

2018 Best Farmers competition launched

By Geoffrey Mutegeki

The 2018 edition of the Harvest Money's Best Farmers competition has been launched with a call to Ugandans to embrace the farming sector.

This is the fifth edition of the Harvest Money's Best Farmers competition and will run from February to November 2018.

During the launch that was held at Mish Farm in Kiwenda village, Wakiso district yesterday, the stakeholders pledged to continue supporting the competition. The competition is a partnership.

The national Best Farmers' competition, now running for the fifth year, is sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Kampala, dfcu Bank, Vision Group and KLM Airlines. This year, a new sponsor, Koudijs Animal Nutrition, has also come on board.

Unlike in the previous launches, which were held in boardrooms, this was held at Mish Farm, which is owned by Celia Kansime, one of the winners of the 2016 Best Farmers competition.

Speaking during the launch, The Netherlands ambassador to Uganda Henk Jan Bakker

underlined the embassy's continued support for the competition, which he said is guaranteed.

"We remain committed to supporting this competition, which we have done from the start. We are making a nationwide impact and are changing the image of agriculture in Uganda," Bakker says.

He encouraged farmers to be part of the competition that is revolutionising agriculture.

Paul Van Apeldoorn, the dfcu Bank chief transformation officer, called for more support for the agriculture sector, which he said is able to transform Uganda.

"The importance of agribusiness and agriculture sector cannot be overemphasized. This is the sector that can bring Uganda forward and is a key to making Uganda achieve its middle-income dream," Apeldoorn said.

Robert Kabushenga, the Vision Group chief executive officer, couldn't hide his excitement for the positive impact the competition has made towards transforming farming in Uganda.

"The competition is benefiting Ugandans more



The 2018 Best Farmers competition was launched at Celia Kansime's Mish Farm in Wakiso district yesterday. Kansime was among the 2016 best farmers. Photo by Maria Wamala

than we all know. The impact is massive and I would like to thank everyone for the support," Kabushenga said.

He commended the Netherlands embassy for bringing on board Koudijs Animal Nutrition that will boost the competition in terms of money and expertise.

Koudijs Animal Nutrition, is an organisation that focuses on the production, sales and services of complete animal feed, concentrates and premixes.

"The first time we did this launch was in the boardroom with fruits on the table. Today, we are on the farm in our overalls and are able to bring the public into people's farms. We are no longer sitting in boardrooms. We are talking to farmers and real people," Kabushenga said.

Victoria Sekitoleko, the chief

BETWEEN THE LINES:

The national Best farmers' competition, now running for the fifth year, is sponsored by the Royal Netherlands embassy in Kampala, dfcu Bank, Vision Group, KLM Airlines and Koudijs Animal Nutrition.

judge for the Best Farmers competition, praised the farmers who were chosen in the previous years and have continued to excel.

"I am glad to see that one of the farmers who was among the winners in 2016 has continued to progress. This shows that our judging is not biased," Sekitoleko said.

She encouraged Kansime to set up a shade at her farm to

train youth who would like to do farming, but have nowhere to get the training.

"If you are to train, do not train everyone. Focus on young ladies who are desperate to learn and are ready to relate with you," Kabushenga said.

Kansime, who was among the farmers who were supposed to fly to the Netherlands last year, but missed because she had a baby, will be travelling with the winners of the 2017 Best Farmers competition.

"I'm so excited to host you here and being recognised for my farming efforts. Farming requires focus and commitment which my fellow Ugandans need to have in mind if they are to succeed," Kansime said.

She is a poultry farmer with about 28,000 birds. She also grows sweet pepper, tomatoes and paprika fruits.

Winners of the best farmers share sh150m worth of farm inputs and are taken for an expenses paid tour of farming enterprises in Netherlands.

Entering competition

Farmers can nominate themselves or be nominated by others by sending their names to any of the Vision Group platforms, like, New Vision, Bukedde, Ruzizi Orumuri, Etop, Arua radio and TV West.

Nominations can be through e-mail harvestmoney@newvision.co.ug.

To nominate by SMS, type Farmers [space] name of farmer and send to 8338.

After the nomination farmers will be profiled on the various platforms. Their stories will be forwarded to the winners.