

Tororo scientists commit to boosting food production

IMBALE

By Faustine Odeke

It is said that water is life, but without food, one can hardly strive to make ends meet and achieve any of their intended targets and goals.

Food production has always remained a major challenge due to unpredictable weather, outbreak of diseases and pests, besides the caterpillars, which are now ravaging gardens.

Despite all the political bickering that has torn the district apart, veterinary doctors and agricultural experts under the production department in Tororo district have committed themselves to restoring the lost glory by mobilising farmers to appreciate agriculture as a business.

The district production and marketing officer, Patrick Okware, said 2018 will be a challenging year of work, where extension staff will be rated according to performance and those who perform below average will have only themselves to blame.

"2018 will be a year of no excuses in terms of lack facilitation and transport because the Government has secured funds. It is going to be a year of hard work as you will be assessed based on performance. I will not be ashamed to state that last financial year performance was below average and we are not going to tolerate that any further. We need to bring back the glory of the department to the admiration of everybody as



John Obbo

Obbo has now focused on multiplying high yielding rice varieties

you will be required to submit your work plans, budgets and reports in time," Okware said.

He said the department has already initiated many activities that are intended to guide the farmers into good agronomic practices to be productive businessmen by minimising losses associated with bad farming practices.

Okware made the remarks during a get-together party organised by the veterinary department recently. The



Patrick Okware

department also formed a savings and credit co-operative society (SACCOS) with 41 members.

Okware said he was glad to note that the district service commission had advertised jobs to fill the vacant positions in the department, adding that he was proud of the vibrant and dynamic staff that are committed to their work despite a few cases of insubordination.

He said in order to regulate the sector and streamline agricultural extension services, the department is going to embark on the registration of the private sector dealing with the department to curb the challenges of fake inputs on sale.

"All agro-input dealers are expected to be certified by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries and those who will not have complied will be forced to close," Okware further said.

Dr Boniface Obbo, the district veterinary officer, said they are prepared to deal with all sorts of disease outbreaks that are likely to impact negatively to the farmers. He challenged members in the department to see to it that they are close to the farmers by guiding them with the appropriate advice.

He said in order to improve the quality of the local animals and boost milk production, they have so far trained four experts to conduct artificial insemination of the cows.

He said as a department, they received 8,000 doses of the rabies vaccine and enough poultry vaccines adding that they have also dealt with foot and mouth disease that had attacked some sub-counties early last year.

"On average, we have been receiving 10 cases of dog bites in the district and of recent, we also heard of a case where a monkey around Tororo Rock bit an 11-months-old baby. Please vaccinate your dogs and ensure that affected persons are treated immediately," Obbo advised.

John Othieno Obbo, an agriculture officer, has now focused on multiplying high yielding rice varieties to help farmers boost their production.

Obbo said he is now multiplying five-high yielding varieties, which he recently brought from Egypt to distribute to farmers. The varieties can yield eight to 10 tonnes of rice on one hectare.