinations that are famed to cure almost all your lifestyle-based woes; high blood pressure, intestinal ailments, cancers, sexual malfunction, diabetes, name it.

A probable prank?

In a tea market that's already in short supply of quality green leaf, with factories preying on each other, where could these budding firms producing herbal teas be getting their raw material? Is this not a prank that lures desperate consumers looking to better their health? Remember; you only pluck two leaves and a bud while harvesting from a tea bush. Mixing in excess leaf ends only in downgrading the quality of the ultimate product.
All Uganda's 32 Tea factories have to tight-mark their plantations, whether they belong to out growers or are owned by factories themselves. Competition here is cut throat. They use strict supplier contracts and give an array of incentives to farmers to ensure that they have sufficient volumes of green leaf. Some even flout the 'two leaves and a bud' harvesting standard in effort to up their quantities. Their primary commodity is the Black CTC (Cut Tear and Crush) or the common black tea, 93% of which gets



NARO's Green Tea, a trusted brand from a traceable source

exported either via the Mombasa auction or directly to the UK or some Arabian countries. The remainder, a paltry 7%, is the share of locally produced tea that goes to the Ugandan beverage market. Which estate then could afford excess green leaf to dispense to these herbal tea firms?
Their other window would perhaps be establishing an own tea plantation as a source of green leaf. The recommended size is 40 acres of particular clones for sustainable supply. How many of these companies have such a plantation and of which clone? Ugandan tea research is still working on releasing an own-characterized clone having resumed work at the Rwebitaba Tea Research Center in Kyenjojo district in 2012 after a 35-year lapse following the collapse of the East African Community.
In the unlikely scenario, could these companies be importing green leaf tea; and from where?

The Promise

Nevertheless, these 'herbal teas', however suspect, represent the future of Uganda's tea industry in the wake of falling Black tea prices. For the start, they could increase local consumption and widen the market.
Most importantly however, they loosely fall into the category of specialty teas which are the next frontier for anyone seeking to invest in Uganda's tea industry. In addition to the gradually popularizing Green Tea, other specialties include White tea, Purple tea and Silver tea which currently fetch a higher price and are easier to make.
For now, though, consumers of most of Ugandan herbal teas have to contend with products that are as suspect in their source of raw material as in their promise of a wonder cure.

OPINION BY ABRAHAM AHABWE - **Development Communications Officer** - RWEBITABA ZARDI

PICTORIAL



NARO Rwebitaba staff with members from Mpanga Tea factory after a training at Kasunga Center in Kyenjojo



NARO DG Dr. Ambroze Agona interacting with the press during his visit to Rwebitaba in September 2020



Rwebitaba's Rachael Nalugo (right) interacting with extension workers in Kasese with regard to partnership in the AGRILED project



Rwebitaba's advisory Committe inspecting the apiary unit of stingless bees at the Institute



Rwebitaba's staff guiding Bishop (Rtrd) Geoffrey Rwubusisi on the calliandra plantlets needed for his diary project in Kamwenge

PICTORIAL

Rwebitaba ZARDI was honoured to host the Chairperson **NARO Governing Council Prof. Joseph Obua** during the March 2021 Advisory Committee meeting. Below are the highlights.



Aquaculture technician David Mununuzi explaining the research work at the institute fish ponds to the team



The team being shown the encroachment attempts on Rwebitaba ZARDI land



Team inspecting the progress of works on the reservior for the irrigation system at Rwebitaba ZARDI



Team inspecting the progress on work on the pumping station for the irrigation system at Rwebitaba ZARDI



David Mununuzi talking on the progress of work on the commercial-size pond that is being prepared at the institute

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