

SAWLOG PRODUCTION GRANT SCHEME



News of Uganda's commercial tree planting fund for the private sector

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- Tree Plantations and the Poor
- SPGS Clients' Safari
- Planters' Diary
- Community Planting
- Fire Season - R U Ready?
- 2,500ha Milestone Passed



Tree Plantations & Poverty

"The Sawlog Scheme doesn't appear to be very pro-poor does it?" said the consultants recently hired by a major donor to review the support to Uganda's environmental sector. I was surprised at first, especially having just returned from a week's visit to a number of private planters under the SPGS - from groups of small landowners to bigger investors with over 1,000ha of land. It did make me think seriously, however, about people's perception of plantation forestry and so I explained to the consultants how plantation forestry can in fact contribute very significantly to rural livelihoods and can complement the other key components of poverty reduction (such as food production, education and primary health care).

All of the SPGS planters provide employment right where the poorest people live. Many jobs are also being created in support services - from nurseries to those who provide food for the workers. Many people are receiving practical training in plantation related issues.

Only two years after the SPGS started, there is a rapidly growing forestry contracting business (although we are under no illusion that there is still a long way to go to train more skilled staff and raise productivity). Of course the SPGS clients have to have funds to invest to start with, but this ensures that they are serious investors, thus creating jobs that are likely to be more permanent. We will leave the last word (for now at least) to Richard Laing, the CEO of the Commonwealth Development Corporation, who had a letter published in a UK paper recently, in response to the Millennium Development goals: **"Without a sustainable private sector in the developing world, reducing poverty will remain a laudable ambition - but nothing more. Debt relief and aid are useful but have their limits. Long term investment of capital into private sector businesses in the developing world leading to wealth generation has to be a key plank of any poverty reduction strategy"**. *The Financial Times (16/09/05)*

COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING - THE KAMUSIIME WAY

Something exciting is happening around Rutoto in Bushenyi in the west of Uganda. Amongst the matooke plantations and eucalypt woodlots, the previously bare hills are being planted with pine trees. Leading this transformation is an organisation called Kamusiime Memorial Rural Development Association, a group of 22 local people, who formally got together in 1998.

Kamusiime were amongst the first to sign up with SPGS early in 2004: their contract was for 100 ha – all on the Association members' private land. Their performance in less than two years has been so impressive that we thought we would share their experiences with you as they are an inspiration to others.

When the SPGS team visited in mid-October 2005, Kamusiime were busy preparing a further 23ha for planting later in 2005 and are well on target to achieve their 100ha target in 2006. "We are blessed with good rains in Bushenyi" said Brenda Mwebaze, the very active Secretary of Kamusiime. This is pretty obvious to anyone visiting the region, which has luxuriant vegetation and extremely fertile soils.

Kamusiime have successfully established just over 50 ha of *Pinus caribaea* var. *hondurensis* under the SPGS since 2004 and they have received to date (Oct'05) Ushs20M for their efforts from the SPGS. What is most impressive, however, is the enthusiasm of Kamusiime's members and also the excellent quality of their young plantations. We asked some the committee members just how they are achieving such spectacular results. "The SPGS has been important by providing both technical and financial support" said Brenda – "before we were using the wrong species and had poor seed".

Brenda then went on to explain how Kamusiime organises itself. Members have 'pooled' their land and the committee decides on the work schedule. Every Saturday, each member is expected to come and work or pay Ushs 1000 so that labour can be hired. Most of the other labour is provided by local women and youth, with up to 150 people employed during peak times of weeding in the plantations and pot-filling in their nursery.



Kamusiime Committee members pose proudly beside one of their Pinus caribaea plantations in Bushenyi: this one is only 12 months old (from improved Australian seed).

Kamusiime are even spreading their wings beyond Bushenyi and have recently taken in a contract to establish 20 ha for a private investor in Mpigi. Under the contract, Kamusiime prepare the land, plant and weed the plantation for 6 months and then hand it over to the owner. An impressive initiative indeed, which shows that people are really starting to take tree growing more

seriously in Uganda.

