Harvesting and storing onions

When prices are low, good variety onions that have been well fertilized can be harvested, dried and stored the right way. These can be sold later when the prices raise.

Varieties that take long to mature and those whose leaves dry when mature store well. Germs are the main cause of rotting of onions and they enter mainly through the open neck that comes when the leaves are cut off after harvesting.

The way you fertilize your onions also affects the storability of the onions. Preferably use organic fertilizers in onions, but incase inorganic fertilizers are used, apply them only in the early stages of development and stop their application 2 months before harvesting.

Onion storage

When onions are for storage, harvest when the bulb and one third of the leaves are dry. You can also first bend the other leaves and force them to dry. During harvesting, treat the onions carefully not to wound the bulbs and take the harvested onions to a shaded place and cut off the leaves. Do not wash or peel the onions.

Dry the onions for a few more days in a shade. You can turn them once for even drying. Store the onions in a cool dry place that is open to the air but do not over pile the onions. The place should be raised from the ground to allow free air circulation both below and above the onions.

You can store the in a traditional store that looks like a large basket. The roof of the basket extends about 1 metre to protect the onions from rain. You can also make specialised store houses with all the four walls having round openings every half a metre for easy air circulation. Onions are placed on shelves. Finally, regularly inspect and discard any rotting

and/ or sprouting onions.