

FARMERS EYE HYGIENE TOOL TO BOOST ANIMAL HEALTH

By Joshua Kato

When an agri-delegation of about 30 Ugandans visited The Schippers Group on April 14, the organisation showcased their premium brand, HyCare.

Johan Verhoek, The Schippers Group area manager for Africa, said this hygiene management tool, developed specifically for livestock farmers, presents an effective approach to reduce antibiotic usage by up to 99%.

In addition, it enhances animal health, supports growth and improves overall farm profitability. The foundation of the HyCare system is rooted in structured and proven hygiene practices designed to eliminate and prevent health issues before they arise. The hygiene chemicals can be applied in poultry, dairy and piggyery through various forms, including tablets dropped in water tanks or liquids/foams used to clean livestock shelters



Johan Verhoek, The Schippers Group area manager for Africa, trains Ugandan farmers at the group's office in the Netherlands during their tour

plus supportive equipment. "We have done a lot of livestock nutrition promotion over the years in Uganda.

However, we now realise that nutrition without proper hygiene will not deliver the best results. This is why we

are coming up with easily-adoptable hygiene solutions," Verhoek says.

Livestock hygiene cuts across many areas of the farm, including feeding systems. "If any of these is carried out poorly, it affects livestock health and the hygiene of products like milk and eggs," Verhoek says.

Ninety-nine percent of livestock diseases occur because of mainly poor bio-security and hygiene. Bio-security prevents damage by harmful diseases.

"Harmful diseases bring mortality, higher feed-use, lower revenue. Bio-security is part of the good farm practices, which includes water quality management, cleaning/disinfection and prevention," Verhoek said, while addressing the visiting farmers.

By optimising hygiene practices, farmers can expect many benefits, including reduced antibiotic dependency, decreased animal mortality and prevention of disease outbreaks. This leads to healthier livestock.

CONTAMINATED WATER ISSUE

Verhoek told the farmers that one of the biggest carriers of harmful germs in livestock is the watering systems. "Many of you use piped watering systems and plastic drinkers on your farms. It is through these that germs find their way into the animals, especially if they are not cleaned," Verhoek said. He described the various sources of water and clean water as he defined clean

clean water as:

- Surface water (rivers, ditches, swamp)
 - Rain water (collected in bunkers)
 - Well/borehole (top-tank for daily use)
- Verhoek, however, says if this water is kept for long in the tanks and pipes, it will be contaminated by:
- Planktonic bacteria which attach themselves to waterlines
 - Extracellular Polymeric Substance (EPS) produced by planktonic bacteria which feed on organic pollution in water.
 - Micro-organisms which settle in the EPS layer. Algae, protozoa and bacteria produce toxic products causing harmful mycotoxins.
 - Biofilm which clogs the waterline and reduces the taste
 - E-Coli, enterococcus, streptococcus, salmonella, clostridium and legionella, mycotoxins which are found in Biofilm.

CLEANING WATER FOR LIVESTOCK

Cleaning water for livestock using the chemical (ClO₂) works best because:

- It is effective at wide pH range (higher pH from boreholes)
- Chlorine dioxide reacts directly with the cell wall of micro-organisms and kills them even when they are inactive
- Of superior organism control
- Due to a high oxidation capacity, the concentration for effective use is lower than other chemicals. It is also effective longer than other options.
- Chlorine dioxide will remain active until capacity is reached (14-30 days)
- It will dissolve completely in water
- Chlorine dioxide can be photo oxidised by sunlight (protects from direct sunlight)
- No harmful by-products and non-corrosive
- Improved palatability: It effectively neutralises unpleasant odours.

water as that which is odourless (absence of organic matter) and does not contain harmful substances (bacteria, microorganisms, viruses). Verhoek gave the sources of

COMING TO UGANDA

The delegation learnt that The Schippers Group provides farmers with essential tools, products and expert coaching to implement and sustain high hygiene standards on their farms and will officially open shop in Uganda on June 1.

The group promised to offer innovative technologies that aim at improving product acceptability in European markets and enhance the quality of Ugandan agricultural products.

"This collaboration signifies an important step towards elevating Uganda's agricultural standards and addressing the critical issues related to livestock health and productivity. The integration of these modern techniques and products is anticipated to foster a sustainable future for farmers, while also enhancing Uganda's reputation," Verhoek said.

Proper bio-security remains a missing link in Uganda, said Dr Emma Naluyima of One Acre Farm, who was one of the delegates.

The Schippers Group's technologies will go a long way in improving farm hygiene, says Martin Roy Lukwago, from JMR farms and one of the delegates.

"In line with the knowledge we picked from your presentation in the boardroom at The Schippers Group, we look forward to being the first customers for the chlorine dioxide when it arrives in Uganda," Lukwago said.

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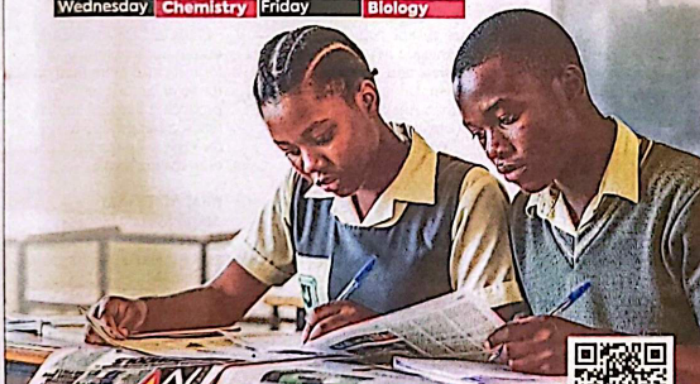
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