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The Politics of Seeds and Agricultural Crisis among Smallholder Farmers in Uganda and Tanzania, 1960–2024

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Abstract

This paper examines how the politics of seeds have limited smallholder farmers' access to seeds in Uganda and Tanzania, thereby contributing to an agricultural crisis. Using secondary and primary sources, the study found that smallholder farmers were encouraged to use improved seeds but the production and supply of such seeds remained inadequate, too expensive, and driven by politics. Consequently, smallholder farmers continued to use traditional seeds whose supply was dwindling. The adoption of hybrid and genetically modified organism (GMO) seeds also led to a loss of seed sovereignty among smallholder farmers, exposing them to exploitation by multinational private seed companies.

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