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Coffee export up with electronic single window

By Samuel Sanya

Uganda exported 443,100 bags of coffee valued at $49.39m (about sh179b) in November 2017, an improvement from 408,027 in November 2016. The improvement is due to the national electronic single window, the Uganda Coffee Development Authority's (UCDA) most recent report indicates.

The National Electronic Single Window (NESW) is a paperless system that simplifies the submission and processing of trade information for export and imports.

Edmond Kananura, the UCDA director for quality control and regulatory services noted that the single window system has hastened the time it takes to issue certificates to exporters. He added that the system has also improved farmers' incomes.

"You do not need to have physical documents because they are already in the system and are automatically delivered.

"So, anything that streamlines and eases the export of coffee will automatically benefit the whole value chain," he added.

UCDA's report also indicates that Ugacof (U) Ltd led with a market share of 17.80% or 78,881, 60kg bags of the exported coffee down from 21.06% market share the month before.

At the end of the spectrum, the National Union of Coffee Agribusiness and Farm Enterprises (NUCAFE) only managed to export 658, bags of 60kg or 0.15% of the market share.

Joseph Nkandu, the NUCAFE executive director, noted that the single window has improved transparency and efficiency in the coffee industry which has fed into an increase in the number of coffee bags exported from an average of three million bags to about 4.6 million bags.

"So these complaints of saying the Ugandan suppliers or exporters delay for this long, is now history. It (the single window) has, therefore, improved the competitiveness of Uganda's coffee exports," Nkandu said.

Despite the increase in coffee export volumes, the UCDA report also indicates there was a decrease in value of exports by 1.90% in November 2017 as global coffee prices tumbled due to a rise in supply.

According to the International Coffee Organisation (ICO), the price slump continued in December as the composite indicator price averaged 114 US cents per pound of coffee in December 2017, down 2.8% from November 2017.

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