

and a report on illicit enrichment authored by a top security officer. Land Protection Police Unit (LPPU) to verify the allegation and indeed discovered robbery, concealing evidence and fraud. **Kayihura set up a team to probe misconduct in the force**

Government to tighten inspection for fruits, vegetables exports

By Taddeo Swambale

The Government has received fresh complaints from the European Union (EU) concerning the quality of fresh fruits and vegetables exported to the lucrative market.

Trade minister Amelia Kyambadde disclosed on Tuesday that many Ugandan exporters have fallen short on the minimum set standards for the horticulture produce.

"Although trade in fresh fruits and vegetables has been growing steadily over the last five years, Ugandans still face challenges of penetrating the lucrative international markets due to non-compliance to international standards," the minister told reporters at the Uganda Media Centre in Kampala.

"We have received notification from the EU

about non-compliance to quality and standards for fruits and vegetables. We are going to tighten inspection at local markets," she said.

Fresh fruits and vegetables from Uganda are mainly exported to the UK, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Middle East, the US and the East African Community (EAC) region.

In 2015, Uganda earned \$127m (sh450b) from exports of 12,000 tonnes of vegetables and \$3.2m (sh11.3b) from 7,900 tonnes of fruit.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are part of the agricultural chain which contributes about 26% of Uganda's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

However, during the same year, the Government instituted a self-ban on the exports of agricultural produce to the EU market, following



Minister Kyambadde

persistent complaints over their poor quality.

Some of the produce was found to contain excess chemicals above the internationally accepted levels, while in some cases, it was said to have been exposed to harmful organisms like fruit flies.

The initial export ban that

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lasted one month affected about 60,000 farmers and over 50 exporters. The decision to institute the ban came after two years of warnings.

Kyambadde said government, along with several ministries and the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), were mulling tighter measures to prevent and detect weaknesses in quality standards.

She pointed at packaging as one of the areas of concern for fruit and vegetable exports,

which are highly perishable and susceptible to contamination along the value chain.

The UNBS acting executive director, Patricia Ejalu, said the body would tighten inspection of the produce and work with farmers to examine choice of seeds, fertilisers, storage and transportation of exports.

Uganda is a member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, an international food standards body formed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation and World

Health Organisation.

In October, Uganda, in partnership with Mexico will host the Codex international meeting, a high level forum on food safety, to discuss standards for fresh fruits and vegetables.

The standards ensure that food is safe and can be traded, and members negotiate on aspects of food safety and quality including food hygiene, limits for food additives, residues of pesticides and veterinary drugs, and prevention of chemical and microbiological contamination.

Health minister Jane Ruth Aceng said Uganda had put in place a multi-sectoral structure to advise the Government on matters of food safety. "We have put in place mechanisms to ensure consumer health protection and fair trade policies are realised," Aceng added.