

Uganda Weekly Agriculture, Market, and Weather Report (Feb 21–28, 2025)

Key insights on agricultural conditions, market trends, and weather forecasts across Uganda. Updated weekly to support your farming decisions.

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION AGENCY

1. Weather Forecast (Feb 21–28, 2025)

Overall: Uganda remains in its dry season, with UNMA forecasting minimal rainfall across the country. Most regions will stay dry until the seasonal rains begin in early March (south) and mid-to-late March (north). Temperatures range from hot in lowlands to moderate in highlands.

Karamoja (Northeastern)

Hot and dry conditions persist with daytime highs of 32–35°C, occasionally reaching 38°C in the driest areas. Night temperatures drop to 18–20°C. No rain expected this week (normal for February). UNMA advises farmers to focus on crop storage and water conservation preparation.

Northern Uganda (Acoli, Lango, West Nile)

Very warm with daytime highs around 33°C and nights at 20–22°C. Dusty conditions prevail with high fire risk in rangelands. NOAA predicts below-average rainfall through late February. First rains typically arrive by mid-March.

Eastern Uganda

Lowland areas (Teso, Busoga) expect 30–32°C highs with dry winds. Mt. Elgon highlands remain milder (mid-20s°C) with possible isolated mountain showers. Farmers should prepare fields for the anticipated early March rains.

Western Uganda

Rift Valley and cattle corridor areas remain hot (30–32°C) and dry. Southwestern highlands stay cooler (highs ~24°C, nights 10°C) with partial cloud cover. Brief afternoon showers possible over Rwenzori and Kigezi highlands. Current conditions favor outdoor work for tea and potato farmers.

Central Uganda

Temperatures average 28–30°C with higher humidity near Lake Victoria. Lake regions may see brief afternoon showers (0–5mm). Expect mainly dry conditions until early March, with cloudy or hazy mornings near the lake.

Outlook

UNMA projects First Rainy Season to begin early March in southern Uganda, spreading to northern regions by mid/late-March. Current conditions show above-normal warmth across the Greater Horn region. Farmers should monitor UNMA updates and implement water conservation and mulching practices during this transition period.

2. Crop Calendar & Growth Stages (Late February 2025)

General Season Overview: Uganda primarily follows a bimodal cropping pattern (First Season: Mar–Jun, Second Season: Aug–Dec). Late February marks the transition from dry season to First Season planting, with land preparation as the primary activity. Here's the current status by region:

Karamoja (NE Uganda, Unimodal zone)

Single rainy season (Apr–Sept) region with no active crops currently. Major crops include sorghum, millet, cowpeas, maize, and groundnuts. Fields are under preparation for late March through May planting, depending on rainfall patterns.

Growth stage: Fallow/Pre-sowing. Current focus: Complete ploughing, secure seeds (via community reserves or NGO support), and implement dry planting strategies for sorghum where appropriate. Peak hunger season management is critical for stored grain rationing.

Eastern Uganda

Region encompasses Teso, Bukedi, Busoga, and Mt. Elgon highlands. Major crops: maize, sweet potatoes, rice (wetlands), groundnuts, millet/sorghum, beans, and perennials (coffee, bananas) in highlands. Growth stage: Pre-planting/land prep. Lowland areas are preparing maize and peanut fields, while wetland farmers are starting rice seedlings. Standard planting window: March to mid-April.

Central Region & Lake Victoria Crescent

Zone characterized by perennial crops (bananas, coffee) mixed with annuals (maize, beans, sweet potatoes). Growth stage: Perennials under maintenance; annuals in pre-planting. Focus on maize storage management and banana plantation moisture maintenance during dry period.

Summary of Key Tasks (All regions, late Feb)

- 1

Complete field preparation: ploughing, harrowing, and ridge-making.
- 2

Verify seed germination and treat with protective pesticides/fungicides.
- 3

Apply organic manure and prepare basal fertilizers for planting.
- 4

Maintain irrigation for essential seedbeds and nurseries.
- 5

Monitor pest populations in perennial crops before seasonal rains.
- 6

Clear pre-season weeds to prevent crop competition.
- 7

Complete remaining harvests and ensure proper grain storage using improved methods (PICS bags or silos).

3. Input Recommendations & Technical Advisory

Strategic use of inputs and techniques can maximize yields this planting season. Key recommendations for fertilizers, pest control, and soil management are below.

