

Uganda Agriculture, Market & Weather Weekly Report

April 4–11, 2025)

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Executive Summary

Uganda's first rainy season shows variable conditions across regions. Karamoja begins planting with near-normal rainfall expected after initial delays. Northern and Eastern regions faced early deficits, though Eastern areas saw improvement in March. Most bimodal region farmers have planted maize, beans, and sorghum, with focus now on weeding and pest management. Livestock conditions are improving with greening pastures, though disease outbreaks (including Foot & Mouth Disease in central areas) require vigilance. Staple grain prices remain relatively stable compared to last year, while beans and cooking bananas have increased due to supply constraints. Meat prices have surged nationwide, with beef at approximately UGX 16,000/kg and goat meat reaching UGX 20,000/kg in some markets. MAAIF and partners have initiated climate-smart agriculture grants and vaccination campaigns to support farmers. This report provides detailed regional weather forecasts, crop guidance, market analysis, and agricultural support information for the coming week.

Weather Forecast (April 4–11, 2025)

Uganda's rainfall patterns vary by region this week. Key forecasts from UNMA, ICPAC, and MeteoBlue:

- **Karamoja** – Unimodal region experiencing the start of its rainy season. Slightly delayed rains now picking up with near-normal seasonal expectations. Light to moderate rainfall this week supports planting. Warm temperatures (mid-30°C highs) suggest early morning/evening sowing is optimal.
- **Northern Uganda** – Transitioning from dry season with scattered thunderstorms, especially in West Nile and Acholi. Above-average rains possible in northernmost areas. Previously dry Lango and Acholi areas now receiving relief. Temperatures: 30–32°C daytime, ~20°C nights.
- **Eastern Uganda** – Following a dry start, eastern districts saw improved rainfall in late March. Moderate rainfall expected, particularly along Mt. Elgon which anticipates above-normal precipitation. Lowland areas may see slightly below-normal totals. Temperatures: 28–30°C with low flooding risk except in mountain catchments.
- **Western Uganda** – Mixed outlook with more frequent showers in mountainous areas (Rwenzori, Kigezi) while Western Rift valley and cattle corridor remain drier. Below-average rainfall forecast for central-western areas; moisture conservation recommended. Southwestern Uganda may receive 50–80mm toward weekend. Temperatures: 26–29°C in highlands, ~32°C in lowlands.
- **Central Uganda** – Experiencing irregular rainfall with intermittent showers expected this week, slightly below average overall. Lake Kyoga and central cattle corridor remain drier, while Kampala and Mukono recently experienced flash floods. Prepare for erratic patterns with sunny intervals. Temperatures: 29–31°C.
- **Lake Victoria Crescent** – Heavy morning rains likely mid-week with potential waterlogging in low-lying areas. Flood warning issued after intense storms. Rainfall expected to be near to slightly above normal. Temperatures: 27–29°C with considerable cloud cover. Wettest conditions expected here, benefiting crops but posing flood risks.

Outlook

UNMA forecasts peak rains mid-April to early May across Uganda, with rainfall expected to intensify in coming weeks. Eastern and northern regions should maintain adequate precipitation, while western and central areas may continue experiencing below-average rainfall. Farmers should maximize current rains for planting and water harvesting. While no specific extreme events are forecast this week, exercise caution during thunderstorms due to lightning risk.



Crop Calendar & Growth Stages

Uganda's bimodal farming regions (Central, Eastern, Northern, parts of Western) are in the early growing phase of the First Season (March–June). Meanwhile, unimodal areas (Karamoja in the northeast, and the South-West highlands) follow different schedules. Current crop stages and key farming tasks by region:

1 Karamoja (One season zone)

Planting of cereals and pulses is underway, typically spanning mid-March through April. Farmers should prioritize sowing sorghum, millet, cowpeas, and maize as soil moisture permits. This week: complete land preparation, continue sowing, and begin gap filling where seeds failed to germinate. Start light weeding 2–3 weeks after sowing to reduce competition. No harvesting is occurring yet (harvest comes around July–September). Pastoral communities should protect fields from free-roaming livestock.

