

## Uganda's agriculture ministry intensifies research on Hass avocado

The Ministry of Agriculture has intensified research on the viability of Hass avocado farming in the different parts of the country.

Hass Avocado is a variety said to be incredibly nutritious and containing potassium, heart-healthy acids as well as fibre. The variety with a dark green coloured rough surface matures after two years and a single mature tree can produce more than 500kg fruits under good agronomic management practices.

Dr Hillary Agaba, the Director for Research at the National Forestry Resources Research Institute says that Hass avocado is believed to be one of the highly profitable crops which have attracted a constant surplus demand in the international market.

According to Dr Agaba, Uganda aims to produce a million avocado seedlings over the next 12 months, which will be given out to farmers at a subsidized fee of 5,000 Shillings. However, more studies are required to ascertain how local farmers can easily harness this opportunity.

Dr Agaba explains that they have since set up a 10-acre-avocado model farm to act as a gene bank for about 11 varieties of avocado. This will be inspected by different agronomists to conduct viable studies on the possible pests and diseases responsible for deterring the maximum productivity of the crop.

He says that the garden will also act as a national research hub where interested scientists will ascertain the different Hass avocado byproducts so as to promote value addition to the fruit before export.





Dr Agaba says that they have partnered with successful farmers who will foster their target of producing one million well grafted Hass avocado seedlings, which can be easily distributed to interested farmers at a low cost.

Under the same partnership, he says eligible farmers will have access to free extension services and constant orientation on well researched and acceptable agronomical practices, aimed at fostering production of quality avocado fruits suitable for sustaining the current demand at the international market.

Dr Agaba however stresses that most farmers earn low yields during the first harvests and their research is mainly aimed at identifying such gaps so that the farmers can be linked to highly productive seedlings which will save them from suffering embarrassment and humiliation resulting from product rejects on the international market.

Hamza Musubika, a Hass avocado farmer in Mayuge district says that although he planted 100 Hass avocado trees about four years ago, and would earn at least 350 million Shillings annually, his garden was attacked by flower abortion early last year.

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<https://www.dispatch.ug/2021/05/24/ugandas-agriculture-ministry-intensifies-research-on-hass-avocado/>

