

Farmers trained for Netherlands

By Joshua Kato
and Herbert Musoke

Know what you grow. Grow what you know. Be known for what you grow," was a statement made by Samuel Iga Zimunya, an entrepreneurship consultant, while addressing the 2017 best farmers at Grand Global Hotel in Kampala recently.

The farmers will be in the Netherlands from June 2 to 9.

The best farmers competition, now in its fourth year is sponsored by the Embassy of the Netherlands, dfcu Bank, KLM airlines, Vision Group and Koudijs Nutrition BV.

A training workshop sponsored by the Embassy of the Netherlands will start on May 31 at dfcu offices in Nakasero, Kampala. It is intended to educate the travelling farmers to what they expect to see in the Netherlands. "The orientation training is intended to sharpen the farmers business acumen before they travel to the Netherlands," explained Josephat Byaruhanga, a senior agriculture policy officer at the Embassy of the Netherlands.

The programme, that ran from May 22 to 24 involved among others; pitching a business proposal, where farmers were asked to make short presentations of their farms before potential investors. Other facilitators included Dr George Tumwesigye, a lecturer, from Kampala International University and African Agribusiness Incubators Network and Elias Tiwangye, a senior trainer from Management Training and Advisory Centre.

Do not grow everything

"Ugandan farmers have an average of 15 enterprises on the farm," Iga, one of the lead facilitators observed.

This is irrespective of the fact that most of the farmers operate on less than two acres.

Iga further pointed out that at the end of the day, farmers have got everything, but have nothing.

According to the farmers, this is intended to have different streams of income. "We do it because we want to earn money each day, which is not possible with a single enterprise," Tom



Rachael Amol speaking to fellow farmers during an orientation workshop at Grand Global Hotel in Kampala recently.

Photo by Herbert Musoke

Anyii, a farmer from Lira said.

Anyii pointed out to farmers that in modern farming societies, farms specialise in one or two enterprises. "When you specialise, you easily manage your farm and make profits," Iga said.

What to grow

Iga said said a few Ugandan farmers know what they are growing off their fingertips. "A good farmer must know what he is growing, why he is growing it and be known for what he is growing," he explained. Iga added that as soon as you master the knowledge about your enterprise, everything will fall in place. "I want people to address you by what you grow. I want people to identify you by the colour of your company," he explained.

If you rear pigs, people should for example, call you *Mama Pig*, just like Dr Emma Naluyima, a best farmer from 2014. There is also *Mama Nkoko* like Celia Kansime, the winner 2016," Iga said.

"Even *Maama Beans* like Joy Mugisha, a best farmer from 2016. With this, you will have conquered the market," he added.

Strategy

"What is the strategy of your farm in the next five years?" Iga asked. A strategy includes written down plans for the farm in the short and long term.

He pointed out that the strategy should be made depending on the size and objectives of the farm. For example, how does the farm wish to expand?

"Is it through improving on productivity or improving on production?" he asked.

Iga explained that if the farm intends to expand by increasing production, then they have to buy more land and expand the acreage. However, if the farm is expanding through productivity, then they have to intensify their systems to produce more using the same acreage," he said.

Intensifying means using farming methods like improved seeds or inputs for crops and improved breeds for livestock. "Intensifying means adding better practices in order to earn more yields from the same area," Iga said.

Precise

"Nobody will give you 10 minutes to talk about your farm," Tumwesigye, said while presenting their farms before possible associates.

He advised the farmers that a simple, but precise presentation includes your name, farm and key enterprises. "Then after this, you follow up with a well done, clear business card," Tumwesigye said. The business card should include your name, farm or business logo, telephone contacts and what you are engaged in.

FARMERS EXPECTATIONS



Robert Ocitti, Ordahe Farm, Arua

It is a dream come true for me. Going to the Netherlands has been my dream since there are a lot of experienced farmers. I expect to learn modern ways of poultry keeping, technologies that I can employ on my three acre piece of land so that I can maximise production.



Rachael Amol, Heri Organic Shamba, Wakiso

I expect to learn the modern farming technologies especially the ones for small space since I am an urban farmer. During the trip, I expect to network with the farmers and other experts in the Netherlands for future business purposes. This trip is going to be of great importance to me because I am going to learn a lot that will change the way I farm.



Jacob Noah Kazindula, Bam Kaka Group

I expect to learn from the experienced Netherlands farmers, how to do farming as a business to maximise productivity. I also expect to learn from them how to establish a farm that can last generations.



DO YOU KNOW OF A FARMER

who is innovative and has a financially sound farm for the last 2 years or longer?

Nominate him/her via SMS: Type FARMER <space> FARMER'S NAME, PHONE NUMBER, DISTRICT

