

Introduction

- Feeding represents 65% of production cost in livestock production.
- Thus, improved forage productivity will increase milk production efficiency and a reduction in fluctuation of milk prices.
- Farmers currently rely on grazing on poor pastures, use of crop residues and collected feed
- Poorly functioning forage seed value chain has resulted in under-utilization of promising improved forage species in Kenya and Uganda.

Objectives

- To assess the forage seed sector in Kenya and Uganda



Materials and Methods

- Use of desk reviews and Key informant interviews with sellers of forage planting materials and seed companies.
- A total of 16 seed companies/entities both public and private were included in the interviews in Kenya and Uganda given the time limitation at the time of the study (November-December 2020)
- An additional 3 seed sellers were interviewed during a larger community survey that was conducted as part of the project activities.

Type of seed entity	Number of entities interviewed in Kenya	Number of entities interviewed in Uganda
Private local company	5	4
International company	-	2
Cooperative society	-	1
Farmer group	1	-
Community based organization (CBO)	-	1
Public institution e.g. KALRO, NARO	1	1

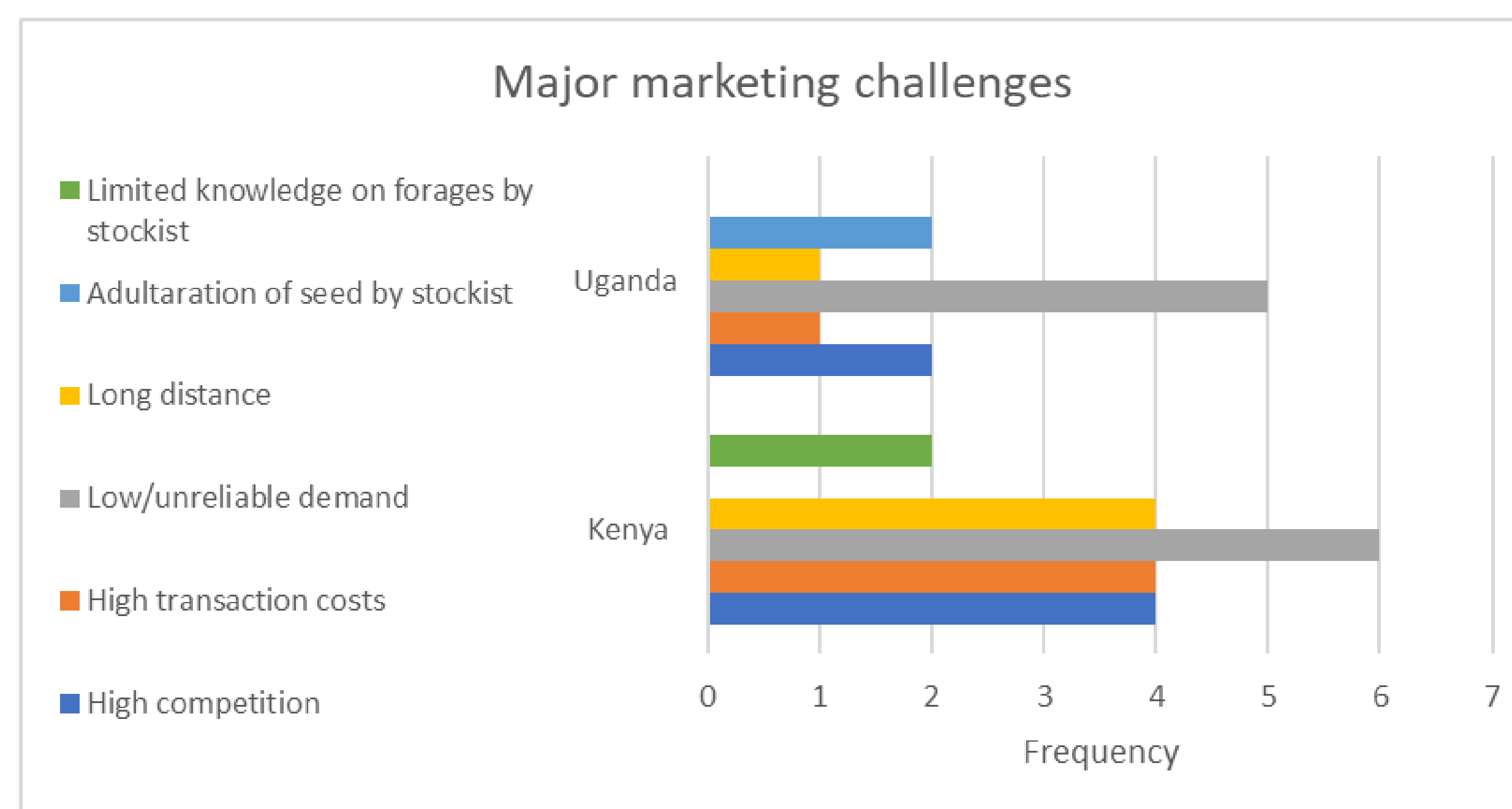


Key Outcomes:

- More than 50% of seed transfer/sale to farmers is conducted through the informal seed sector.
- Most commonly demanded propagation materials are grasses and leguminous forages.
- Within the informal seed sector, farmers receive seeds as "gifts" from other farmers.
- Seed quality certification standards are limited more to large-sized companies.
- Thus, small-medium sized companies often trade in uncertified seeds/planting materials.
- Major marketing challenge is lack of reliable demand for improved forages occasioned by lack of farmer awareness on improved forages.

Traders in the informal seed sector access seeds locally. The seeds/planting materials do not undergo the rigorous process of certification by KEPHIS

"If I import seeds, the process of verification takes long (about 90 days) for the seeds to be cleared. At the end of the day I am not able to adequately meet demand due to the delays. I prefer sourcing seeds locally from farmers as this does not go through the rigorous certification process" sentiments share by one of the respondents



"Most stockist are more knowledgeable on food crops as opposed to forages. Therefore, when farmers ask about forages they are not able to give informed feedback" as noted by some respondents

Conclusions

- In order to create/increase demand for improved forages, there is need to raise awareness and improve on access to knowledge through innovative promotion pathways for improved forages and extension e.g. use of ICT tools, farmer field schools etc.
- There is a need to develop the nascent informal seed sector by supporting and developing quality declared seed standards. Thus, increasing seed availability and reduce cost of seed for smallholder farmers.
- There is need to harmonize seed policies in Kenya and Uganda to allow smooth importation and exportation of forage seeds within the East Africa Community framework.



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