

Data Collection Survey on Refugees and Host Communities' Livelihood Improvement through Cotton Production Business in Uganda

Period of the project: From June 2023 to June 2024

Our assignments: Agronomy and Farming (Cotton production)

Background of the Survey

The Northern region of Uganda, which shares borders with neighboring countries, continues to experience instability, leading to an influx of refugees. Furthermore, the prolonged stay of these refugees has placed a continuous burden on the host communities. In this context, the cotton industry was identified as a potential means to improve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers, including both refugees and host community residents. This study aimed to examine the current state and challenges of the cotton industry and its value chain in the region, as well as the conditions faced by refugees and host communities. The findings were compiled into a report to provide actionable insights for industrial development and to inform JICA's cooperation policies.

Outline of the Survey

In this survey, AAI staff focused on farming practices and production techniques related to cotton production in the Northern region of Uganda. Through the survey on the current state and challenges of cotton production in the region, it was revealed that cotton has several advantages compared to other cash crops and can serve as a reliable option for local farmers. At the same time, the survey highlighted that one of the primary reasons for low yields is the insufficient application of recommendations and findings from NARO by extension officers and farmers.

Additionally, the survey compared organic and conventional cotton in terms of income and farming practices, identifying the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. It also clarified the challenges faced in farming in refugee-hosting areas and assessed the potential of cotton as a cash crop for both refugees and host community farmers. Furthermore, the survey identified the necessary farming conditions, extension systems, and technical advantages and challenges required to establish cotton cultivation as a trusted crop locally.

As a result of the survey, it was concluded that for refugees who have access to land through methods such as block farming, a farming model combining cotton as both a food crop and a cash crop can be proposed.

Responsibilities

- Conducting a survey on the cultivation status and farming challenges of conventional and organic cotton.
- Field survey and evaluation of results from cotton cultivation in pilot plots utilizing the block farming system.
- Monitoring training sessions on cotton cultivation for mixed groups of refugees and host community members.
- Organizing the current status and challenges of cash crop cultivation by refugees.
- Assessing the potential and considerations for cotton cultivation by refugees.

Photos



A scene from cotton production field survey



Interview to a veteran farmer of organic cotton production



Overview of the pilot farm



Interview to cotton researchers in National Agricultural Research Organization