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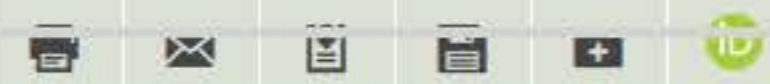
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Farmers' personal characteristics in assuring agricultural productivity: lessons from sweet potato farmers in Teso, Uganda.

Author(s) : [Epeju, W. E.](#)

Author Affiliation : Department of Agriculture, Kyambogo University, P.O.Box 1 Kyambogo, Kampala, Uganda.

Author Email : wepeju@yahoo.co.uk

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Abstract : Farmers constantly require incentives to stay in production. This paper discusses findings on farmers' personal characteristics salient in production among sweet potato farmers from the study done in Teso, Uganda. Both farmers and agricultural advisers consulted agreed that the weather is a big factor in agricultural production. Over 91% of the farmers expressed positive attitudes towards growing sweet potatoes which spelt their interest in farming. Conditions under which farmers worked affected enterprise productivity. Key elements in the farmers' work environment in Teso included basic factors in agricultural production, essential needs, accelerating needs, health, rights and readiness to work. The assuring farmers' personal characteristics on sweet potato productivity in Teso were: farmer's income, marital status, age, years of school agriculture done, and exposure to agricultural extension. The income sources at any one period varied by farmer. The exposure to agricultural extension was significantly related statistically to two productivity indicators of income per ha and income per person. On formal education, 96% of the farmers surveyed had attained primary education, which was found significant in their work. Farmer's age was significantly related statistically to the productivity indicator of income per hectare. There was gender division of labour. Gender is significant in sweet potato production in Teso. Majority of farmers had more than 45 years of farming which was significant experience. Therefore, based on the study, the farmers' personal characteristics found significant on agricultural productivity among the farmers are: income level, exposure to agricultural extension, years of school agriculture done (educational level) which determined the farmers' knowledge of what to do, marital status, farmer's age, gender and farming experience such as years in growing sweet potatoes.

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