



Participants attend chili lessons during Monitor Farm Clinic at Mbarazi Mbarara early this year. FILE PHOTO

# Monitor Farm Clinic facilitators give peek into what participants should expect

Facilitators including Dr Stephen Lwasa, Julius Ahangaana, Dr Constantine Katongole, Prof Ssettumba Mukasa and Moses Lumu predict the best Monitor Farm Clinic, writes Denis Bbosa

If it were a meal, it would be a four-course one. The organisers of today's Monitor Farm Clinic have put together a buffet of agricultural knowledge that participants will most certainly enjoy and reap benefits.

Seeds of Gold magazine reached out to most of the expert facilitators set to guide the participants today at Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute (MUARIK) Kabanyolo and they revealed vital

clues of what to expect.

## Dr Stephen Lwasa, Economics expert and host

Among the key farming economics components that every participant will learn from Dr Lwasa's mandatory lecture are; resource use efficiency, the role of an entrepreneur/investor, enterprise selection, goal setting, planning for production, planning for the market, planning human resource, financial planning and planning for and mitigation of risks and uncertainties.

Other key elements Dr Lwasa will take participants through; enterprise budgeting, gross margin analysis as a budgeting and profit analysis tool, farm records, types, benefits and challenges, break even analysis, marketing aspects, maximising profits from livestock enterprises, maximising profits from crop enterprises and the principles of ethical marketing. He says he is ready to answer - in depth - the commonly forwarded farming economics questions of; is it profitable to venture into this or another agricultural enterprise? What is the cost of production and how do I determine the minimum price at which to sell? What is the payback period (and return on investment?), what is the startup capital? How do I analyse an enterprise to ascertain whether it is profitable or not? Where do I market

## FARM CLINICS THE WAY TO GO

"This farm clinic concept has not been around for a long time for the organisers to strongly be confident of their outcomes and successes and attribute them to the clinics. "We need to put in place a system to monitor them, assess their performance and with time we can be able to tell the successes," Dr Stephen Lwasa says.

## ADVISE TO INCOME EARNERS BIDDING TO JOIN AGRIBUSINESS

"It takes the right mindset, the zeal to work hard and to be patient. Many farmers fail to select the low startup capital enterprise, only to realise that they cannot sustain their enterprises. There are many enterprises that need relatively low investments, and these include; mushroom, leafy vegetables such as Nakati, and indigenous chicken," Dr Lwasa adds.

He also works with MUARIK to analyse its enterprises and advise on production and marketing aspects. He has also worked with many farmers widely. He has local, regional and international experience in farm enterprise budgeting, planning, management and analysis of records and marketing.

## Julius Ahangaana (passion fruit expert)

His main focus will be around site selection involving the assessment and tests on the soils. Selection and process of obtaining disease and pest free planting materials and demonstrate and display soil enhancement approaches in relation to passion fruit particularly the use of YAD Biofertiliser and the Echo Balance. Ahangaana also promises to address the recommended agronomic and particularly propagation approaches that is farmer friendly and useable to achieve maximum yields plus the key pest and disease identification approaches for adequate diagnosis.

## What to avoid for a successful passion fruit production

Participants will be tipped on the various passion fruit diseases like woodiness, root and collar rot, fusarium wilt and anthracnose among many others.

Other pertinent issues like unreliable sources of clean planting materials, changing weather patterns, pests and fickle market will also be addressed by the expert.

## Ready-made market

The market for passion fruit in Uganda and the neighborhood is particularly insatiable. There is a big effort required

my products? Drawing business plans to assist them to apply for loans from banks and microfinance institutions.

"This one will involve evidence based enterprise budgets, cost of production and break-even price. This clinic will also touch on enterprises that have not been handled before. These include; coffee and pig production," Lwasa noted the apparent difference between the Mbarara Clinic in May and today's event.

## Who is Dr Lwasa?

He holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics. He lectures at Makerere University, and has practiced agriculture.

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**WHY YOU SHOULD EMBRACE PASSION FRUIT GROWING**

According to Julius Ahangana, passion fruit production in Uganda is currently looked at as an upcoming cash crop considering its potential to sustain livelihoods both financially and nutritionally. It also impacts the foreign income of the nation.

"Passion fruit farming is one kind of business that can be started at any scale depending on the individual interest. It is a business you do and earn though saving on what would have been spent on purchase of each passion fruit. You can sell in the neighborhood or even selling to the processors and maybe export," Ahangana advises.



A research scientist at Naro Mbarara explains to participants about best bean farming practices. FILE PHOTO

forwarded by Ugandan dairy farmers.

"There are several causes of this problem although several management options for improvement exist, many of the options are not pocket friendly," he states.

Therefore, the objective of this farm clinic is to give training to farmers on the management strategies that they can use to get the most out of their milking cows with minimal or no additional costs according to Katongole.

He expects this Farm Clinic edition to be better for two reasons; "we are using experience from previous editions for better delivery, and we are focusing on management strategies that will bring minimal or no costs at all to the farmer."

**Fruits of previous clinic**

"After the clinic, there is a lady farmer (names withheld) in Lugazi who invited me to her farm for advice on silage making and on using molasses. I am happy to report, that that farm has greatly improved because of my advice. Based on such testimonies, I strongly believe the Monitor farm clinics are worth attending."