2 Northern & West Nile (Two seasons)

Crops are at emergence and early vegetative stage. Most farmers completed planting of maize, beans, sorghum, and groundnuts in March. This week: start first weeding for early-planted fields (recommended at ~3 weeks after planting). Begin scouting for pests on young crops. For sweet potato fields planted earlier, continue routine weeding and monitoring. In West Nile, complete planting by mid-April to maximize rainfall benefits. Harvest and properly store any remaining dry season crops like sunflower or simsim (sesame).

3 Eastern Uganda (Two seasons)

Most fields are in early vegetative growth stage. Complete any remaining first-season planting by April 15, especially for slower-maturing crops like sorghum. Begin first weeding of bean and maize fields to prevent competition from fast-growing weeds. In wetland areas, continue rice transplanting and maintain water levels. Thin excess maize or sorghum seedlings to recommended spacing. In Bugisu highlands, stake climbing beans as they start vining. Cotton-growing areas in Teso should continue land preparation for planting later in April.

4 Central & Lake Victoria Crescent (Two seasons)

Due to delayed rains, some farmers are still planting or replanting. Complete all maize and bean planting by week's end. Begin weeding crops that are 2-3 weeks old, especially in intercropped systems. For perennial crops like matooke (bananas) and coffee, focus on mulching, desuckering bananas, and pruning coffee to manage new growth. Apply organic manure to boost soil moisture retention. Harvest maturing horticultural crops planted in February and replant vegetable seedlings. Urban farmers around Kampala should plant quick-maturing leafy vegetables to meet market demand.

5 Western & South-Western (Highlands, one main season)

Currently in the inter-season period. Finish harvesting, threshing and storing any remaining second-season crops from 2024. Begin land preparation for the next season (August planting) to allow time for weeds and residues to decompose. In bimodal western districts (Hoima, Masindi), focus on weeding and fertilizing early-stage crops. Pastoral communities in the Ankole cattle corridor should plant fodder crops like elephant grass and lablab to improve livestock feed. Fruit farmers should prune orchards and conduct ring-weeding around trees to prepare for the upcoming fruiting season.

Priority tasks across Uganda this week: weeding, thinning, and monitoring young crops. Apply fertilizer to late-planted fields if not done during planting. Practice mulching and apply organic manure to improve soil moisture retention and boost crop resilience. Harvest rainwater where possible for supplemental irrigation or livestock use. Aligning activities with crop growth stages as per the crop calendar will optimize yields.

Input Recommendations & Technical Advisory

Strategic input usage and proper agronomic practices can significantly improve crop yields. Here are crop and region-specific recommendations for fertilizers, pest management, and soil improvement, plus our "Tech Tip of the Week" featuring research-backed innovation:



Fertilizer & Soil Management

Maize and Cereals

Top-dress maize with nitrogen fertilizer (Urea) when plants reach knee-height (3-4 weeks after planting), applying ~1 teaspoon per plant away from the stem, preferably before rain. Apply a second dose at 8-10 weeks. If DAP was used at planting (50 kg/acre), still top-dress with Urea for nitrogen. For unfertilized crops, apply NPK for a mid-season boost. Sorghum and millet need less fertilizer, but light nitrogen application helps in low-fertility soils. Avoid over-fertilizing in dry areas. Follow the "4Rs": Right source, Right rate, Right time, Right placement.

Beans and Other Legumes

Legumes require less synthetic fertilizer but benefit from phosphorus at planting. Focus on soil health by applying well-decomposed manure around plants. For yellowing leaves, apply small doses of NPK, but avoid high nitrogen as legumes fix their own. Consider foliar sprays for micronutrient deficiencies. Groundnut farmers should plan to apply gypsum at flowering to improve pegging.

Banana and Perennial Crops

With rains beginning, apply organic mulch and manure to perennials. For bananas, add compost or cow dung in rings around mats (1-2 feet from pseudostem to prevent rot). Apply recommended fertilizers for coffee (CAN or NPK) and tea at the start of rains. For acidic soils, add lime based on soil tests. Fruit trees need manure in basins and NPK fertilizer to promote flowering and fruiting.

