

Quarterly Report June 2010 CCIU LTD

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Title of Activity:	Conservation Cotton Initiative Uganda Ltd
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ACTIVITIES DURING QUARTER:

A) COTTON GINNING

The seed cotton was taken to Iki Iki Ginnery, which is owned by North Bukedi Cotton Company, and certified as organic by Control Union . The outturn was satisfactory and as expected.

SEED COTTON	KGS	GIN OUTTURN	BALES	KGS	LBS	GOT %
AR	80154	AR LINT	162	28,955	63,834	36.1%
BR	2290	BR LINT	4	834	1,839	36.4%
	82444	TOTAL LINT	166	29,789	65,673	

The lint has been transported to Phenix Logistics premises and is awaiting a decision where to apply. The seed was taken over by CDO to be dressed for planting seed, which is their prerogative.

B) FARM ACTIVITIES COTTON

1) Rotation Crop

In order to encourage farmers to rotate their crop as required for soil conservation, we distributed 1962 kgs of finger millet seed to the farmers who had worked with us in the last season. Finger millet was selected after consultations with the lead farmers.

2) Neem Tree Seedlings

The neem tree is known for its use in pest and mosquito control and there are commercial products made from neem extract available for use in organic farming.

The leaves can be used in the preparation of a tea together with some other ingredients and sprayed on the cotton as insect repellent.

We have distributed 3000 neem tree seedlings to our farmers in Gulu and Amuru districts, and on the distribution days had a radio talk show with the Gulu District Forestry Officer, who in Acholi language gave instructions how to plant and care for the seedlings and answer questions from listeners.

3) Cotton Seed Distribution

Cotton Development Organisation, CDO, availed the seed in good time. Initially 33 tons of delinted dressed seed were allocated to Gulu and Amuru. As the demand from farmers however was higher than last year, the quantity was increased and 66 tons have been distributed. Both the new company leasing Gulu Ginnery and ourselves were involved in the distribution. CCIU distributed in the areas where most of our farmers are. It is to be noted that not all the farmers receiving seed are on the project. The quantity of seed distributed is equivalent to about 10 000 acres if using 6 kg per acre. CDO recommends an economical 3 kg per acre, but in practice this is not realistic. Farmers tend to use even more than 6kgs, for fear of germination problems. Contrary to what we initially expected, some farmers report poor germination, something we will have to verify.

4) Farmers Registration

The extensions staff undertook the registration of farmers who want to participate in the organic program for the coming season. Our target is 3500 farmers with one acre under cotton each. We registered slightly more, as experience has shown a fairly substantial drop out rate, partly because some farmers decide in the end to plant a competing crop like maize or soy beans on the opened land.

Signing of contracts with farmers and filling in of entry forms have been completed and the data captured. Still in progress is the recording of GPS readings of the farmers homestead.

5) Selection of Lead Farmers for Demonstration Plots

120 Lead Farmers have been identified and selected. Their initial training has taken place in June and will go into July. So far 25 demonstration plots have been planted out of which 21 are in Gulu and 4 in Amuru.

We have five Secondary schools participating in organic cotton demonstration plots for both districts of Amuru and Gulu. Names of the schools are as follows, Sacred Heart Girls High, Keyo SS, Pabbo SS, Awere SS and Layibi College out of which the first three schools have already planted. The lead farmers are given a basic kit for the demonstration plot which consists of:

3 kgs Cotton Seed , from CDO, delinted and dressed with Bronopol

1 sisal rope

1 hoe

1 Axe

1 panga

1 kg sorghum seed (trap crop)

Okra (trap crop)

1 record book and a pen.

After the crop is established, a ULV Pump or a knapsack sprayer is added

Recipient	Hoes	Pangas	Axes	Sisal Ropes
Lead farmers	120	120	120	120
Schools	25	5	5	5
Total	145	125	125	125

Crop condition

Where weather conditions (rains required) allowed , the early crop was planted in June and is doing well, Gap-filling, thinning and weeding is in progress. Below a well laid demonstration plot with just emerged cotton plants.



6) Soil Improvement Trials

In collaboration with Serere Agricultural Reserch Station and NOGAMU, we have established four demonstration plots with trials of mucuna beans to to test improvement in soil fertility. Mucuna beans have a high capacity for nitrogen fixation, and are ploughed under as they are not edible. Soil samples have been taken before planting and after ploughing the beans under in preparation for the cotton. We are

waiting for the results.

