

New initiative set to transform fish farming in Uganda

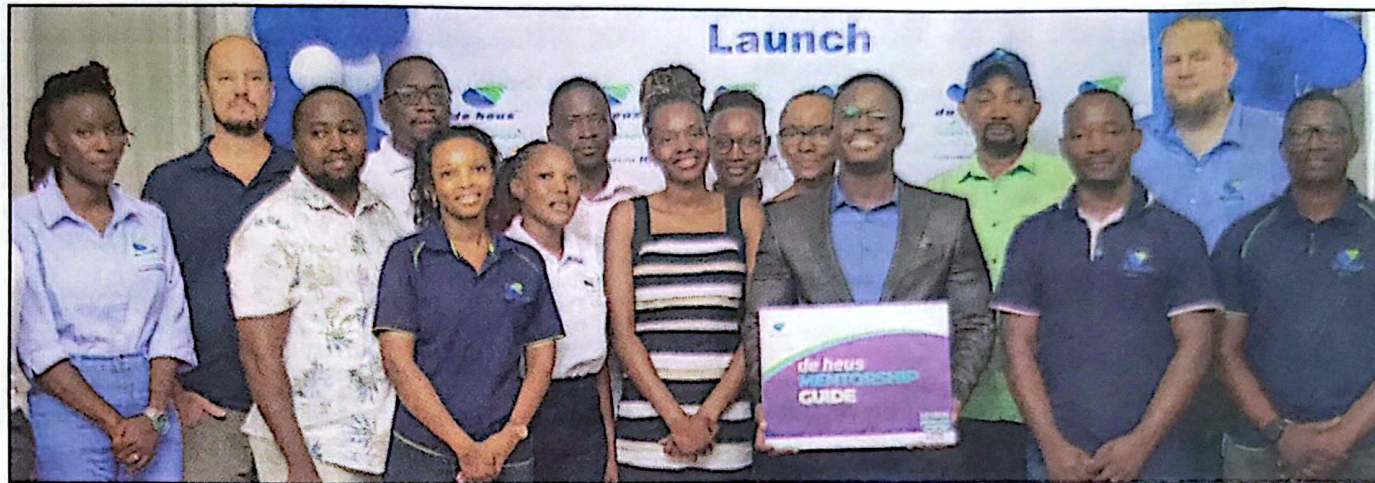
By Simon Okitela

Commercial fish farmers are set to benefit from a one-year fish farming mentorship programme aimed at supporting medium-scale fish farmers and experienced entrepreneurs across the country.

This 12-month initiative launched last Wednesday in Jinja by De Heus Uganda, a Netherlands company and partners, aims to enhance productivity, enforce farm management practices, advance market access and ensure profitable overall harvests for farmers.

Speaking during the unveiling of the programme, Ivo Van Der Lee, the commercial manager, noted that the programme targets entrepreneurs (business people ready to invest in new ventures) and medium-scale fish farmers already in operations who are ready to improve production and scale fish farming into a sustainable business.

"These selected participants will have farm visits and individual coaching to make sure they become technical farms and also business wise more successful," Ivo Van Der



Officials, partners and fish farmers pose for a group photo during the launch of De Heus Uganda's one-year fish farming mentorship programme in Jinja on Wednesday. The initiative is aimed at transforming fish farming

Lee said.

During the next one year, participants will receive expert-led mentorship, field-based training, business development support, and access to a strong national aquaculture network necessary for ensuring scalability and profitability.

Bon Tjeenk Willink, the managing director of De Heus Uganda, highlighted how Uganda's aquaculture sector continues to face challenges such as limited technical support, limited market

information, high feed costs and inconsistency, among others.

He is confident the mentorship programme directly addresses these gaps through practical, hands-on training, expert guidance and this in the long run boost Government's efforts of pushing fish production in Uganda to 1m tons by 2030.

"We have invested significantly in the country, including the commissioning of the largest aquafeed plant in East Africa, which has a

production capacity of 100,000 tons of fish feed annually. This facility aims to enhance fish farming, food security, and economic opportunities in Uganda, supporting local farmers and promoting sustainable aquaculture practices," Bon explained.

He added that Uganda's aquaculture sector has the potential with a number of large players in the market and an upcoming segment of successful medium-sized farmers who require expertise training to enable them to

navigate the available markets.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The program is open to entrepreneurs with capital, land access, and a valid business license. The business must be registered and have clear records of operation

Participants must be medium-scale fish farmers ready to increase production using commercial feeds.

The other is the clear ambition or a clear business plan that stipulates the potential for scalability.

STATISTICS

Uganda's aquaculture industry has continued to expand, with the latest data from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics showing significant growth, with a total of 9,463 fish farms across the country. The Buganda sub-region leads with the highest concentration of farms, followed by other regions like Busoga, Ankole, Tooro, and Rwenzori.

Production figures for the period between July 2024 and June 2025 show that the country produced 65,444 metric tonnes of farmed fish.

MENTEES SPEAK OUT

Richard Businge, a fish farmer from Hoima district, is among the beneficiaries of the inaugural cohort who was identified as one of the model farmers.

He said despite the numerous challenges facing the sector, fish business remains lucrative.

Monica Karungi, a fish farmer in Kasanje, Wakiso district, said: "The programme will help us work with people who have had experience in aquaculture and to be able to learn from them and to understand aquaculture fully."