



Transfer of vets to NAADS irks association

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THE Uganda Veterinary Association has criticised the Government's decision to transfer agricultural extension staff at sub-counties to the National Agriculture Advisory Services programme.

According to a January 14 letter from the public service ministry, production staff, who will not have joined to NAADS, will be retired on abolition of the office. "The responsibilities spelt out in the guidelines are not going to work in areas like meat inspection and livestock disease control," said Dr. Sam Okech, the association president.

Okech was addressing district veterinary and fisheries officers at a consultative meeting at Makerere University recently. "We do not know who will inspect and approve livestock products. We envisage a situation where Ugandans are going to consume products that are not inspected."

Okech noted that the NAADS programme had a fixed time in which to work. "The mandate of NAADS is limited. What will happen when the programme expires?"

"We have a role to play by providing professional services and advice rather than dismantling the district production sector. We should look for other ways to enhance performance of NAADS, provided all stakeholders are involved," he stressed.

Okech explained that the demand of veterinary services is high in districts like Amuru, which has only two veterinary doctors. He said under the local government, some production services are offered for the good of the public and should not be privatised.

"It is not clear how single farmers will benefit from NAADS. We are going to appeal to Parliament next month," Okech said.

This article can be found on-line at: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/19/712374>

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