Fertilizer Recommendations

For first-season planting, prioritize these applications:

- **Basal (Planting) Fertilizer:** Apply phosphorus at planting for strong root development. Use NPK or TSP/DAP (200 kg/ha) or phosphorus-rich organic sources like poultry manure in planting holes.
- **Top-Dress Fertilizer:** Apply nitrogen 4-6 weeks after emergence. For maize, use Urea or CAN (~50 kg N/ha) when plants reach knee height.
- **Lime and Soil pH:** Test soil pH before planting. For acidic soils (pH <5.5), apply agricultural lime (~1 ton/ha) to achieve optimal pH of 5.5-6.5.

Soil Amendments & Conservation

- **Mulching:** Apply mulch to perennial crops now to preserve moisture, reduce erosion, and suppress weeds. Target >2% soil organic matter.
- **Erosion Control:** Repair terraces, bunds, and drainage channels before rains begin, especially in highland areas.
- **Inoculants:** Use rhizobial inoculants on legumes to enhance nitrogen fixation and boost yields.

Tech Tip of the Week: "Push-Pull" Intercropping

Boost pest control and soil health by intercropping cereals with desmodium and bordering with Brachiaria grass. Plant one row of desmodium between every two rows of maize, with Brachiaria as border rows. This method naturally repels stem borers and fall armyworm while improving soil fertility through nitrogen fixation. The border grass provides additional livestock fodder.

Pest & Disease Control

Implement these IPM strategies at season start:

- **Fall Armyworm (FAW) on Maize:** Set up pheromone traps 1-2 weeks before planting to monitor and reduce moth populations.
- **Storage Pests:** Protect stored grains using hermetic bags, silos, or approved fumigants. Monitor regularly for weevils and borers.
- **Bean Pests & Diseases:** Treat seeds with fungicide/insecticide coating before planting. Monitor emerging crops for aphids and foliage beetles.

4. Livestock & Ranching

Late February marks the peak of Uganda's dry season, presenting significant challenges for livestock keepers. Here's the latest on market prices, veterinary programs, and animal health management:

Pasture and Water Conditions

Grazing areas across Karamoja and the Cattle Corridor are severely depleted. Most communal lands are bare, forcing herders to move animals to dry-season reserves or wetlands. Water sources are critically low, particularly in Nakapiripirit and Nakasongola, where livestock must travel long distances to drink.

Best Practice: Provide supplemental feeding with stored hay, silage, or feed blocks. Mix crop residues like sorghum and maize stover with molasses to improve palatability. Offer mineral licks to address deficiencies common in dry pastures.

Veterinary Health & Disease Prevention

Key dry season health concerns and initiatives include:

- **Tick-Borne Diseases:** Animal congregation at water points increases tick exposure. Maintain regular spraying or dipping every 1-2 weeks, rotating acaricides to combat resistance.
- **Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD):** Following recent outbreaks, the government secured 3 million vaccine doses from Egypt and approved 10 million more. Coordinate with district veterinary officers for upcoming vaccination campaigns.
- **Other Vaccinations:** Prioritize Lumpy Skin Disease vaccination for cattle and PPR shots for goats/sheep before the rainy season begins.

Livestock Market Updates

Current market prices across regions:

- **Cattle Prices:** Mature bulls: UGX 7,500-18,800 per kg live weight (250 kg bull: UGX 1.9-4.7 million depending on quality and location).
- **Goat and Sheep Prices:** Live goats average UGX 7,400-11,100 per kg (medium goat: UGX 220,000-330,000). Karamoja prices typically lower.
- **Poultry:** Local chicken: UGX 25,000-35,000 in Kampala, UGX 15,000-20,000 upcountry. Eggs: UGX 12,000-13,000 per tray.
- **Milk:** Farmgate prices in Southwest: UGX 800-1,000 per liter. Kampala retail: UGX 1,500+/L for raw milk.

Livestock Management Best Practices Now

- 1

Routine Health Checks: Schedule veterinary inspections for respiratory issues and lameness. Treat wounds promptly as dry conditions can worsen infections.
- 2

Shade & Heat Stress: Ensure adequate shade and constant water access during peak heat hours to maintain milk yield and weight.
- 3

Breeding: Consider delaying mating until animals regain condition. For dairy AI, time services for calving during the rainy season when feed is abundant.
- 4

Prevent Bush Fires: Exercise caution with fire in rangelands and maintain firebreaks to protect remaining pasture and farm infrastructure.

5. Market Analysis (Prices & Trends for Staples)

Uganda's food markets remain well-supplied from the recent second-season harvest (Nov-Dec 2024). Below are current prices of staple commodities across regions, based on WFP Market Price data and Selina Wamucii marketplace reports.

