ONION PRODUCTION; GROWERS'GUIDE

NURSERY ESTABLISHMENT

The seedlings stay in the nursery for two months before transplanting.

- Dimensions: 1 metre wide by any length
- Beds should be raised in case of rainy season
- Mix processed farm yard manure with DAP well on the bed
- Weekly spray with **Farmcozeb 80WP; 75WG**
- In case of bad weather they spay with curative fungicide
- For major boosting they apply CAN or Urea at nursery
- Seedling take 1½ - 2 months in the nursery

PLANTING

Onions require a lot of water during the growth. It's therefore important t consider the method of irrigation from before planting. In flood irrigation planting in basins or furrows give the crop adequate water and reduces the frequency of watering.

NB: use of a sieve (similar to that of watering can) to avoid uprooting the seedlings on the basins.

Spacing = 30cm x 8 – 10cm

Manure and Fertilizer application

Use well decomposed farmyard manure or compost. Broadcast adequate manure and DAP and work them into soil prior to planting.

Weeding

Use of herbicide is preferred. Herbicides are applied as a post emergence. Apply the herbicide at the time of transplanting and do not apply after the 14th day from the transplanting because scorching will occur. Use **Farmuron 50WP** at the rate of 40 – 50gm/ 20L of water. Ensure the soil is moist at the time of application.

Topdressing

It is done one month after transplanting. Use CAN broadcast and work into the soil. If chemical weed control is used do not work the fertilizer into the soil, use irrigation water to dissolve the fertilizer into soil. Subsequent use of foliar feeds after topdressing increases yields and the quality of the bulbs.

PESTS AND DISEASES

DISEASES

Downey Mildew

Lesions are formed near the tip of the older leaves. Yellowish patches covered in purplish grey wet fields are seen. Growth is reduced hence yields. The disease is favored by humid conditions especially poor drainage.
Control: Foliar spraying of **Equation pro** at the rate of 10g/ 20L of water or **Topsin M** at the rate of 20ml/ 20L.

Bulb Rot
The disease causes damping off seedlings and collar rot in older plants. Collar rots shows as yellowing of the leaves followed by wilting and death.
Control: Spraying with **Farmcozeb 80WP** 50g/ 20L of water. Drench with **Topsin M**.

Purple Blotch
This is a fungal disease whose symptoms are initially expressed as small white spot on the foliage followed by large purplish blotches often surrounded by orange border. If the attack on the foliage is early, the plant may fail to produce bulbs. The attacked leaves turn black and eventually die.
Control: Foliar spray with **Farmcozeb 80WP** 50g/20L, **Equation pro** 10g/ 20L and **Topsin M** 20ml/ 20L of water.

PESTS
Onion Thrips
Thrips feed at the base of the plant within the leaf sheaths. Attacked leaves have sunken silvery patches. In severe attacks the entire leaf appear silvery wither, dry up and die
Control: Foliar spraying with **Farm-X 25EC** 25ml/ 20L of water or **Jawabu 48C** 40ml/20L of water.

HARVEST

Maturity: Takes 190 days
Harvest when the neck of the onion is weak (soft and bending).
NB: Excessive use of CAN and water leads to poor formation of the bulb and constricting at the neck crucial for full maturity and hence harvesting.

Yield: This will depend on type of onion and agronomic management practices applied. Up to 28 Tonnes/ Acre