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TL III three years down the road…

NARO Bean variety NABE 14

The Tropical Legumes III project (TL III) in Uganda supports common beans and groundnut crops. Uganda joined Tropical Legumes in 2012 and has since registered remarkable improvement in beans production particularly amongst enrolled in this project.

TL III aims at improving livelihoods of smallholder farmers through enhanced grain legume productivity and production in sub-Saharan Africa and South east Asia. This is based on the premise that most beans and groundnuts are grown by smallholder farmers, who often experience acute shortage of high-yielding and early-maturing varieties.

In Uganda, TL III review meeting for 2017 – 2018, was held in February 2018 at NaCRRI. The meeting focused on assessing project progress, identifying gaps and developing a roadmap to sustain improved livelihoods of small scale bean farmers in Uganda.

While officiating the opening of the TL III workshop, the NaCRRI Director, Dr. Godfrey Asea, reminded the project team and stakeholders that there are more than 30 officially released bean varieties on the market yet not all of them are fully utilized or grown by farmers.

"We need to recall some of the older varieties that have been on the market for more than 10 years and leave just a few that are evidently on high demand owing to their desired attributes" added Dr Asea.

The research team was urged to rigorously assess varieties prior to release such that any released variety is responsive to clearly defined needs from end-users.

It was also evident that access by farmers to high-yielding and early-maturing bean varieties, is still a formidable challenge. Inefficiencies in functioning and monitoring of operations of both formal and informal seed systems, largely accounts for this. Accordingly, this calls for adoption innovative ways that can guarantee increased seed access by farmers.

Moving forward, the team resolved to: 1) underpin the different realities, preferences and aspirations of men, women and youth bean farmers; and 2) quantify the multiplier effects associated with production, processing and consumption of bean varieties notably NABE 12C, NABE 4 and NABE 14, that were launched during the life time Tropical Legumes project.