AWARD
African Women in Agricultural Research and Development

2010 AWARD Fellow
Florence Lubwama Kiyimba

Position:	Research officer
Institution:	National Agricultural Research Laboratories – National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARL-NARO)
Country:	Uganda
MSc:	Agricultural Engineering, University of Nairobi, 1998
Mentored by:	Dr. Agnes Namutebi Department of Food Science and Technology Makerere University

Research area: Gender-responsive agro-processing technology development and dissemination in smallholder dairy production.

Florence Lubwama Kiyimba's current research focuses on the gender aspects of a technology that was designed by NARL-NARO to help Ugandan women reduce the time it takes to chop elephant grass for their penned dairy cattle.

"Working as a team, we carry out needs assessment surveys to identify constraints in agricultural production and then design and develop simple, appropriate, and gender-sensitive technologies to reduce the energy and time intensity on women and children, while minimizing losses in processing and adding value to the products," explains Lubwama Kiyimba. "In most rural societies, women's technology development needs have received very little attention, yet they are the primary labor force in agricultural production."

The forage chopper that Lubwama Kiyimba's team developed, equipped with hand guard and a plate controlling the length of cut, was safer than the women farmers' traditional method of chopping with a machete, which often resulted in hand injuries. Although the forage chopper saved time spent on the actual chopping activity, it did not save the absolute time spent on the forage-processing operation, nor was it necessarily the women's time and labor that were saved.

"We assumed that the forage chopper would save women time and effort, but this was not the case," says Lubwama Kiyimba. "The machine actually added to their work, since it had to be moved in and out of storage for use on a daily basis, coupled with the need to sort forage before chopping." This project reinforced Lubwama Kiyimba's commitment to understand the gender-technology relationship, with a focus on how agricultural technologies consolidate or transform existing gender relations as individuals use them. She is currently in the third year of her PhD studies in Gender and Technology Development at Wageningen University in the Netherlands.

A lifelong learner, Lubwama Kiyimba says her high school teachers encouraged her to do what comes naturally. "I was always better at science than art," she recalls, "so engineering was a perfect fit for me—even though at university, I was one of only two girls in a class of 14."

Lubwama Kiyimba is excited to be an AWARD Fellow, particularly for the networking opportunities it will provide. "In the world of science, networking enhances career development as you share and learn from other professionals. Being mentored by a senior scientist also offers a rare chance to share knowledge with an expert in your field of interest, hence building your scientific skills."

Most of all, Lubwama Kiyimba believes that this fellowship offers her the opportunity to contribute to her country's effort to fight poverty, especially for rural women. "As one person, I may not change the world, but I may change the world for one person or household through my contribution to the joint effort to improve the situation of rural women in Uganda."

Lubwama Kiyimba is one of 180 African woman scientists who have won an AWARD Fellowship. AWARD is a professional development program that strengthens the research and leadership skills of African women in agricultural science, empowering them to contribute more effectively to poverty alleviation and food security in sub-Saharan Africa. For more information, please visit www.awardfellowships.org