Introduction
Sweetpotato (Ipomoea batatus (L.) Lam.) is the third most important food crop in Uganda. Although it is considered a food security crop, its productivity is far below its potential. This study assessed the pest status and farmers’ perception and management practices of the most economically important insect pests of sweetpotato, i.e. the sweetpotato weevils Cylas punctifolius Boheman and C. brunneus F. and the sweetpotato butterfly Acraea acerata Hew (Pictures 1).

Materials and Methods
A total of 192 rural farm households of the districts Kabale, Kasese, Gulu, Masindi, Soroti and Wakiso were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. Additionally, the infestation rate and intensity of infestation of all three pests was quantified over two growing seasons in the districts of Kabale and Masindi.

Results
i) Farmer interviews (household survey)
Over 80% of the sweetpotato production is used for home consumption (Fig. 2). Contrary to what was generally assumed, the households of the Soroti district grew sweetpotato also primarily for home use and not for sale. This further emphasizes the importance of sweetpotato as a food security crop across the country. Most of the households (55%) sold sweetpotato roots at the local/road side markets and to middle men (31%). A few households sold sweetpotato roots either to neighbours (11%) or to schools (2%). Among the sweetpotato insect pests mentioned, sweetpotato weevils were ranked as number one by 57% of the households followed by caterpillars of the sweetpotato butterfly (37%) (Fig. 3). Caterpillars of the sweetpotato butterfly in Masindi and Wakiso districts were ranked as most damaging to sweetpotato than the sweetpotato weevils.

ii) Sweetpotato field surveys
The prevalence of A. acerata larvae was generally low (8–25 %) and its larvae caused very little defoliation (1–25 %) (Fig. 4). For Cylas spp., the abundance was relatively high (40–97%), with a consequential high yield loss (37–51%) of marketable root weight (Table 1).

Farmer management practices of A. acerata included use of chemical insecticides (24% of households), ash application (3 %) and hand picking (2%). However, 65% and 87% of the households did not apply any control measure for A. acerata and Cylas spp., respectively.

Conclusions
• Major losses due to A. acerata occur after pest outbreaks especially after prolonged dry seasons, which situation was not captured in our survey.
• Appropriate integrated pest management (IPM) strategies must be designed, particularly for Cylas spp., if the food security and livelihoods of farmers who depend on this crop is to be improved.