

Negotiating Increased Food Production with African Indigenous Agricultural Knowledge: The Ugandan Case

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Abstract : Scientific agricultural knowledge was introduced in Africa, including Uganda, during colonial rule. While this form of knowledge was introduced as part of Western scientific canon, African indigenous knowledge was not destroyed and has remained vital in food production. Modern scientific methods were devoted to export crops while food crop production was left to Africans who continued to use indigenous knowledge. Today, indigenous agricultural knowledge still provides farming skills and practices, more than a century since modern scientific agricultural knowledge was introduced in Uganda. It is evident that there is need to promote the still useful and more accessible indigenous agricultural practices in order to sustain increased food production. It is also important to have a tailor made agricultural knowledge system that combines practical indigenous practices with financially viable western scientific agricultural practices for sustained food production. The proposed paper will explain why the African indigenous agricultural knowledge has persisted and survived for over a century after colonial introduction of western scientific agricultural knowledge. The paper draws on research findings for a PhD study at Makerere University, Uganda. The study uses both written and oral sources, including colonial and postcolonial archival documents, and interviews. It critiques the parameters within which Western farming methods were introduced to African farmers.

Keywords : food production, food shortage, indigenous agricultural knowledge, western scientific agricultural practices

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