

As part of the COMESA value chain development programme, the out grower farmers in the Kapeeka area in Nakaseke in Uganda have called on the COMESA secretariat to provide funding for the purchase of drying facilities to enable them contribute effectively to the value chain in the agriculture sector in order to increase their yields.

The Kapeeka Out Growers farmers associations who spoke through Great Lakes Agriculture Development limited - GLAD director general Bent Ronsen, when a team from the COMESA Secretariat and the AKiba International Limited officials and consultants visited the farming block on 6th December 2012, said there has been so much wastage in the yields in the past due to lack of technologies that can help solve the problem.

AKiba has fifteen commodity value chains which are being promoted in the area as well as other parts of the country and are yet to be rolled out to the entire region.

Mr Ronsen said the Kapeeka area produces maize and other crops all year round since the rainfall is continuous in the area. This makes it difficult for them to dry the produce effectively hence affecting the quality and quantity of the yields especially for the small scale farmers.

He said that it becomes very problematic for the out growers as well as him as a commercial farmer, to dry farm produce especially maize as they normally use sun and wind drying methods.

He however called on COMESA to assist the farmers in order to implement and enhance the Value chain by providing financial support to purchase a drying machine, which will result in further job creation in the area.

“Currently we have about 70 workers at this farm and as you may know, the out growers also provide some employment to various people who help out at the farms but we would like to increase the number of people working on our farms especially if we completely mechanize our farms” Ronsen said.

He said; “The cost of the equipment we want for 2000 metric tonnes for the drying alone, costs over USD 700 000.”

Mr Ronsen said once the machine is in the farmers will ensure that value chain implementation in Kapeeka area will be enhanced which will result to improved livelihoods of the member in the area and the rest of the country as a whole.

“We are really looking to COMESA to help us as this is the only way we shall produce maize of high quality that will meet international standards.

He said there is need to create value through extension services to the small scale farmers for better yields.