

Coffee farmers reject new rules

Quality control. The new guidelines require coffee farmers to acquire high-tech machines which farmers think is a tough proposal.

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BUKOMANSIMBI. Coffee processing factory owners in Bukomansimbi District have opposed the new rules and regulations issued by the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA), saying they are not realistic.

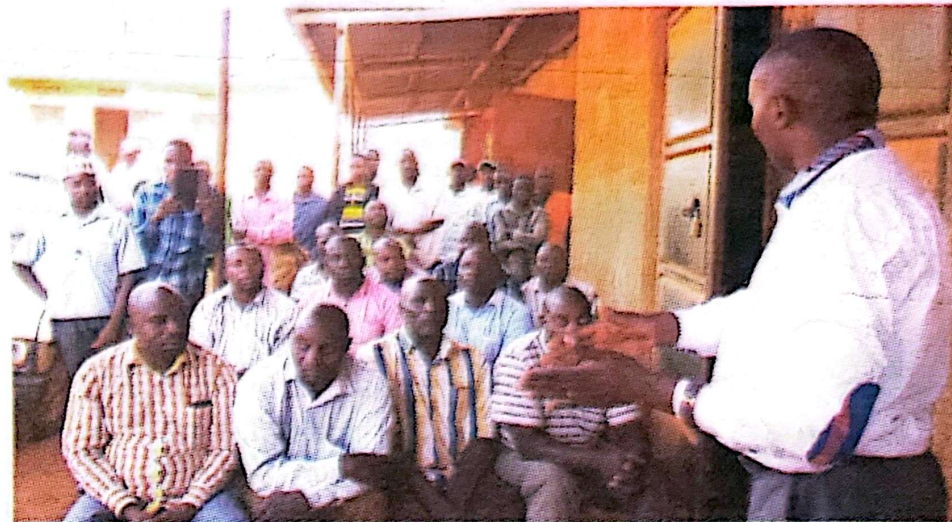
“Some of us use coffee processing machines which we acquired on loans that we are still servicing. Instructing us to install John Gordon machines in just three months is very unfair,” Mr Sulaiman Bukenya, a coffee processor in Bukomansimbi District, said.

While in a meeting with Bukomansimbi South MP Deogratious Kiyingi in Bukomansimbi Town last weekend, owners of coffee processing firms blamed UCDA for not putting into consideration the time and resources spent by farmers before destroying their coffee and other property.

The new guidelines also require a factory operator to do away with semi-permanent structures in which coffee husks are currently stored.

They asked government to extend soft loans to them to purchase the required new machines and tarpaulins on which they can dry coffee beans.

“We need government to extend soft loans to us so that we can buy the



Time to act. MP Deogratious Kiyingi addresses coffee processors at Bukomansimbi Town Council at the weekend. PHOTO BY ALI MAMBULE.

required machines,” Mr Leonard Lumala, the chairman of coffee factory operators in Bukomansimbi District, said.

150

**NUMBER OF FACTORIES
AFFECTED**

Recently, UCDA destroyed more than six tonnes of coffee, arrested some farmers and more than 150 coffee factories in the sub region were closed for more than two months for operating without licences and

below safety standards in addition to processing unripe coffee beans. However, the factories were later reopened after the owners fulfilled the necessary requirements.

Mr Kiyingi said UCDA officials need to be educated about many things which they seem not to be aware of.

“Farmers no longer leave husks at the factories where they process their coffee because they use them as fertilisers for their plantations,” Mr Kiyingi said, adding that forcing the operators to construct permanent husk collection chambers would be useless.

But he warned the farmers against harvesting green coffee beans, drying coffee on bare ground and processing half-dried coffee.

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