Down at 12171.71

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invest in anything else," he said. from long term institutio... ... Muvawala said.

Govt gets tough on fake agriculture inputs

By Prossy Nandudu

The ministry of agriculture has issued a directive to importers of agricultural inputs to register their suppliers and distributors within three months or lose their trading licenses.

According to agriculture minister, Vincent Ssempijja, this is to rid the country of fake agro inputs for the sector to achieve its intended objective of ensuring food security and commercial purposes.

The three-month grace period began on Wednesday. Ssempijja said the ministry will, within that time, verify the credibility of the origins of these products. After this period, the ministry will draw a list of genuine suppliers or agrochemicals both here and outside Uganda and publish it in the media and other channels for the farmers' benefit.

"Those who will not have registered will have their licenses revoked, products confiscated and destroyed and the Government will not hesitate to arrest the culprits," said Ssempija.

> *"Those who will not have registered will have their licenses revoked,"*
>
> **Agriculture minister**

The minister was speaking at a meeting with importers and suppliers of agriculture inputs, which include fertilisers and animal drugs at Imperial Royal Hotel on Wednesday.

He said the move is part of renewed efforts from the agriculture ministry to restore sanity in the agriculture sector.

Ssempijja added that the ministry will collaborate with the trade ministry through the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), health ministry through the National Drug Authority (NDA) and Police through the agriculture division desk to ensure proper co-ordination.

"The proliferation of fake and adulterated animal drugs has resulted in the death of animals because the ticks get resistant," Ssempijja said.

He added that this has affected the sector's growth and the Government loses sh3.4 trillion revenue annually due to pest resistance.

The sector, according to Ssempija, employs 75% of the population, according to UBOS 2005 and contributes 20% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), accounts for 50% of exports and provides raw materials to industries.

He, however, said the growth has stagnated at 3% annually due to low productivity, as a result of the changing weather, declining soil fertility and adulterated inputs such as fertilisers.

Sempija quoted a recent study that by the time imported agro inputs reach Uganda's borders, 30% of them have been tampered with. The study was done by Makerere University and the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC).

"It means they are opened up somewhere before they are again loaded onto the trucks and sent to Uganda. So, we want to close all those gaps by registering suppliers, dealers and distributors up to the village level, so we can monitor them," he added.

Josephat Bamugaya from Export Trading Group, importers of fertilisers, said unscrupulous people pack stones and soil as fertilisers.

He said the most affected fertiliser are the two NPK fertilisers meant for tea, fruits and vegetables. They are NPK 2555 and NPK171717.