Kamusiime activities have also not gone unnoticed by other landowners in Bushenyi either. A number of local people have been asking them for pine seedlings to grow on their own lands, having seen the excellent growth of Kamusiime's plantations. Kamusiime are only too happy to direct these people to their nearby nursery.

You can see how Kamusiime have not only improved their silvicultural standards quickly but have had the entrepreneurial spirit to respond to the market opportunities being stimulated by the SPGS – be it nursery production or contract tree planting. We even nearly forgot to mention that Kamusiime also have a thriving apiary venture too, producing 200 litres of honey per year. Although, of course, your SPGS team are above accepting bribes, a small pot of honey was accepted purely on research grounds – and believe us, it is excellent!

*For further information on Kamusiime contact:
Brenda Mwebaze on 077 452 680.*

SPGS COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING INITIATIVE

So you thought SPGS benefits only 'big' people with large acreage and approved investment/management plans did you? Well you are about to get shocked... read on. The SPGS actually gives substantial support - in the form of seedlings and technical support - to communities who have expressed an interest in planting trees primarily for timber production.

Approximately 100,000 seedlings of *Pinus caribaea* and *Eucalyptus grandis* will be dispatched to our esteemed community plantation "investors" in Luwero, Bushenyi, Rakai, Hoima, Apac, and Mbale before the end of the current planting season (provided the rains are favourable). These are small individual tree planters who have dedicated part of their land (minimum area being two acres) for tree planting.

The LEMA community group in Luwero have put on their boots and started planting. The community members are all scattered in the two sub-counties of Katikamu and Makulubita. Despite being frustrated by a dry spell earlier on, they have managed to plant over 40,000 eucalyptus and pine seedlings. Maama Margaret, we are grateful for the good coordination. Also in Kalagala Bombo, 5,000 eucalypt seedlings have been delivered and planted.

Ryamasa community in Bushenyi, unlike LEMA, are located on one hill (approximately 2000 m asl) well coordinated and although work goes on individually, it is a perfect example of how people can work together. Ryamasa community has received and planted 10,000 pine seedlings in mid October 2005 and they have requested an additional 20,000 trees for the March/April 2006 planting season.

Nkalwe CFM group in Rakai like LEMA are scattered in Kabira sub-county, however these are sensitized on plantation establishment and along with NFA, collaboratively guard the Kigona river forest block of the Sango Bay forest. These received 8,000 pine seedlings and planting goes on.

6,000 PCH seedlings have already been delivered and planted in Akokoro, Apac district. Another 20,000 pine seedlings for community planting in Kabwoya Village, Hoima District have been dispatched and planted.

As for Mbale, an initial 4000 pine seedlings were delivered in the first week of November 2005. Through collaborative forest management (NFA and neighboring communities of Namatale CFR),



Charles and Alexander (SPGS's community planting officers - on extreme left) posing with some of the Bushenyi community that expressed interest in tree planting on their own land.

communities will be planting 5 rows along the 19 km boundary. The total seedlings requirements for the entire length of the planting stand at 57,000 seedlings at a 2m x 2m espacement. A number of applications have been received from Ntungamo, Rukungiri, Masindi, Nebbi, Kamwenge and Bushenyi for the same SPGS support.

The lessons we have learnt to date are that it is easier working with communities closer to each other than those so scattered. It is became clear very quickly that these communities require regular training and monitoring to perfect their tree planting activities - work that the SPGS's Community Planting Officers (CPOs) are now busy with.



One enthusiastic man in Bushenyi planting a pine seedling after receiving trees and tuition from the SPGS's Community Planting Officers in October 2005.

MUBENDE SAFARI

“Well, do you think we should repeat this meeting’s format in the future” asked the SPGS team at the end of the clients’ meeting in Mityana. Almost as if rehearsed, there was a resounding cry “definitely - yes!” So I think we can take it that our first quarterly clients’ meeting preceded by a day’s safari was a success. Here are the highlights:

Despite some heavy early morning rain and an ominously grey sky, some 41 people descended on Kasana-Kasambya Central Forest Reserve from all corners of the country. Four SPGS planters’ plantations were visited during the day but the start was at the demonstration planting established by the FRMCP in early 2003. The main planting here is *Pinus caribaea* var. *hondurensis* (PCH), with smaller areas of *Araucaria cunninghamii* and *Maesopsis eminii*. Planted less than 3 years ago in Apr/May 2003, you can see the impressive performance from the photos.