7) Field Officers Training

A two day training was organized for our field staff (17) on the 31st May to 1st June, with resource personnel from NOGAMU . The main topic was the ICS and general organic agronomy.

8) Farmers Training

Ordinary farmers training is in progress, these training sessions are carried out on the demo plots by the field officers . As of end June, 587 farmers have attended the sessions.



9) Certification

Cotton Development Organization is planning to bring in pesticides for pest control for cotton farmers in our areas. In addition we also have an NGO under USAID funding, carrying out IRS against mosquitoes (Uganda Indoor Residual Spraying Project) using a Pyrethroid called Fendona. These are problems which may be a stumbling block during inspection for certification, as they pose clearly a risk of contamination of seed cotton, in the case of pesticides by drift but also potential dishonesty in the case of IRS by contact if farmers store the cotton in their house.

C) ACTIVITIES WITH PRIMARY SOCIETIES

1) Training of Societies Officials

The strengthening of the primary societies is an ongoing process. We have held training meetings with primary societies officials in collaboration with the District Cooperative Officer. CCIU's efforts in this are getting official recognition and are well appreciated. The meetings so far concentrated on the role of the primary societies. The next training will be on basic accounting and administration, again in cooperation with the DCO.

2) Societies Ox Plough Program

The extensive training program on the use of ox ploughs was completed in April. 370 farmers participated in a two day program in various locations. The attendance was higher than usual, and there was interest and need. CCIU intends to extend this program, the use of animal traction is clearly gaining popularity, and as tractor services are only scantily available and expensive, this component of the project is clearly helpful to the societies and their farmers.

3) Societies Mini Gins

The down payments for the machinery have been made on 23rd June and shipment is expected end of July.

We have held meetings with the societies and in cooperation with the District Cooperative Officer have selected the two societies to benefit from the pilot plants.

We have requested a lawyer to draft an agreement and this will be discussed with the societies and the DCO

D) SELF ASESMENT / EVALUATION / PROBLEMS

a) Targets

The targets for this part of the cotton year are:

1) Timely distribution of Seed

Seed distribution this year was in time, and the project has been instrumental in the orderly execution of the exercise, and that includes seed for farmers who are not in the project.

2) Farmers Registration

We have registered the farmers but lag behind in GPS coordinate collection and recording

3) Field Officers Training

The project has been lucky to benefit from NOGAMU (National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda) support in the form of resource personnel coming in for training of our field officers, and is on schedule in this respect.

4) Preparation for Pre Audit Inspection /

The project has failed to obtain full organic status in the first season. IMO took the position that it is not feasible for small holder groups to be certified first year without any conversion period, even in the absence of pesticide and fertilizer use. This is a policy issue, not in the regulations as such. We have agreed that this season a preaudit inspection shall be carried out to assess the level of training new farmers receive in order to satisfy IMO that the farmers are well versed in the principals of organic farming.

At the same time, the future for organic cotton has once more become very doubtful on a political level. We are facing a renewed campaign from Government against organic cotton growing. At the forefront is the Director of Planning in the Ministry of Agriculture, supported by the Chairman of CDO, both are convinced that organic yields are so low that the farmers are not compensated by the premium paid. An initial meeting has been very negative, they instructed us to limit ourselves to 500 farmers, later increased to 1000. We are still lobbying the MD CDO, with uncertain outcome.

E) IMPACT

a) Farmers interest in Cotton

Growing cotton on some of the land a farmer has, will contribute to cash household income.

The most frequent question our extension staff was asked last season by farmers, was who would come and buy the cotton. Many did not believe our assurances that we would, did to their later regret not plant. The demand for cotton seed was much higher this year, which seems to indicate that our presence and marketing with the societies has raised the level of confidence and interest in the crop.

b) Societies

At last years AGM of West Acholi Cooperative Union, only 7 of the 99 societies had held any AGM. As of the end of June, 28 out of the 40 societies we are working with, have held their meetings assisted by the project and have submitted their annual return forms to the District Cooperative Officer. The societies involvement in the ox plough program and earlier the marketing is helping them to become relevant again in their communities.

CCIU LTD

C.Auberson

13/7/10