**Who is Ahangana?**

He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture, a PGDT (Agriculture) and a Scholar of MSc. Crop Science. He was born in a primordial agrarian family, a practitioner, trainer, agronomist and on-farmer consultant and contractor. Ahagaana is also the CEO of JUPETER Agro-consults Ltd, coordinator for the farm clinic trainings (MUARK) and currently the acting Farm Manager for Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute-Kabanyolo.

**Dr Constantine Katongole, dairy expert**

The centre of his lecture will be addressing the low milk production by cows - a permanent problem



Participants look at banana species from Naro early this year. FILE PHOTO

**Who is Katongole?**

Dr Constantine Bakyusa Katongole is a Senior Lecturer of Animal Science at Makerere University - College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. He has a PhD in Animal Science.

**Prof Ssettumba Mukasa, banana expert**

Even with the multiple challenges facing banana production, Prof Mukasa asserts Ugandans cannot do away with the enterprise.

"The great lakes region of East

Africa and Uganda in particular, has the highest per capita consumption of banana in the world estimated between 200 to 250 kilogrammes per capita.

"Besides being a staple food, bananas also provide income for millions of farmers through local trade. Bananas include diverse types based on their use such as cooking (Matooke - East African Highland Bananas; EAHB), dessert (yellow bananas), roasting (gonja or plantains) and beer (various types used for making juice) bananas. The EAHBs account for 78 per cent of all the bananas grown in East Africa

and 18 per cent of total world banana production."

**ABOUT THE FARM CLINIC**

Event: The 7th edition of Seeds of Gold Farm clinic  
Date: Today! Saturday, August 26, 2017  
Theme: Climate Smart Farming  
Topics: Piggery, dairy, passion fruits, bananas and coffee  
Venue: Makerere University Agriculture Research Institute Kabanyolo, Gayaza  
Fee: Shs70,000

**Drive to revive banana production**

"The aim of this training is to empower farmers (and potential farmers) with knowledge and skills in various aspects of banana production including varieties, agronomy, pests and diseases management as well as crop (mat) and plantation management practices," he revealed.

**Who is Prof Mukasa?**

He is a senior lecturer at the School of Agricultural Sciences, Makerere University with vast knowledge in agricultural issues. He holds a PhD and is an expert in Molecular Biology, Biotechnology, and Microbiology.

**Moses Lumu, coffee expert**

At 29 years, Lumu has garnered more than enough experience in the field of coffee production. He has been involved in Robusta and Arabica coffee hybridisation, evaluation and selections for development of varieties with desired traits like resistance to diseases, high yield and good cup quality. "Our main focus at Kabanyolo, will be in the areas of what a good coffee variety is, what a good coffee seedling is and how to identify it, how to establish a coffee plantation and where to establish it, management of coffee plantation, current coffee pests and diseases and their solutions, integration of coffee in food security and environment conservation and the role of a farmer in determining coffee quality and price," Lumu says.

The expert, has established coffee field trials at NaCORI.

**HOW THE FARM CLINIC HAVE EVOLVED**

**BY ESTHER OLUKA**

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Today, Seeds of Gold, a Daily Monitor pullout magazine published every Saturday will be hosting a farm clinic at Makerere University Agriculture Research Institute Kabanyolo in Gayaza.

This seventh edition farm clinic will focus on the theme; "Climate Smart Farming" intended to educate farmers on adapting to climate change.

Partakers will also be informed on a wide range of topics including bananas, coffee, dairy, passion fruits and piggery.

Tony Glencross, Monitor Publications Limited's (MPL) managing director says participants should expect complete expertise on the selected topics.

"We shall be discussing care, maintenance, maximising value, among other things. Even beginners (in the sector) should come as we shall be having experts teaching them on what they should do and look out for as they are starting out," Glencross says.

Rather than focus only on content, Glencross says MPL keeps organising the farm clinics as a way of giving back to society.

"Agriculture is an important sector in our economy; therefore as a company, we want to continue involving the community by continuously giving expertise on different agricultural aspects," he says.

**The farm clinic over the years**

The farm clinics were initiated after a big demand by the readers of the Seeds of Gold magazine, says Sarah Nalule Walakira, the MPL head of marketing.

"The pullout was launched about five years ago. The readers told us that although it was an informative product, they also wanted an extension to it, some sort of event where they would learn practical skills from experts," Nalule says, adding,

"And that is why we started the farm clinics." During the early years, the clinics were conducted at farms of experienced agriculturalists. This has however changed recently as the clinics are now conducted at research institutions.

"The advantage of institutions is that they have a diversity of offers. Farmers base on personal experiences when sharing their views whereas researchers and experts will give you an entire scope including the pros and cons of everything, therefore, providing a wider span of knowledge," Nalule says.

Away from agriculture, there will also be experts tackling the arising issues on climate change. Part of the farm clinic diversification includes hosting

the farm clinics in different regions around the country.

"We intend to have the next clinic, after this one, in the Eastern region," Nalule says.

**Why everyone should be interested in the farm clinic?**

Some people may wonder why they should be interested in the farm clinic and yet they are not farmers themselves? Well, the farm clinic caters for interests of different groups.

"For instance, students or even teachers can come and learn from the experts and pass on this knowledge they have acquired to someone else," Nalule says. This is the second farm clinic, this year. The first one was held on May 27, 2017 in Mbarara.