



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

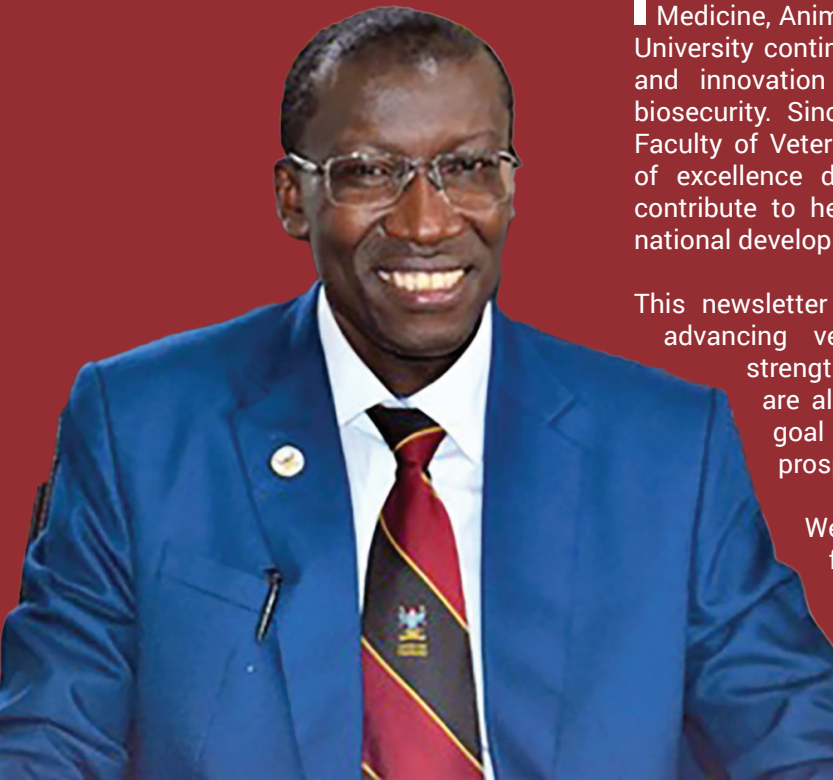
COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE, ANIMAL RESOURCES AND BIOSECURITY

NEWSLETTER

CoVAB

October – December 2025

Dear Readers,



It is my pleasure to welcome you to this edition of the CoVAB Newsletter, October –December 2025. The College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB) at Makerere University continues to stand at the forefront of training, research, and innovation in veterinary sciences, animal resources, and biosecurity. Since its establishment over 50 year ago, from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, CoVAB has evolved into a center of excellence dedicated to nurturing skilled professionals who contribute to healthier communities, sustainable livelihoods, and national development.

This newsletter highlights a few of our outputs and efforts in advancing veterinary medicine and animal production to strengthening biosecurity and public health. Our programs are aligned with Uganda's Vision 2040 and the broader goal of transforming challenges into opportunities for prosperity.

We celebrate the collective efforts of our students, faculty, industry partners, and government stakeholders who continue to support our mission.

Prof. Frank N. Mwiine

Principal, College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB)



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Construction of a Student Hostel at Buyana Stock Farm Commences



Makerere University has begun construction of a UGX 980 million student hostel at Buyana Stock Farm, a key facility under CoVAB. The project, undertaken by the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), addresses longstanding accommodation challenges and marks a new phase in revitalizing the farm as a center of excellence in veterinary training and research.

Makerere University has officially commenced the construction of a UGX 980 million student hostel at Buyana Stock Farm, a key research and training facility under the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB). The project, undertaken by the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), marks a major milestone in addressing the longstanding challenge of inadequate accommodation for staff and students engaged in training and research at the farm.

Groundbreaking Milestone to address a need

The groundbreaking follows the announcement made earlier this year and signals the beginning of a new phase in revitalizing Buyana Stock Farm. The hostel will provide modern housing facilities, easing the burden on students who previously faced difficulties

accessing accommodation during their practical sessions.

Veterinary student numbers at Buyana Stock Farm have risen from 29 to 80, straining facilities built for fewer trainees. The new hostel will ease this pressure as the farm continues to serve as a hub for practical training, research, and community outreach.

In August 2025, the Makerere University Council Audit Committee, led by Mr. Muteganda Amon, inspected Buyana Stock Farm and identified pressing challenges such as deteriorating infrastructure, staffing shortages, and animal welfare concerns. These findings highlighted the urgent need for revitalization and underscored the significance of the newly commenced hostel

construction. Beyond providing much-needed accommodation for students and staff, the project is viewed as a cornerstone in broader efforts to strengthen facilities, improve governance, and restore Buyana Stock Farm's reputation as Uganda's leading veterinary training institution.

