

Agriculture ministry sponsors Harvest Money Expo



By Geoffrey Mutegeki and Prossy Nandudu

The Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), through the Vegetable Oil Development Project, is the latest entity to sponsor and endorse the 2018 Harvest Money expo. The fair, set for February 16 to 18, will be held at Nelson Mandela National Stadium, Namboole on the outskirts of Kampala city. It will be held under the theme: "From your farm to the market."

For the second time running, the expo will have a range of exhibitors ranging from farm produce, agro machinery, seed

producers, soil management, coffee farming to animal feeds and fertilisers, among others, all gathering in one place.

Like the first expo that was held at the same time last year, the expo will offer an opportunity to farmers to meet experts in one place and also act as an avenue for networking.

According to Anthony Wanyoto, in charge of communications at the agriculture ministry, through the Vegetable Oil Development Project Phase II (VODP II), the ministry will have a stall at the expo, where they will be sharing information with the farmers.

"Let everyone come, see and learn. The expo will avail information that will transform farmers' knowledge along the value chain of vegetable oils, coffee, milk linked to research (NARO)," Wanyoto said.

"VODP II has contributed to poverty reduction in the project areas like Kalangala and Buvuma. We want to re-echo this by showing the visitors at the expo and our stakeholders what we are doing in Kalangala with oil palm and the 45 districts in east, north and West Nile with oil seeds (sunflower, soya, sim sim and groundnuts)."

"We believe we have a story to share as oil palm has

changed lives in Kalangala by way of providing a monthly income to participating farmers and generally to the local economy in Kalangala district," Wanyoto said.

At Namboole, VODP II will be in the same tent with National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA), Dairy Development Authority (DDA) and Directorate of Extension Services.

Regarding the Vegetable Oil Development Project, Wanyoto said it aims at increasing domestic production of vegetable oil and its by-products.

According to the agriculture ministry, Uganda imports 60-70% of its edible and soap needs.

The annual domestic and regional growth rate demand for vegetable oil and its by-products stands at 9%. This is due to population growth and rising incomes.

VODP 2 is Uganda's strategic effort to increase domestic vegetable oil production, address rural poverty by involving smallholder farmers in oil crops production and improve the health of the population through increased vegetable oil intake.

Joshua Kato, the *Harvest Money* editor, revealed that

whereas the year's expo has attracted more exhibitors, 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 them will have to pay an extra sh10,000 per day.

Interested farmers and exhibitors can book a stall by sending an email to:

hme@newvision.co.ug <mailto:hme@newvision.co.ug> or Call 0752007564 and 0784584846