Soil Conservation

Implement moisture retention and erosion prevention techniques. Use contour bunds and trenches on slopes to slow runoff. Apply mulch in drier areas to reduce evaporation, suppress weeds, and add organic matter. Consider interplanting green manures and cover crops (mucuna, lablab) to improve soil nitrogen. Avoid burning crop residues. Where possible, harvest rainwater for supplementary irrigation during dry spells.

Pest & Disease Management



Fall Armyworm (FAW) on Maize

Scout young maize fields twice weekly for "windowpane" holes in leaves or frass in whorls. Early action is crucial. IPM approach: handpick and destroy egg masses/larvae in small plots; apply bio-insecticides or selective pesticides from MAAIF approved list for larger infestations. Spray in late afternoon when larvae are active. "Push-pull" method (intercropping maize with desmodium, planting Napier grass borders) effectively repels FAW while improving soil fertility. Continue monitoring after treatment and rotate control methods to prevent resistance.



Stem Borers and Other Cereal Pests

Check for stem borers in maize/sorghum (deadheart symptoms or exit holes). Apply insecticide granules in the whorl or split application of pesticides if detected. Be aware of potential Quelea bird threat to sorghum/millet during grain filling stage, especially for late-planted crops.



Bean Pests and Diseases

Watch for bean fly (stem swelling/wilting) and apply insecticide drench or replant if severe. Control aphid colonies on shoots to prevent virus transmission. For rain-induced foliage diseases like anthracnose or bean rust, remove infected leaves and apply fungicide if necessary. Practice crop rotation to reduce disease carryover. Monitor groundnuts for rosette virus; optimal planting timing and density helps reduce spread.



Banana Diseases

For Banana Bacterial Wilt (BBW), uproot and bury plants showing yellowing and ooze. Sterilize tools when pruning. Destroy Fusarium wilt affected mats completely. Remove Sigatoka-spotted leaves and consider fungicide for commercial plantations. For coffee, monitor for antestia bugs and apply copper-based fungicides during rainy conditions if disease pressure is high.



Livestock Pests (in fields)

Form patrol groups to deter baboons or bush pigs near wildlife areas. Use bird scare tapes for quelea birds in rice and sorghum fields. Apply FAW control methods to affected fodder crops and pastures.



Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Use pest-resistant varieties, maintain field hygiene, practice proper spacing, and consider trap crops or natural enemies. Planting sunflowers or Napier grass at field edges attracts stem borers away from maize. Report outbreaks promptly to extension officers and seek expert advice for proper pest identification before applying controls.

Disease Alerts

Key agricultural advisories: Foot-and-Mouth Disease reported in central cattle corridor, potentially spreading via farm tools (details in Livestock section); anthrax outbreak noted last season in Mt. Elgon region. Both affect livestock and can impact farms through quarantine measures. No major crop disease outbreaks reported this week, but farmers should remain vigilant for common threats like maize lethal necrosis (currently inactive in Uganda) and locusts (none reported).



Tech Tip of the Week: Biopesticides for Fall Armyworm



ICIPE researchers have developed fungus-based biopesticides that effectively target Fall Armyworm eggs and larvae. These environmentally friendly alternatives leave no toxic residues and reduce pest resistance development. They can kill armyworms in early stages and spread naturally within pest populations.

For maximum effectiveness, combine biopesticides with other methods like push-pull intercropping (using desmodium within maize fields and Napier grass borders) and pheromone traps. This integrated approach not only controls FAW but also improves soil health and biodiversity.

Products like Mazao Achieve® are now reaching local markets. Consider trying biopesticides instead of or alongside chemical insecticides for safer pest control that protects beneficial insects. Stay connected with extension services or farmer associations to learn about demonstrations of this and other innovations like thermostable Newcastle Disease vaccines or drought-tolerant crops.

(Sources: Uganda MAAIF Extension Guidelines; Daily Monitor farming tips; ICIPE research on FAW biopesticides.)



Livestock & Ranching

Seasonal changes present critical challenges for livestock keepers across Uganda. Here's essential guidance for cattle, goat, sheep, and poultry management during this transition period:

Cattle, Goats & Sheep



Feeding & Pasture

Pastures are recovering with rains, especially in Lake Victoria basin and western regions, though fodder remains limited in Karamoja and central cattle corridor. Continue supplementary feeding where necessary using hay, silage, or stored fodder. Use planted fodder crops where available. Introduce animals gradually to lush grass to prevent bloating. Provide mineral licks to supplement nutrient-deficient fresh grass, and ensure access to clean water sources rather than stagnant ponds which may harbor parasites.



