



First Lady Janet Museveni (centre wearing hat) with AFRISA graduates during the fourth certificate-awarding ceremony held by Makerere University in Kiruhura. PPU photos

Farmers receive artisan certificates

By Vision Reporter

A total of 88 farmers from Kiruhura district have been awarded artisan certificates accredited by Makerere University after completing a one-year farm training and nurturing course. The training was conducted by Africa Institute for Strategic Services and Development (AFRISA) – skills, production, enterprise development and academics (SPEDA) training model of Makerere University college of veterinary medicine, animal resources and biosecurity (COVAB).

The SPEDA model empowers farmers with skills in modern technologies using locally available raw materials to exponentially increase their production and run their enterprises as businesses. The training is a result of the partnership between the Diocese of North Ankoale, Makerere University and AFRISA.

Last Saturday, the chancellor of Makerere University, Prof. Ezra Suruma, awarded certificates to three categories of farmers who successfully underwent a 12-month on-farm training and nurturing. These include 15 for integrated beekeeping and agro-entrepreneurship, 65 in integrated dairy production and agro-entrepreneurship and eight in poultry production and agro-entrepreneurship farmers.

First Lady remarks

The First Lady, who is also the Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs Janet Museveni, was the chief guest at North Ankoale Diocese Cathedral grounds in Rushere, Kiruhura. Mrs Museveni congratulated the farmers who were passed out and thanked God for making it possible for the people to participate in their



Mrs Museveni (centre) inspects some of the products made by farmers who got artisan certificates

own transformation. She said it demonstrates that God has made a breakthrough.

According to a release from her office, the First Lady said education was not meant to be locked up in ivory towers and small rooms to benefit just a few and leaving out the majority to remain blind and poor.

"I take the pleasure to be the Minister of Education during this time when education is becoming truly what God meant it to be – a means to empower whole societies to transform their God-given talents and live better lives," she said.

She noted that taking technology and innovations from the shelves of university libraries to households in the countryside is the most

Mrs Museveni said taking technology to households in the countryside is the most effective way of knowledge dissemination

effective way for knowledge dissemination and technology transfer.

"As you very well know, Africa has remained backward because our learned people have remained in those ivory towers. But God does not stop working and searching for who He will send. So, He has found the Isaiahs and Jeremiahs of AFRISA and has sent them out of the Ivory Tower to the

trenches of rural Uganda for God's purposes," she said.

The First Lady thanked President Yoweri Museveni, the NRM Government plus Makerere University for being humble and allowing to be used by God. She also saluted COVAB and AFRISA for carrying the mantle.

Mrs Museveni, who urged the graduates to be learning centres of excellence to the

other people, also inspected an apirary enterprise by one of the benefiting farmers of AFRISA-SPEDA model training.

Prof. Suruma observed that the AFRISA-SPEDA training is expected to increase productivity and income of the households and communities which is the way to positive community transformation. He said Makerere has taken an aggressive lead in transforming Ugandans.

About partnership

The Bishop of North Ankoale Diocese, Rt. Rev Stephen Namanya, said the skills development partnership with AFRISA is a commitment of the diocese towards Government's plan to skill Ugandans as a fulcrum for the attainment of Vision 2040.

"The training is timely and we hope it will go a long way in substituting what sometimes has been the absence of information among our farmers," he said.

The principal of COVAB, Prof. John David Kabasa, said Makerere has been demystified and brought down to people's homes and this was the fourth certificate-awarding ceremony since the commencement of the AFRISA-SPEDA programme in 2011.

The first was held in Nebbi, the second in Nakasongola while the third was in Rukoni in Ntungamo. Kabasa requested the Government for sufficient funding to enable the programme go out systematically district by district.

The head of the AFRISA secretariat, Dr. Michael Kansime, said the farmers' trainings include sensitisation, mindset change and envisioning, entrepreneurship training, business planning and goal-setting, value-chain education and enterprise establishment and development.

Farmers thanked Bishop Namanya for partnering with Makerere University and enabling the training. They pledged to utilise the knowledge and skills they acquired to eliminate poverty from their households and develop other people in their communities.

The function, witnessed by many senior officials from Makerere University Council and management, among the many dignitaries, was also addressed by the vice-chancellor of Makerere University, Prof. John Dumba-Sentamu, the MP for Nyabushozi, Fred Mwesigye and Okello, a representative of the AFRISA board of governors.