

# LOW-TECH TOOL HELPS UGANDAN FARMERS EMBRACE REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

September 2022

Coffee can be a challenging crop to farm. Its trees can take several years to reach maturity and produce good yields. During those growth cycles, coffee crops are susceptible to pests, plant diseases, poor soil quality, and the effects of extreme weather linked to climate change. While there are techniques to address these challenges, learning good practices and knowing when to apply them demands special attention from coffee farmers: How much pruning is too much? When should fertilisers be applied? What's a good approach to intercropping?

As a simple and reliable way to share timely guidance for coffee growers, Kyagalanyi Coffee Ltd. (Volcafé's company in Uganda) developed printed calendars to distribute to farmers. The calendars offer focused advice for each month, are appropriate to the local growing season, and touch on everything from planting seedlings or intercropping with shade trees, to stumping and pruning, to thwarting plant diseases and pests.

*"Calendars are a wonderful GAPs implementation guide. On a monthly basis, the calendar reminds you of the most important GAP to implement. In this way, the calendar helps us in improving coffee productivity and profitability."*

Alice Kacubya, coffee farmer in Lwengo district

By combining illustrations with step-by-step instructions, the calendars are an easily understood supplement to in-person trainings. They are a visual aid that reinforces the good agricultural practices (GAP) and regenerative techniques that coffee growers gain through our Volcafé Way farmer support programme, which also involves model farms and local field staff advising farmers.

*"Pictures speak more than words and it isn't easy to forget a picture seen,"* explains Jane Najjemba, a coffee agronomist with Volcafé in Uganda. *"The pictorial part of the calendars made GAP easy to implement."*

Farmers who deploy GAP and regenerative practices can improve coffee yields, boosting their incomes while also reducing the need for costly chemical inputs and safeguarding local ecology.



## QUICK FACTS

**Country:**

Uganda

**Objectives:**

Support farmers to learn and apply regenerative agriculture practices through a low-tech solution, enable improved coffee yields and farmer incomes

**Timeline:**

2016 onwards

**Impact:**

Over 23,000 calendars have been distributed to coffee farmers in Uganda, providing a take-home supplement to in-person trainings and visits to model farms

## LEARN MORE

**Marie Renou-Ullrich**[marie.renou@volcafe.com](mailto:marie.renou@volcafe.com)**Eric Fichtl**[eric.fichtl@volcafe.com](mailto:eric.fichtl@volcafe.com)**Pictures:**

[1] The calendars offer month-by-month tips and techniques to coffee farmers like Alice.



**Combat climate change**  
**Regenerative practices**

Jane says the calendars have been positively received by farmers, with the majority finding the advice clear and easy to grasp.

Alice Kacubya, a coffee farmer from Lwengo district, says, “Calendars are a wonderful GAPs implementation guide. On a monthly basis, the calendar reminds you of the most important GAP to implement. In this way, the calendar helps us in improving coffee productivity and profitability.”

Emmanuel Bukomeko, Masaka Scheme Manager with Volcafe in Uganda adds: “These calendars prove that simplicity is genius. The pictorials and the very few additional texts make the calendars very easy to understand, even for farmers without the ability to read or write.”

The calendars are produced in conjunction with partners like NESCAFE and NESPRESSO who also purchase the farmers’ coffee harvests. There are calendars geared toward robusta as well as arabica coffee. This year, new robusta calendars (seen in the pictures here) were distributed in Uganda’s Masaka coffee-growing region.

Since 2016, Volcafe and our roaster partners have distributed 6,500 robusta and 17,000 arabica commercial calendars to Ugandan farmers.

The calendars are a low-tech resource with lasting value: each printed edition of the calendar spans three years, and the advice contained can support farmers for much longer. Based on the successes in Uganda, we are exploring the possibility of designing localised calendars for other coffee origins.

Pictures:

[2], [3] & [4] The calendars cover several years, offering advice for the cultivation of coffee plants and managing one’s farm. The graphics and tips contained demonstrate regenerative agriculture practices. Topics covered include water conservation, soil health, safety on the farm, and record-keeping.

[5] Hakim, a farmer in the Masaka region, with his calendar.



## UGANDA LOW-TECH TOOL HELPS UGANDAN FARMERS EMBRACE REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