Parasite Control

Administer dewormers at the start of rainy season, especially for young stock vulnerable to parasitic infestations. Monitor for foot-rot in sheep and goats – keep pens dry, trim hooves as needed, treat affected hooves with antiseptic, and maintain animals on dry ground until healed.



Disease Management

Rainy season brings increased risk of tick-borne diseases. Implement weekly or biweekly acaricide spraying/dipping and check animals regularly for ticks. Foot-and-Mouth Disease outbreaks continue in central regions with quarantines in effect. Avoid moving animals across districts and report any symptoms immediately. Practice biosecurity by disinfecting visitors' footwear and isolating new animals for 14 days. FAO and MAAIF vaccination campaign (140,000 FMD doses, 110,000 CBPP doses, 400,000 PPR doses) is targeting Karamoja and Elgon sub-regions – coordinate with local veterinary officers to participate.



General Herd Management

With improved nutrition, animals will return to breeding condition. Plan breeding now for offspring to arrive during next year's dry season. Castrate non-breeding males to improve growth and temperament. Provide dry, sheltered areas for young animals as nights cool, using fresh straw or wood shavings to prevent pneumonia from wet bedding.

Poultry (Chicken)

Feeding & Housing

As rains bring insects for free-range chickens, continue providing supplementary maize bran or growers' mash in evenings, especially for layers. Offer clean water in drinkers to prevent water-borne diseases. Ensure coops are rain-proof with patched roofs and dry floors to prevent disease. During cooler nights, provide heat sources for chicks and ensure local chicken enclosures are well-ventilated but draft-free.

Disease Prevention

Newcastle Disease (NCD) is Uganda's biggest poultry threat, often striking after rains begin. Vaccination is essential as there's no cure. Use affordable thermotolerant vaccines like Kukustar via eye-drop or drinking water. Vaccinate now, as outbreaks typically coincide with seasonal changes and prevention can increase egg production by 80%. For commercial flocks, also vaccinate against Infectious Bursal Disease (Gumboro) and Fowl Pox if not done recently. Keep coop bedding dry to prevent coccidiosis, and treat with anticoccidial drugs if bloody droppings or listless birds are observed.



General Poultry Care

Control mites and fleas by cleaning bedding and using diatomaceous earth or approved insecticides. Provide wood ash or sand dust-baths for free-range chickens. Egg production may dip after heat stress but should rebound as weather cools. Ensure layers get adequate calcium through oyster shell or limestone grit, especially if free-ranging. Keep brooding hens in safe, dry locations away from predators. For broilers, maintain proper ventilation during humid days to prevent respiratory issues. Practice consistent biosecurity by limiting visitors and sanitizing hands/feet when handling birds. Remember: proper vaccination and coop hygiene are your best defenses this season.

Market Analysis

Agricultural market prices show typical seasonal trends as last harvest stocks diminish. Below are average retail prices (UGX/kg) for key commodities across regions, based on WFP data and market reports:

Region	Maize UGX/kg	Beans UGX/kg	Sorghum UGX/kg	Millet UGX/kg	Bananas UGX/kg	Beef UGX/kg	Goat Meat UGX/kg
Karamoja (NE)	~1,800	~5,000	~1,800	~2,000		~15,000	~15,000
Northern	~1,300	~3,500	~1,500	~1,500	~4,000	~17,000	~19,000
Eastern	~1,200	~3,200	~1,400	~1,300	~3,500	~16,000	~18,000
Western	~1,400	~3,300	~1,600	~1,500	~2,500	~15,000	~17,000
Central	~1,500	~3,800	~1,500	~1,400		~16,000	~18,000
Lake Victoria Crescent	~1,500	~4,000	~1,300	~1,300	~5,000	~16,000 -16,500	~20,000

Table: Approximate retail prices by region. (Sources: WFP market monitoring data, Selina Wamucii, and local market reports.)