The PCH was from Australian clonal seed orchard seed and is already at a stage where it can be pruned. Bric gave an expert demonstration of good pruning techniques for a first, access pruning to about 2.0 metres. The key points were the cutting techniques to ensure that there is no damage to the stem (which encourage diseases) and that the branch stub left is almost flush with the stem (i.e. not leaving a ‘coat-peg’). Armed with some brand new pruning saws, participants then were able to try it for themselves, though the two ladies present from the EC threatened to send in a bill to the SPGS for the trees they pruned!



*The SPGS team showing planters how to establish a Permanent Sample Plot (PSP) in the *Pinus caribaea* demonstration plot in Kasana-Kasambya nr. Mubende (only 30 months old, from Australian seed orchard seed).*

The trenches that had been prepared at this stop had been intriguing people but Paul then explained that it was a demonstration of a Permanent Sample Plot (PSP). He went on to explain why PSPs were so valuable for monitoring growth and general performance of plantations and showed how to set up a PSP.

The next topic was foxtailing, which is the plant’s response to excellent growing conditions on the site: with almost no dormant season in many parts of Uganda, some pines don’t stop to put out branches but keep shooting for the sky (like a fox’s tail). The SPGS Advisors stressed that thinning is the most critical operation with regard to growing sawtimber crops and the current recommendation would be to bring the stocking down to around 700 sph at 1st thinning at which time all the weaker, deformed and smaller trees - which would include most of the foxtails - would be removed. Thinning will probably be necessary at only 4 years in this fast growing crop.

We then moved on to Besepo (Uganda) Ltd.’s major new planting under the SPGS. Ponsiano has established the largest individual area (to date) under the SPGS – some 298 ha has been paid for under his current contract, with a mere 202 ha to go! He entertained us with the his family history, telling us that his father had been a pitsawyer and he felt that it was clearly time to redress the balance and start seriously planting. His main problem had been keeping on top of the weeding. After advice from the SPGS Advisors (and some



Margaret Kasekende (from the EC Delegation in Kampala) demonstrating her prowess with a pruning saw during the SPGS clients’ field trip in Mubende.

stern words from Allan!), he had vastly increased the labour to carry out manual weeding and also started to use glyphosate. His efforts were clearly paying off. Ponsiano had also been the first of the SPGS planters to use a bulldozer for land clearance and he explained how cost-effective it could be, provided the operator was well instructed.

Members present also discussed the poor stem form of some of the pines, especially the *P. oocarpa* from local collections. This seed is clearly not good quality, which points to the original imports into the country not having come from the best provenances. The advice was to focus more on PCH improved seed, which will clearly give better yields and much straighter stems (which is what sawmillers like of course).

The next stop was Richard Bakojja's plantation where we lunched under the shaded of a big fig tree. Richard was one of the early SPGS pace-setters and is a passionate supporter of tree planting. To date, he has established 90ha of his 300ha contract. Like many planters, Richard was taken by surprise by the rampant weed growth on the site and he sensibly slowed down planting to get on top of the problem. Richard suggested that we all walked to the top of the hill to get a proper view of his plantation, which sorted the men from the boys – or should we say the fit from the not so fit! The view was well worth the effort though (see photo on page 7).

