

200 jobless as company shuts down

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TORORO. More than 200 employees of Agro Trust Seed processing Company in Tororo District have been rendered jobless after the Ministry of Agriculture directed its closure.

Mr Moses Erongu, the senior Agricultural Inspector National Seed Certification Services at the Ministry, said they closed the company over non compliance.

"We issued the directive after it came to our knowledge that the company was packing and cleaning seeds for planting purposes yet the ministry had not tested them to certify their purity," Mr Erongu said on Tuesday.

Issue

He said the company failed to comply with the Seed and Plant Act of Parliament that stresses that labeling and packing of seeds shall be supervised by government through its structure of national seed certification services.

Mr Erongu explained that move is aimed at fighting counterfeit inputs that have flooded the market, which he said are responsible for poor production.

"For the one month the company has been in operation it has been the source of income to many community members especially students who are on vacation,"

EMMANUEL OWORI, PROPRIETOR

Mr John Grace Ssewanyana, the head of the crop sector enforcement unit in the ministry of Agriculture, said they have already opened a general inquiries file where the proprietors will be charged of promoting counterfeit.

"The results from the samples of seeds that have been taken for testing at the national seed laboratory will guide us on what to be done," he said.

He added that they will also investigate whether the company sought permission from Food and Agricultural Organisation [FAO] to use its logo.

Opposed

However, the workers at the company have protested its closure.

Mr Thomas Omalla, one of the workers, said: "Closing the company will force many us on streets again unless government promises to find us an alternative mean of survival."

Mr Emmanuel Owori, one of the proprietors of the company, told the daily monitor that whereas government has decided to close the company it should also consider people's livelihoods.

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