Staple Commodities Prices (Late Feb 2025)

Maize Grain

National average maize prices are at UGX 1,000/kg, with regional variations. Surplus areas in Western Uganda see lower prices (UGX 800/kg farmgate), while deficit regions like Karamoja face higher costs (UGX 1,300/kg). Urban markets like Kampala maintain moderate prices around UGX 1,050/kg.

Sorghum and Millet

- Sorghum:** Farmgate prices range from UGX 1,200-1,500/kg in producing areas, with Karamoja markets seeing higher prices around UGX 2,000/kg due to poor 2024 harvest.
- Millet:** Currently trading at UGX 2,500-3,000/kg in most markets, with premium prices in urban areas reaching UGX 3,500/kg due to strong cultural demand.

Beans

Common bean varieties retail between UGX 3,800-5,000 per kg nationwide, with premium types reaching UGX 11,000/kg in urban supermarkets. Regional price differences reflect local production patterns and transport costs.

Matooke (Cooking Bananas)

Current dry conditions have reduced yields and bunch sizes. Market prices range from UGX 10,000 per bunch at farm-gate in western Uganda to UGX 25,000-30,000 in Kampala markets, depending on size.

Regional Price Highlights

| Crops → Regions↓ | Maize kgs | Beans kgs | Matooke bunch | Sorghum kgs | Millet kgs | Groundnuts kgs | Cowpeas kgs |
|---|--------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|
| North (Gulu, Lira, Kitgum, Arua) | 850 UGX | 3,600 UGX | 25,000 UGX | | 2,800 UGX | 5,500 UGX | |
| East (Soroti, Tororo, Kumi) | 900 UGX | 3,500 UGX | 20,000 UGX | 1,200 UGX | | 5,000 UGX | 3,000 UGX |
| West (Mbarara, Fort Portal, Bushenyi, Kabale) | 800 UGX | 3,000 UGX | 10,000 UGX | | 2,200 UGX | | |
| Karamoja (Moroto) | 1,300 UGX | 5,000 UGX | | 2,000 UGX | | | |
| Central (Kampala) | 1,050 UGX | 3,800 UGX | 20,000 UGX | 1,600 UGX | 3,000 UGX | 6,000 UGX | |

Market Supply/Demand Observations

- 1

Supply: Current grain supplies are adequate but expected to tighten by April. Recent heavy rains affected storage in eastern Uganda but provided a decent second crop.
- 2

Demand: High local demand from schools combined with strong regional exports to Kenya and South Sudan are driving market activity.
- 3

Inflation and Fuel: Food inflation remains in single digits, with stable fuel prices supporting consistent food costs across regions.

6. Looking Ahead & Reminders

As we wrap up this weekly report, here are key forecasts and action items for farmers and stakeholders:

Looking Ahead (Late March & Early April 2025)

- 1 Rainfall Onset:** First rainy season begins early March in southern Uganda and late March in northern regions. Critical planting window opens in next 2-3 weeks, with germination expected by mid-March in central, western, and eastern regions.
- 2 Crop Progress Expectations:** By late March, early-planted beans will need first weeding. Monitor for Fall Armyworm March-April. Schedule second weeding and fertilizer application for maize/sorghum in April (4-6 weeks post-planting).
- 3 Market Trends:** Expect gradual price increases through April (maize ~UGX 1,200/kg in Kampala). Prices should decrease with June harvests.

Reminders and Action Items for Farmers

- 1 Finalize Land Prep & Plant Immediately with Rains:** Complete ploughing now. Plant as soon as soil moisture is adequate - timing is crucial for maize, beans, and groundnuts.
- 2 Use Quality Seeds & Inputs:** Use certified seeds or test germination of saved seeds. Apply recommended seed treatments and basal fertilizer/manure.
- 3 Implement Pest Control Early:** Check fields twice weekly for pests, especially FAW on maize. Remove egg clusters and consider pheromone traps.
- 4 Conserve Moisture & Soil:** Implement mulching, maintain contour bunds, and avoid field burning to preserve soil moisture.
- 5 Livestock – Prepare for Rainy Season Health:** Complete deworming and vaccinations before rains. Prevent bloat by gradually introducing animals to new pasture.

Final Thought: Success this season depends on preparation and timely action. Utilize extension services and the resources listed above to maximize your farming outcomes.

Here's to a Prosperous Growing Season!



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