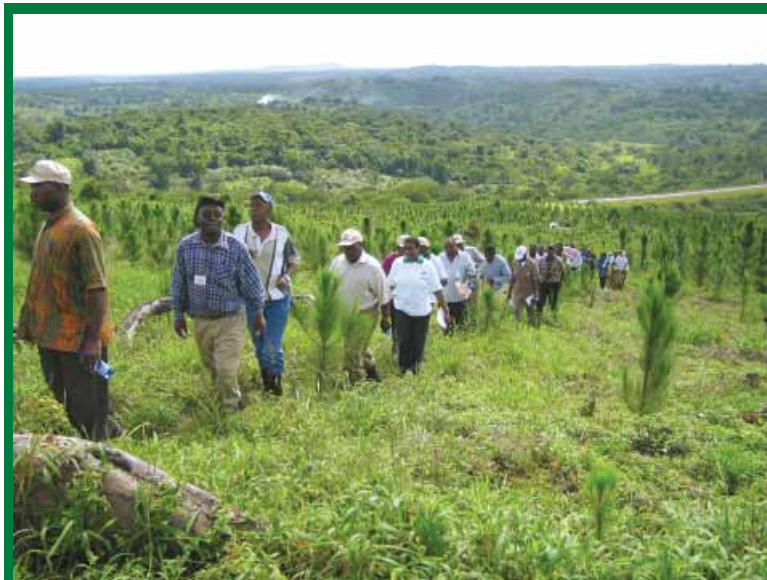
Next up was the 45ha planting of Precision Sawmill Ltd. Here we saw some different issues, namely, taungya and the problems caused by poor post-plant spraying. We saw some young pines swamped by a bean crop. Despite the practice of taungya not permitted under the SPGS rules, it keeps 'cropping up' occasionally. It was clear to all present, however, that this practice of trying to grow food crops along with the trees was incompatible with producing decent tree crops. We also saw where the client had sprayed glyphosate after planting in an effort to control the excessive grass competition. Spray damage was evident on a number of trees due most likely to a combination of careless spray technique (e.g. windy

conditions or poorly trained personnel) and poor timing of spraying, when the weeds were too tall and well developed. Hopefully the client will benefit from the group discussions and advice.

The last stop was Lt. General Wamala's 68ha SPGS planting (out of a total contract of 100ha). We could see where a bulldozer had cleared land for the current year's planting but the consensus was that the numerous termite hills should have been flattened at the same time as the bush was been cleared. We also looked at the *Pinus patula* planted in late 2003. Despite looking good at this stage, the advice was that this species was not well suited to the site and it would eventually struggle. *P. patula* requires cool sites, which in Uganda means high altitudes (e.g. Kabale).

Mention was made that there was a 5th SPGS client – Hon. Sheila Mishambi - who

had also planted in Kasana-Kasambya CFR, but the access road was not good. To date, Sheila has received payment for planting 17ha of her 100ha SPGS contract. Allan thanked everybody for sharing their experiences so openly and hoped that people would learn from what they had seen. Overall, it was a good day for all those involved with the SPGS and "well done" to all the private planters who made time to attend.



SPGS clients and Steering Committee members being route-marched up to the top of the hill planted by Richard Bakojja in Kasana-Kasambya CFR in Mubende. Richard has established 90ha to date mainly of *Pinus caribaea* var. *hondurensis* from Australian seed.

ENERGY PLANTATIONS?

The SPGS has just commissioned Forest Industry Services (FIS) to identify feasible models for rural power generation from woody biomass. There is a strong demand for energy in Uganda opening up opportunities for private investors. Within the study, energy wood production systems are explored like planting fast growing tree species on a 2-3 year rotation and appropriate conversion technology identified (wood-gasification, steam and stirling engines and co-generation systems). We will share the results with you early in the New Year.

FIRE SEASON IS APPROACHING

How Prepared are you?

As you sit down and read this latest edition of the SPGS newsletter your mind is probably filled with the holidays and New Year rushing up to greet us. Possibly you would have mentioned a couple of times to others that it has been a while since it last rained and how hot and dry it is. Most likely, however, what isn't very high up on your list of concerns is the threat of fire to your tree plantings. Sit back and consider a few things:

✿ Chances are you have spent over a million shillings for every hectare you have planted (more if your trees are a year or older) and every year that they grow the more valuable they become and the costlier they will be to replace.

✿ You have spent a lot of time planning and managing those areas and ...

✿ If they were destroyed you would be back to square one, with money and time to be spent before you can reap the reward of your investment.



Participants learning to safely extinguish a forest fire during a Fire Protection course in NilePly's plantation near Jinja (Nov.'05).

