

Ssempijja orders extension workers to recruit farmers

BUSIA

By Egeessa Hajusu

The agriculture minister, Vincent Ssempijja, has directed sub-county extension workers to start recruiting and training farmers for specific enterprises in commercial farming.

"We have to reach out to farmers and convince them to take up certain enterprises," he said.

Ssempijja was on Friday addressing Busia district leaders at the district headquarters before he went to the field to interact with the residents and model farmers championing coffee growing.

He said the extension workers should go on the ground and convince farmers and also discuss with them the economic benefits of engaging in commercial farming and businesses they can undertake to help them know what they expect from those activities.

Ssempijja said extension workers should sensitise the farmers on embracing agro-business, be registered in groups doing similar

businesses and be given support by the Government.

He said his ministry was waiting for that kind of arrangement, adding that the ministry was ready to change its plans to support committed, organised farmer groups.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

■ Ssempijja asked extension workers to go on the ground and convince farmers of the benefits of engaging in commercial farming.

This is the third time in two years that Ssempijja has visited Busia district to interest farmers in commercial farming and promote coffee cultivation, which is being piloted in the area.

He said the Government had set a target of increasing the production of coffee to 20 million bags in 2020 from three million bags in 2015.

A farmer, David Muwanga, said pests and diseases was the main challenge which had kept farmers from engaging in commercial farming for fear of registering losses.