

Villages get soil testing equipment

MBARARA

By Chris Mugasha

About 121 villages in the districts of Ankole region have received soil testing kits. The kits were handed over to 121 youth to help farmers carry out soil sampling analysis.

According to Nicholas Kagurutsya, the Sheema municipality agriculture officer, soil testing is only done at Makerere and Kawanda Research Centre.

Kagurutsya said such gadgets can help farmers who cannot afford to take their soil for testing to Makerere. "The kits can help to give the farmer indicators of major nutrients lacking in the soil. However, it cannot tell the percentage that is needed," he explained.

The youth received the kits after undergoing a training in practical agriculture skills.

Out of the group, 77 were trained as crop managers while 44 were trained as plant doctors. The youth passed out on Friday at IBO mixed farm in Bwizibwera, Rwanyamahembe sub-county, Mbarara district.

The three-month training was conducted with support from the Association of Volunteers International under the Skilling the Youth for Employment in Agribusiness (SKY) project.

"We have acquired practical skills which we do not get from our institutions of learning," Asimwe Mujuni, one of the trainees, said.

"We are now able to advise farmers on how to break the cycle of certain diseases through crop rotation. We shall be advising them to keep on alternating the crops of different families," he said.

Mujuni said many farmers are using pesticides wrongly, an issue he attributed to lack of technical advice.