

According to residents, the hippos have injured three people in Kachera and destroyed crops in other villages. The most recent victim was only identified as Pastor Beda.

Kagamba sub-county councillors

who are farmers in Dwaniro, said they each lost at least one acre of potatoes.

"Hippos love sweet potato leaves. Once they know where a garden is, they use all ways to reach there,"

Local leaders said the population around the area's water bodies has increased over the last seven years. Julius Byabikyengire, a councillor, said encroachment on the

to stray and destroy. Many people have defied orders to cultivate crops near the lake, he lamented.

Kabale chairperson tips potato growers

KABALE

By Job Namanya

Kabale district chairperson Patrick Besigye Keihwa has asked potato growers in the Great Lakes Region to team up and devise strong marketing strategies for their products.

He said this while presiding over this year's Potato Week in Kabale on Monday. The event attracted potato growers from Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo.

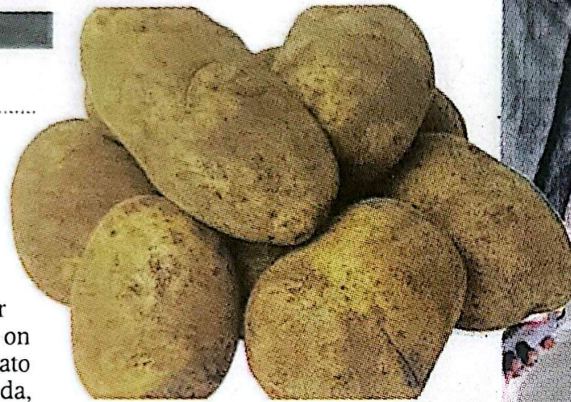
Keihwa also complained of poor quality potato seeds that he said had resulted in crop losses.

"Some farmers always use poor quality seeds and end up losing crops. Let there be strict inspection of potato seeds on the market," Keihwa said.

Activities to mark the Potato Week, which kicked off on Monday, are taking place at Kirigime Guest House in Kabale town.

Also gracing the event are officials from the Netherlands Embassy and other organisations promoting potato growing in the region.

The week is being marked under



the theme: "Enabling environment for sustainable potato production, increased food security and income in the Great Lakes Region."

Addressing participants, Stephen Tindimubona, the Uganda National Seed Potato Producers Association (UNSPPA) executive officer, urged stakeholders to find a solution to the bacterial wilt and new potato pests such as leaf minor and nematodes, which are threatening to reverse the gains made in the Irish potato industry.

According to Alex Barekye, the Kachwekano Zonal Research and Development Institute (KAZARDI)



A visitor speaking to a farmer who was exhibiting her products during the opening of the Potato Week. Photo by Job Namanya

director, Irish potato production in the region needs harmonised procedures in the value chain in order to spur development.

He said during the week, they hope to share experiences that will help them to develop technologies and

create a linkage between farmers and researchers.

The event, which is ending on Friday, will feature exhibitions from Irish potato farmers, field visits to farmer groups and discussions from experts in the industry.