Getting a bit more worried I hope? Well then it's time to think about what would happen right now if a fire occurred in or near your trees:

1. Who would see it?
2. Is there any natural or man-made break around your plantings to stop a fire from coming in?
3. Who would fight it and would they know what to do?
4. Do they have any equipment to fight it with?

Yes it is enough to give you sleepless nights! Fortunately though by preparing before the dry season, we can put some methods in place that would significantly reduce the risk of severe losses to fires. The most important things to consider are as follows:

✿ Create and maintain firebreaks around your plantation. Many fires enter from outside where

others have set fire to bush or grass irresponsibly. By preparing adequate firebreaks you can prevent those fires from getting into and destroying your trees. External breaks should be 10m minimum; internal ones 5m.

✿ Make sure that there are people keeping an eye out for fires. This could be someone you have employed or even your neighbours. The sooner a fire is spotted, the quicker it can be put out and that reduces the area burnt.

✿ Make sure that there are people to fight the fire, again either someone directly employed or by having an agreement with neighbours.

✿ Have equipment available for people to fight the fire with. Starting with basic beaters and hoes; buckets for water and somewhere to collect water from. Larger plantings validate more sophisticated equipment such as water tankers, knapsacks and perhaps even semi-permanent fire watchtowers.

By having these in place at least you have made an effort to prevent or to fight fires in your trees. Of course there will be fires too big to fight but at least you can fight those that aren't. If you have no fire prevention and fire fighting resources, a fire that starts out small will grow to eat all your trees and investments.

For further information see *Plantation Guideline No. 18 (v2) – Fire Protection*, available from the SPGS office and on our web-site www.sawlog.ug

**BE
PREPARED!**

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 4TH SPGS CLIENTS' MEETING HELD IN MITYANA ON 27TH OCTOBER 2005

This was the first of its kind, with the SPGS clients' meeting following on from a field day and as you have hopefully read, many issues were covered, leaving little to be discussed during the meeting....or so we thought!

For the first time, SPGS clients were able to meet with Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment (Eng. Kabanda), representatives from EC Delegation and Ministry of Finance and the newly recruited staff of SPGS i.e. Messrs Atuyamba Alex and Odeke Charles.

The message for the meeting was the need to continue with the sharing spirit of diverse and rich experience among participants. After the administrative business was dealt with, we kicked off with feedback from the field day to remind people of the key points covered and especially practices that required attention – including:

- The importance of using improved seed wherever possible.
- The poor performance of *P. oocarpa* compared with *P. caribaea* from Australia.
- The importance of good site-species matching (e.g. *P. patula*).
- Pruning techniques and timing.
- The importance of Permanent Sample Plots (PSPs) for monitoring growth.
- The benefits that mechanical land preparation and a good road network can bring.
- The importance of planning when it comes to weed control.
- The need for better training and supervision when using herbicides.
- Why taungya is incompatible with producing a decent timber crop.

The other things during the meeting include an update on the SPGS contract performance by Allan, SPGS Administrator and a presentation by Paul Jacovelli (Chief Technical Advisor) entitled "Where are we going? What does the future hold for the SPGS?".

There was an extensive period of questions and answer session during which a range questions from administrative to technical were asked and discussed. Last but not least, an illustrated presentation from Bric Milligan (SPGS Technical Advisor) highlighted some important lessons from recent client inspections and marked the end of yet a successful meeting! The next meeting will



The view from the summit: Richard Bakojja's excellent planting in Mubende. Uganda's hills are at last being planted.

follow this format, with a half day's clients' meeting following a day's field tour to plantations. We are already planning it in the Jinja and Mayuge area for 31st Jan – 1st Feb 2006 – so mark it in your new 2006 diaries as soon as you get one!

SPGS - PROGRESS

As we went to press (end Nov.'06), the SPGS has reached a major milestone: 2,560 ha of private planting has met the standards and received the 1st SPGS payment of Ushs300,000. 53% of this area has also received 2nd SPGS payment of Ushs150,000/ha. Nobody has yet received 3rd payment, which will hinge on having the planted areas well protected from fires.

