



BM Silo **Danish Silogrowth in Uganda**

Background

Farmers in Uganda are learning improved methods of cultivation, which makes a tenfold increase on their harvest. To make sure that the farmers achieve maximum profit, BM Silo is assisting in developing an improved way to store their crops.

Self-help

In August 2009, Jens Silkjær and his family went to Uganda for the first time. Jens Silkjær, which is a professional and educated farmer, quickly realized that the local farmers were starving in spite of them owning some of the most fertile land in the world and an ability to harvest twice a year.

Jens Silkjær wanted to use the knowledge he had from Danish agriculture to assist the local farmers in Uganda. Therefore, he entered into a cooperation with a large well-organised church in Uganda, which needed assistance to strengthen their agricultural project. Subsequently, a partnership with the local church and the NGOs Victory Outreach Ministries and International Aid Service was established. In 2011 Danida donated DKK 200.000 to the partnership, which was spend on founding the project Farming4Life - a project that educates Ugandan farmers in order to improve their harvest and profit.

Initially Farming4Life established a demonstration farm from where 40 students were trained and workshops for additional 40 were held. To start with the Ugandan farmers were laughing, when they were introduced to the new methods of cultivation.



They were taught to measure up their fields, sow in rows, fertilise the land and cover it with a turf to detain the water and reduce weed.

By using these new methods of cultivation, a Ugandan family can farm their land and get 30 bags of maize in contrast to the previous three bags. A family can survive on three to four bags, and they can sell the rest. Thus, today the Ugandan farmers have embraced the new methods.

Danish silo as money bin

By means of Farming4Life's methods of cultivation, the farmers in Uganda have harvested more crops than they can consume themselves. Therefore, they need to store the harvest until the produce can be sold.

Today, the Ugandan farmers use small home-made silos covered with clay to store their crops. These silos does not protect the content from insects and pests, and the farmers often experience a loss of 30-50%.

There are huge fluctuations in prices in Uganda - especially in maize. The Ugandan population is extremely vulnerable to these fluctuations, since they are consuming huge quantities of maize.

See more on: www.bmsilo.com

Jens Silkjær contacted BM Silofabrik ApS, after he had watched a portrait of the company and its products on the local news. He was sure, this was the right company to help him build and develop a silo that could protect the Ugandan farmers' crops from pests and store their harvest long enough to ensure the farmers the highest possible price. BM Silofabrik ApS agreed to enter the project even though Jens Silkjær had no financial funds.

Matching local conditions

"In our company, we are used to the customers who demand customized silos, which can be easily filled. In Uganda they are facing different challenges in addition to time and physical conditions, which you, as a silo manufacturer, have to comply with", says Claus Martinsen - owner of BM Silofabrik ApS.

Claus Martinsen and his father and founder of BM Silofabrik ApS, Bent Martinsen, are participating together in Farming4Life's project in Uganda. They are developing a silo that can resist the warm climate in Uganda and at the same time, it must be built so simple that the local farmers easily can operate it themselves.

Price and delivery also play an important role in building the silo, since the price of the silo must match the Ugandan farmer's economic abilities. Additionally, BM Silo has to take into account that the infrastructure in the country is insufficient and the high freight costs.

"I am sure that the Ugandan farmers will welcome our product, since the silo can solve the problems they have with crop loss caused by pests. It is a very interesting project to attend, and we are pleased that we can take an active part in helping the local farmers in Uganda"

Claus Martinsen,
Owner of BM Silofabrik ApS.

Developmental effect:

- **BM Silofabrik ApS builds a silo to prevent crop loss**
- **Education and livelihood**
- **Better nutrition and health**

In order to match the local conditions, skills and economic ability, the construction of the silo is based on one of the first silos that BM Silofabrik ApS produced. The idea is to build a silo without legs that can be placed directly on the ground. This will make it easy for the Ugandan farmers to load and unload the silo by hand. Furthermore, the silo has a lock mechanism to prevent theft. The silo is modular, which means that the farmers can start out with a small and cheap model, and as the need for storage increases, they can buy additional modules.

The silo is manufactured in galvanized steel, which makes it impossible for pests to penetrate. Galvanized steel also reflects sunbeams and protect the content from superheating. The silo is shipped and delivered unassembled, which makes it possible to pack 40 silos in one freight container. This reduces the freight cost radically and saves the Ugandan farmers a lot of money.

The future

"Currently a few of our small model silos are placed in Uganda to test how our silos react to the climate. Furthermore, we have sent some joint filler to Uganda to ensure that it matches the Ugandan standards", Claus Martinsen says. Farming4Life is planning to send 40 silos to Uganda in the nearest future. The silos will be sold to local farmers in Lira in the northern part of Uganda.

