

Farmers utilizing seasonal weather forecast information

Many of Uganda's small holder farmers and households rely on rain-fed agriculture yet rapid changes in weather patterns make it increasingly difficult for smallholder farmers to appropriately time their planting and harvest operations. Despite efforts by the Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA) to provide seasonal weather forecasts and agricultural advisories using the few weather stations scattered across the country, dissemination has been limited and irregular. Most farmers face challenges accessing weather forecasts and advisories and the dissemination channels it uses, the information often does not arrive on time to guide decisions and the advisories are difficult to understand. This has reduced farmers' faith in the accuracy of weather forecasts and advisories.

To build farmers confidence and re-build trust, World Vision, worked with UNMA to use tailored, targeted and simple radio, trainings, social media and instant mobile phone messages to disseminate weather forecasts and advisories to local government production departments and smallholder farmers in 22 districts. Together, the seasonal weather forecasts and agricultural advisories equip farmers with enough information to plan their planting and harvest activities on a more real-time basis so they can cope with the effects of weather variability.

Testimonies by farmers and officers of selected district production departments show improved trust in and use of the weather forecast information. The District Farmer Association disseminated the information and advisories to their members. They have since reached out to the District Production Department to help them access markets for their produce.