

Dr Naluyima trains on best farm practices

By Umar Nsubuga

"No matter how rich or poor one may be, they will all head to the same market for food. Therefore, investing in farming will inevitably guarantee you market and wealth."

Dr Emma Naluyima made this remark at a recent farmers' training at hers and husband, Washington Mugerwa's farm in Bwerenga, Wakiso district. A cross-section of farmers attended the training.

Participants from different parts of the country converged to get practical knowledge on piggery, beans, dairy, bananas and coffee management, among other projects.

Naluyima was the fourth runner-up of the 2014 Best Farmers' competition.

The competition is organised by Vision Group and supported by the Embassy of the Netherlands, dfcu bank, KLM Airlines and Koudijs Nutrition BV.

The biggest enterprise on the farm is piggery. Other enterprises include growing matooke and vegetables, as well as fish farming. The couple also runs a school that emphasises agriculture.

The theme of the training was *The Employers' Heritage*. Naluyima explained that many people venture into farming after retirement and sometimes lack the knowledge

to ensure success. Thus, she advised that it is better to engage in agriculture when one is still strong. She coupled this with a message on attitude change and did not have any kind words for the elite, who despise farming.

Dr Dick Nuwamanya, the president of Uganda National Farmers Federation, who was the guest-of-honour, Naluyima's views.

"The problem with Africans is that they are a quarrelling race. Look at the Americans, for instance. When they got their independence, they settled down and developed their country."

"Africans, on the other hand, started quarrelling among themselves over resources when they got independence. The consequence is that they are unable to feed themselves with these vast chunks of arable land."

"We need more Naluyimas to preach the farming gospel to change our people's attitude," Nuwamanya remarked.

Robert Serwanga, a trainer with the Harvest Money Expo and the director of Agrarian Systems Limited, said the main objective for the trainings was to enable skills that would help farmers transform from subsistence to profitable commercial farming systems and enable interaction between farmers and other value chain

actors including traders, researchers and drug and feed suppliers.

Pigs are wealth

Naluyima, who facilitated the session on piggery, advised farmers to always look at the history of the breed of the pigs before buying them.

Participants were also told to treat pig farming as a business, not a hobby.

Farm-oriented school

Richard Kavuma from Kapeeka, who attended the training, said he did not feel comfortable enrolling his children to schools that did not teach agriculture.

"I am impressed by the children in Naluyima's school. They are knowledgeable in agriculture. Children as young as eight years are given hands-on agricultural lessons at this farm. They own the gardens and any harvests are sold and the proceeds given to the garden owner," he said.

Farm and market

The training also focused on the market to help farmers develop solutions for constraints at both farm and market levels. Participants were also taught about feeds, breeds and management.

Matooke

Washington Mugerwa, a



Dr Emma Naluyima speaks to farmers at her farm in Bwerenga, Wakiso district

What others say

Simon Kintu, Zirobwe

The participants were receptive to what they were taught. Some have vowed to continue practising what they have been taught about the farming enterprises even with the limited resources.

Sarah Nabirye, Iganga

I have learnt a lot from this training. I encourage all Ugandans to engage in agriculture, instead of roaming the streets in search of jobs.

Alex Kilge, Jinja
I have engaged in many businesses including charcoal making and hawking clothes, but now I am going to get into farming. This season, I am going to grow passion fruits and cassava.

Samuel Obura, Lira
I did not know that rearing pigs and pawpaw farming can be such a profitable business. I thank Vision Group for getting professionals to train us.

Dan Tebewalwa, Masaka
I have learnt about the importance of testing soils before planting

matooke expert, said matooke was the most important food crop in Uganda.

He explains that it is produced by millions of smallholder farmers with yields are as low as five to 30 metric tonnes per hectare a year, compared to potential yields of 70 metric tonnes.

"When a farmer wants to grow matooke, he is expected to plant seedlings free of pests and diseases."

"The site should have deep well-drained and fertile soils, preferably rich in organic matter because it will enable the roots of the plants to be stable and to tolerate infections," Mugerwa told farmers.

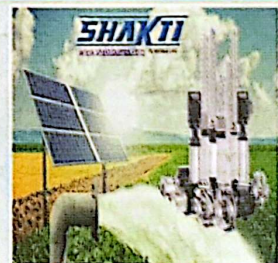
According to Mugerwa, application of fertilisers in soil preparation is important for boosting soil nutrients.

"It leads to good quality yields weighing 70kg to 80kg. A farmer who applies fertiliser in his field is capable of keeping the plantation above 50 years without replanting," he said.

Busiro East MP Medard Lubega Ssegona thanked Naluyima for hosting.

Best practices

During the training, participants were taught how to engage in farming on a small budget and piece of land for both domestic consumption and commerce.



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