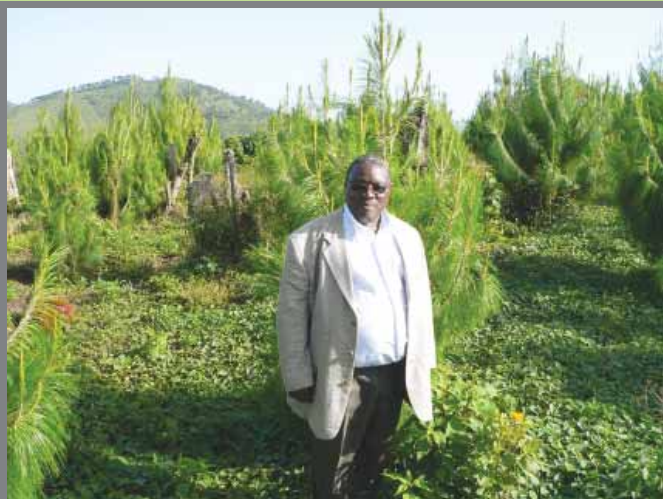
A big WELL DONE to the private sector planters and a message from the SPGS team:

"Have a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and New Year and Together Let Us Plant More and Better in 2006".

TRAINING UPDATE

The two **Fire Protection** courses held in Nov. '05 were very well attended and there was a great deal of enthusiasm amongst participants, especially as we able to demonstrate for the first time using the fire-fighting equipment that the NFA has recently purchased. If you missed out, this course will be repeated prior to the next dry season - around May/June '06.

The next course being run by the SPGS is the 4-day **Plantation Maintenance** course from 19th-23rd Feb. 2006, based around Kyenjojo. This course covers post-plant operations, including weeding (both manual and chemical), pruning, thinning, basic tree measurement and Eucalypt coppice management. This is an important course for all on the SPGS: both Paul and Bric will be there to pass on their experience. *Book places with Allan today as numbers are restricted.*



Babweyaka Vanancio of Bavame Enterprises posing in front of his Ppatula plantation in Mafuga CFR, Kabale. He has received the 1st and 2nd payments to date for his 100ha SPGS contract.

SEED: Stephen Kaukha, Manager of the National Tree Seed Centre, has given us the following update on the availability of commercial tree seed:

- ❖ *Pinus caribaea* var. *hondurensis* seed is now available from both Brazil and South Africa. The price of both seedlots is Ushs 850,000 per kg. NB1. both these seedlots are permitted under the SPGS's rules. NB2. check with the NTSC regarding germination.
- ❖ *Eucalyptus grandis* from South African seed orchards is expected mid-Dec (price not available).
- ❖ *Maesopsis eminii* from local select trees is available at Ushs50,000 per kg.

Contact the NTSC on 041 286 049

Planters' Diary

(what you should be doing during Jan & Feb!)

Fire Season Preparations: ensure your plantations have firebreaks around them and that you have the means of putting out a fire should one start.

Land Preparation: start preparing land for planting in the March/April rains and - where heavy grass growth is expected - prepare to pre-plant spray just before the rains.

Training: book your key field staff on the SPGS Plantation Maintenance course (scheduled for 19-23 Feb 2006 in Kyenjojo).

SPGS Clients' Meeting: the next quarterly meet is being planned for 31st Jan (field visits) and 1st Feb 2005 (main meeting). The venue is likely to be in Jinja and Mayuge, but Allan will be in touch in early Jan. to confirm details.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

you can look forward to....

Two articles promised for this Issue but due to space had to be postponed to Issue 8:

- **EUCALYPTUS AND THE ENVIRONMENT:** a balanced view of this ongoing debate.
- **THE EUCALYPTUS CHALCID WASP:** A summary of what we know about this pest.

And thats not all - we will also future.....

- **SPGS's 2005 AWARDS:** for the best overall plantations established in 2005 under the SPGS and also for the most improved planter in 2005.
- **CERTIFICATION:** why we have to move towards international standards and what the implications will be for investors in tree plantations in Uganda.

Have you visited our web-site yet? If not then please do so sharpish and let us have your comments! It is designed to inform all those interested or involved in the Sawlog Scheme.

www.sawlog.ug

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