

Telecom rolls out 154 upcountry network sites. Airtel Uganda has rolled out 154 network sites in a bid to ensure affordable and reliable countrywide coverage of voice and internet services. Last month, the telecom firm launched the 4G LTE technology to offer subscribers around the country the fastest available speeds as well as an improved experience in internet-based activities. [Jonathan Adengo]



UNBS confiscates 2,000 litres of fake cooking oil

Source. Unscrupulous dealers siphon it off tankers ferrying crude cooking oil used in processing cooking oil.

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KAMPALA. Traders dealing in sub-standard products are facing hard times following continued crackdown on products on the market that do not meet standards.

The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) last week seized more than 2,000 litres of adulterated cooking oil worth Shs12 million from Naluwerere in Bugiri District.

The confiscated cooking oil would have otherwise been detrimental to the health of thousands of consumers in Naluwerere who rely on fast foods and roadside food vendors for meals.

How it is processed

The adulterated cooking oil is rampant in areas around Bugiri where unscrupulous dealers siphon it off tankers carrying crude cooking oil which is a raw material for processed cooking oil.

The dealers use rudimentary methods for processing before selling it to nearby traders and roadside food vendors.

The seizure followed week-long investigation where UNBS market surveillance inspectors combed the villages of Naluwerere in Bugiri District following a tip off from concerned residents.

Mr Gaston Kironde, the UNBS senior market surveillance officer, who



The confiscated cooking oil at UNBS warehouse at their head office in Bweyogerere, Wakiso District. COURTESY PHOTO

spearheaded the operation, said the cooking oil was being sold to nearby traders and those involved in selling of food stuffs by the roadside and fast food restaurants.

"We confiscated the oil to protect consumers from consuming harmful substandard products. The oil was being processed using rudimentary

methods in very unhygienic conditions which are likely to compromise the health of consumers."

Mr Jackson Mubangizi, the UNBS manager market surveillance, said: "We picked samples of adulterated cooking oil from market for testing in our laboratories and the samples were found to contain chemicals that

are harmful to human health."

Speaking to *Daily Monitor* yesterday, Mr Godwin Muhwezi, the UNBS principal public relations officer, explained: "Crude cooking oil is imported into the country as a raw material for further processing. However, the unscrupulous dealers either siphon the raw material or buy it from

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Chemical substances.

Adulterated cooking oil poses a threat to consumers' health. Results from UNBS laboratory analysis show that the adulterated cooking oil contained harmful quantities of chemical substances such as phenol that can cause damage to body organs such as the liver, kidneys and the heart.

truck drivers before further processing it using rudimentary means."

He said the oil is then put in jerry cans and sold off to nearby traders and food vendors.

Such oil, Mr Muhwezi said, is often cheaper than the actual cooking oil and therefore attractive to small scale traders.

Case for quality mark

On the UNBS Quality Mark, Mr Muhwezi said: "The cooking oil did not have the UNBS Quality Mark. The Quality Mark is the only guarantee that consumers have bought quality and genuine products. This is because UNBS certified products are often subjected to rigorous audits and laboratory tests to ensure that the products are being produced according to the set standards."

He called on the public to be vigilant and report to UNBS such cases using available communication channels.

"Fighting substandard products from the market to ensure consumer protection requires a concerted effort from the public and other law enforcement agencies," Mr Muhwezi said.

He added: "I would like to encourage the public to use our toll free line (0800133133) to report such cases so that our team can investigate and prosecute the culprits."