

The Minister of Trade and Industry, Prof. Jean-Chrysostome Ngabitsinze has said that the government is going to put effort into aggregation of Soya beans to meet the high demand for the crop on the market.

The Minister made the remarks on Tuesday in Kayonza district, Eastern Province on a visit to Mount Meru Soyco Ltd, a factory that manufactures edible oil from Soya bean.

“Everything that the Mount Meru Soyco factory needs for processing edible oil is not enough in Rwanda, the company has to import soya beans; which means production of the crop can’t meet the demand because of obstacles in growing the crop.” Prof. Ngabitsinze said.



To process at full capacity of two hundred tons of cooking oil per day, Mount Meru Soyco factory has to import soya beans from countries like Malawi and Zambia.

In April 2022, data from the Ministry of Emergency Preparedness (MINEMA) indicated that heavy downpour destroyed over 49 hectares of soya beans crops in Kayonza District. Soya farmers in Kayonza District incurred losses as floods destroyed more than 30 hectares of soya bean plantations.

The Director of Mount Meru Soyco, Manoj Kumar Parajapat also revealed that one of the challenges they face in producing cooking oil is the higher price of soya beans on the local market.

Manoj noted that the company imports most of soya beans from Malawi and Zambia because the price is much cheaper compared to buying from cooperatives in Rwanda.

The Minister pointed out that there are challenges in growing the crop which means the company can’t produce enough cooking oil; we have agreed that government will come up with some initiatives so that farmer cooperatives can grow the crop for the company to obtain enough soya beans instead of importing from Malawi and Zambia.

He pointed out that government will come up with initiatives to leverage and empower farmers to increase soya production and urged for a partnership between Soya farmers’ cooperatives and Soyco Ltd management to be created.

“We have asked the management of the company to work with the district so that they can look at some of the government programs that can support them. We also urged them [management] to help in raising awareness to improve quality of life for residents.” He said.

In addition, the Minister revealed that they agreed that Soyco Ltd should increase production in order to boost their exports since don't have a market problem.

Soy bean is one of the six priority crops under the Crop Intensification Program (CIP) for Rwanda. Land consolidated land for soy bean grain production has increased from 5,720 to 19,011.9 Ha while the production has significantly increased in last two years from 0.8 to 1.5 tons per Ha according to Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB).

However, there is need to focus on selection and breeding of high yielding soy bean varieties to achieve 3.5 tons per Ha potential.

According to RAB, research trials have been conducted at Rubona, Nyagatare, Muhanga, Ngoma and Karama RAB stations to evaluate 19 soy bean genotypes sourced from Zimbabwe.

To ensure that farmers can successful grow soya beans in Rwanda is also an ongoing challenges, Saver Bahizi, president of KOISORWA cooperative notes that Soya is a lucrative crop these days, because the price is above Rwf 1,000 but he underlines that the biggest challenge is that the crop is not among produce covered by the National Agriculture Insurance Scheme.