Market Prices

Grain prices: Currently affordable compared to past highs. Maize averages UGX 1,200–1,500/kg in surplus areas and up to UGX 1,800/kg in deficit regions like Karamoja. Prices have fallen ~35% year-on-year from 2024 peaks. Beans range from UGX 3,200–5,000/kg, with remote areas facing the highest prices due to transport costs. Sorghum and millet prices remain moderate (UGX 1,200–2,000/kg), generally cheaper than maize in many markets.

Cooking bananas (matooke): Prices have risen sharply due to dry season supply constraints. Urban markets sell at UGX 3,800–7,500/kg, while farmgate prices in Western Uganda remain much lower (UGX 1,500–2,000/kg). Transport costs and post-harvest losses drive the urban price premium. Prices should ease slightly when rains improve yields by May.

Livestock: Meat prices have surged countrywide. Beef trades at UGX 15,000–17,000/kg in most regions, up from ~UGX 12,000 a few months ago. Goat meat ranges from UGX 17,000 in rural areas to UGX 20,000 in towns. This trend stems from livestock shortages due to drought, disease outbreaks, and high demand. Milk prices have also increased to UGX 1,400–1,600 per liter in urban centers.

Other commodities: Maize flour retails at UGX 2,000–2,500/kg, and local rice at UGX 3,000–3,500/kg. Sugar and cooking oil remain high due to global price trends. Vegetable prices have increased recently but should normalize by late April as rains improve supply.

Market outlook: The major anomaly is the high cost of livestock products compared to relatively affordable grains. Thanks to last year's decent harvest and ample stocks, cereal prices remain lower than last year, cushioning food security for many families. Markets are functioning normally with open supply routes, including regional imports. If first season rains perform well, prices should remain stable. Farmers with grain reserves might fetch better prices in May if the lean season deepens, but June harvests will likely keep prices in check.

Government & NGO Updates



MAAIF Climate-Smart Agriculture Project

The Ministry of Agriculture is implementing the Uganda Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation Project (UCSATP), a 6-year, USD 354 million World Bank-funded program to boost productivity and resilience. Matching grants are available to farmer groups in 69 districts, with farmers contributing 20% and the project covering 80% of costs for climate-smart practices in coffee, cocoa, maize, and dairy value chains. Refugee-hosting districts receive 100% funding. Farmers should organize in groups to access quality seeds, fertilizers, machinery, and irrigation support.



Livestock Disease Control Efforts

MAAIF and partners have intensified animal disease control with FAO-donated vaccines worth \$1 million. An ongoing vaccination campaign in Karamoja and Mt. Elgon regions targets FMD, CBPP, CCPP, PPR, and anthrax. The government has introduced cost-sharing for FMD vaccination to ensure sustainable coverage. Livestock farmers should contact district veterinary officers to schedule vaccinations, which are crucial for lifting movement quarantines. MAAIF is drafting an "Animals Resources Strategic Plan 2025" to improve veterinary laboratories and surveillance.



NGO/INGO Activities

Active international organizations include:

- WFP: Providing food assistance in refugee settlements and Karamoja, procuring maize and beans locally, and supporting school gardening projects with FAO.
- FAO: Launched desert locust preparedness training for extension workers.
- USAID/Feed the Future: Supporting value addition for maize and oilseeds in Eastern and Northern Uganda with grain storage and post-harvest training.
- World Bank/EU: Funding the Agriculture Cluster Development Project and youth agribusiness training through Enabel.
- Relief organizations: Mercy Corps and Save the Children are scaling up assistance in Karamoja, while Red Cross is preparing for possible Lake Victoria flooding.



National Fisheries Plan & Funding Appeal

A March 2025 stakeholder conference sought to mobilize funds for the National Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries. Uganda's fisheries sector employs 3.2 million people and contributes 12% of agricultural GDP, but current funding (UGX 3 billion) falls far short of the UGX 20 billion needed. The Ministry seeks support to improve fish habitats, enforce regulations, and establish aquaculture parks. An EU grant of Shs 40bn for aquaculture remains underutilized due to administrative issues, which are being addressed to boost investment in the sector.



