

Harvest Money Expo: Companies to showcase genuine seeds

By Joshua Kato

He planted the new seeds with a lot of expectations, during the March-June season 2017. The previous season, Alex Mukasa had planted only two kilogrammes of the variety - sent to him by his son in Kampala and saw how well it performed. So the next season, he personally travelled to Kampala and bought 10kg of the seeds.

"But the harvest was not as good as the last season," he says.

Mukasa's dilemma is faced by many farmers who chose to turn to better seeds. This is because there are not enough good seeds on the market to cater for all of them.

As the first 2018 planting season draws nearer, there are many farmers like Mukasa who are looking around for the best improved seed varieties to plant.

This is why at the 2018 Harvest Money Expo, seed companies will take a leading role in not just showing farmers the best seeds to plant, but also how to plant them.

The expo will take place from

February 16 to 18 at Mandela stadium, Namboole.

"Last year, there were several good performing seeds varieties that were released," Josephine Okot, the executive director of Victoria Seeds, said. All these new varieties will be exhibited at the expo.

Victoria Seeds is one of the companies that will exhibit its products at the expo. Common seeds include the various varieties of maize, beans, groundnuts, soya, millet, rice and all vegetables.

According to researchers at the National Agriculture Research Organisation (NARO), although progress has been made, there is a big deficit between the market requirements for seeds and the actual production.

At the moment, there are two parallel seeds systems in Uganda. One is the formal system, that is regulated by the Government while the other is the informal system that is regulated by the farmers - under a near traditional arrangement.

The companies under the formal system produce only 25% of the

requirements, which means that farmers use largely seeds saved from the previous harvest. The informal system produces 75% of the seeds.

However, as farmers become more commercial, so is the need for improved seeds.

The good news for farmers who will grace the expo is that nearly all the seed-producing companies in Uganda have booked to grace the Harvest Money Expo.

Companies that have confirmed exhibiting at the expo include Victoria Seeds, Pearl Seeds, East African Seeds, NASECO Seeds, Agroz Seeds, Zoe Seed Ug, House of Seeds and Seed Co.

"We shall be showing expo-goers the latest seeds on the market," says Godfrey Katwere from NASECO.

"We have realised that many farmers buy poor seeds because of the lack of knowledge regarding where to find the good seeds. We encourage them to come to the expo so that they get the seeds directly from the producers," Katwere said.

This year, more exhibitors have come on board compared to last year.



Farmers make good harvests when they buy genuine seeds. Companies will showcase genuine seeds at the Harvest Money Expo

However, the entry fee to the expo remains the same at sh10,000 per person.

Several training sessions have been organised for farmers and people who want to attend these training sessions will have to pay an extra sh10,000 per day.

The sh10,000 for the training, allows a person entry to all the sessions lined up for that day.

Interested farmers and exhibitors can book a stall by sending an email to hme@newvision.co.ug or hme@newvision.co.ug or call 0752007564 and 0784584846.