

**THE IMPACT OF ELEPHANTS ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY: A SOCIO-
ECONOMIC EVALUATION OF FARMERS/ELEPHANT CONFLICT IN WAKYATO
SUB-COUNTY, LUWERO DISTRICT, UGANDA**

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Abstract

This study was aimed at assessing the impact of the elephant on agricultural productivity in Wakyato sub-county Luwero district. The objectives of the study were; to value damages to crops by elephants, assess the methods used by farmers to deter elephant raids and lastly, to examine the potential benefits that the local communities have with respect to the presence of elephants and other wildlife. The study was largely based on data from direct measurements and observations. Interviews and published information were also used in data collection.

Four crops; cassava, maize and banana were considered. In view of the findings, the damage was a very real constraint to agricultural productivity. This has affected food security and household per capita income. This study has shown that on average, a compensation of Ugandan shillings 100,744/= or US\$ 74.62 per year per household would make the households as well off with elephants without. The farmers have used traditional methods to reduce raids with considerable success. These methods included physical guarding, ditches, moats, fences, noise and fires. The results show that a combination of physical barriers and guarding reduces elephant raids considerably. Some farmers however, were not able to protect their farms due to technical and

financial constraints. There is need for government and UWA to develop a strategy that will address this problem. More studies are needed to compare the potential financial gains from the wildlife in the district, this may lead to a landuse system that may be compatible with human needs in Wakyato. To reduce the human/elephant conflict the government together with UWA must compensate the farmers at least with the value lost. The long term solution however, is for the planning unit in Luwero assisted by the technical staff from UWA and related government departments to come up with an integrated landuse plan that recognizes both wildlife and human welfare.