Extension and Input Support

No general input subsidies are available this season except the UCSATP matching grants. NAADS continues distributing tea and mango seedlings in select districts alongside quality seeds for staples. The Agriculture Minister has warned about counterfeit seeds and agro-chemicals, with MAAIF and UNBS conducting market inspections. Farmers are advised to purchase from certified dealers. Areas affected by disasters like Kasese floods or Katakwi dry spells have received emergency seed distributions from government and relief agencies.



Policy Announcements

The government is revising its National Agricultural Extension Strategy with greater focus on digital tools and parish-level agents. The fertilizer policy is under review to increase usage through affordable smaller packs for smallholders. Plans for an Agricultural Bank are being considered, but farmers are currently directed to existing SACCOs and Microfinance Support Centre loans.

In summary, various support initiatives are available: climate-smart grants, vaccination campaigns, fisheries investments, and relief projects. Farmers and officials should access these resources through district production offices or monitor radio announcements for updates.

Relevant Publications & Links

Weather & Climate Resources

- March–May 2025 Seasonal Forecast (Uganda) – UNMA (March 5, 2025) – Near-normal to above-normal rains expected across regions.
- Crop Monitor for Early Warning, No. 103 (April 2025) – GEOGLAM/FAO – Notes dry conditions in central/western Uganda, improved rains in east. ([Download PDF](#))

Market & Economic Data

- FAO GIEWS Country Brief – Uganda (Oct 2024) – Overview of 2024 season: below-average first harvest, poor Karamoja harvest, low maize/beans prices.
- WFP Uganda Food Price Data (Jan–Feb 2025) – [Dataset](#) tracking market prices showing regional variations for staple crops.
- UBOS Consumer Price Index Report (Feb 2025) – Food inflation at 4.3%, primarily from tomatoes, bananas, beans. [UBOS CPI Summary](#)

Government & NGO Programs

- MAAIF/World Bank Climate-Smart Agriculture Project – ChimpReports (Nov 18, 2024) – UCSATP launch details. [Summary](#)
- FAO Livestock Vaccination Drive (Sept 29, 2023) – \$1M donation of vaccines for FMD, PPR, anthrax in Karamoja/Elgon regions.
- Fisheries Funding Conference – Nile Post (Mar 16, 2025) – Uganda's efforts to increase funding for small-scale fisheries development.

Farming Guides & Research

- Daily Monitor Farming Guides – Practical advice on planting, spacing, weeding, and fertilizer use for seasonal crops.
- ICIPE Press Release (2023) – Research on biopesticides and integrated pest management for fall armyworm control.

Looking Ahead & Reminders

Finalize Planting

Last call for first-season planting in bimodal areas. Complete sowing by mid-April to avoid missing critical rains. Central/northern Uganda farmers have a brief window remaining.

Prepare for Peak Rains

Expect heavier rainfall mid-April to May. Ensure proper drainage, reinforce terracing, clear ditches, and prepare rainwater harvesting systems.

Weeding & Thinning Schedule

Schedule critical weeding: 1st weeding ~3 weeks after planting, 2nd ~8 weeks for maize. Apply fertilizer top-dressing around week 4 when maize reaches knee-height.

Monitor Weather and Pests

Watch forecasts closely. Implement drought mitigation in dry areas (mulching, staggered planting) or drainage in wet zones. Scout weekly for Fall Armyworm and respond immediately if detected.

Safeguard Livestock

Vaccinate and deworm livestock as pastures improve. Schedule FMD vaccinations, maintain tick control, and provide mineral supplements to help animals recover condition.

Post-Harvest Prep

Clean and repair storage facilities now for the June-July harvest. Consider hermetic storage if planning to hold grain stocks for better market prices.

- ☐ Engage with local parish development meetings, extension workshops, and input fairs this month. These provide valuable resources including demonstration plots, free seed samples, and subsidized services.
- ☐ Start planning for second-season nurseries in June (for rice or vegetables) and source quality seedlings for orchard or woodlot planting in May.
- ☐ Prepare for potential heavy rains by clearing drainage systems and establishing community contingency plans for severe weather events.
- ☐ Stay updated through local radio and verified platforms (UNMA, MAAIF) for weather advisories, pest alerts, and farming tips. Timely information significantly improves farm decision-making.
- ☐ Implementing these measures will help Ugandan farmers navigate the 2025 first season effectively, supporting improved food security and livelihoods.

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