Beyond Accommodation

As construction gets underway, the hostel project is expected to catalyze wider reforms at Buyana Stock Farm, including upgrades to animal units, improved water supply, and enhanced governance structures. With the new leadership and infrastructure investment, the farm is poised to reclaim its role as a center of excellence in veterinary education, research, and community outreach.





Farm Visit

urban livestock systems.

Sustainable Practices

innovative use of organic market waste—such as bean pods and pineapple residues—as livestock feed, cutting costs and reducing urban waste.

Pest and Resource Management

To address pest challenges, the farm applies diatomaceous earth, an organic insecticide, both in the environment and mixed with feed. This approach improves herd health, enhances nutrition, and maintains environmental hygiene

without reliance on chemical pesticides. In addition, Kyakuwa Farm has pioneered circular resource use by converting manure into charcoal briquettes through solar drying. These briquettes provide households with clean, affordable energy, reduce dependence on firewood, and ease pressure on forests.

Broader Impact

The visit reinforced Makerere University's commitment to advancing climate-smart agriculture through collaborative learning and knowledge exchange. Prof. Kabirizi's philosophy of "turning waste into wealth" exemplifies how urban farms can

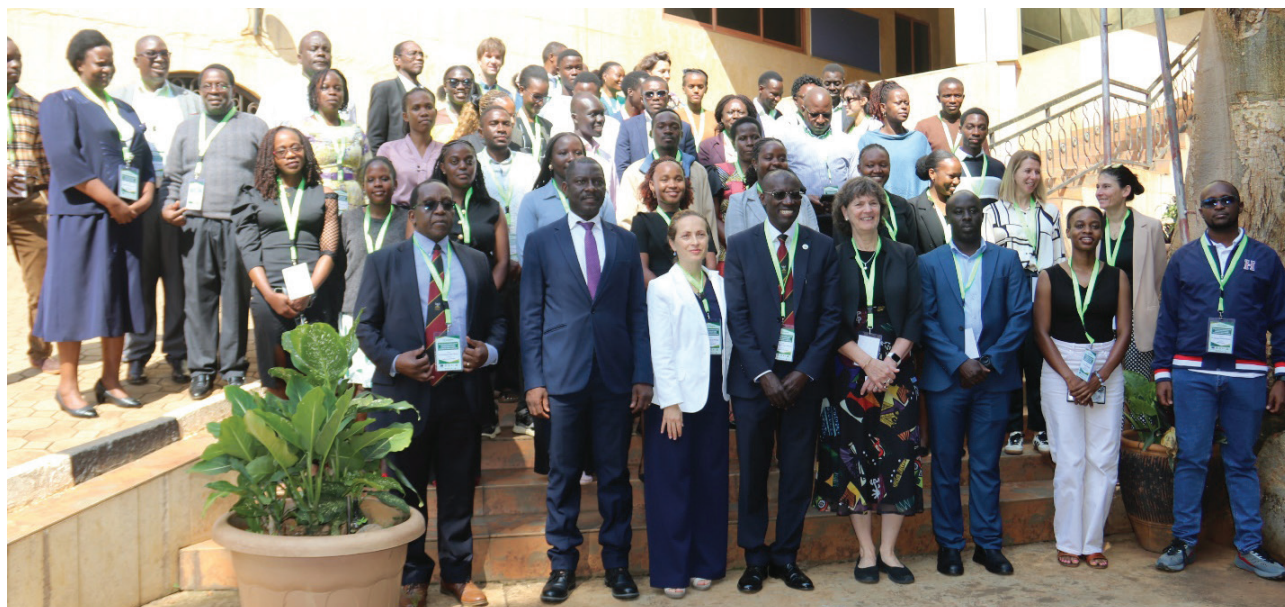
integrate innovation, community empowerment, and sustainability. Her model not only strengthens resilience in dairy production but also empowers youth and promotes early retirement planning among farmers.

Kyakuwa Farm stands as a replicable example of climate-smart agriculture in action,

demonstrating that urban farming can be both productive and environmentally responsible. The CICS-E&SA project continues to build platforms for sharing such proven technologies, ensuring that farmers across East and Southern Africa are better equipped to adapt to climate change while safeguarding their livelihoods.

Innovations demonstrated at Kyakuwa Farm included silage production from surplus sweet potato vines, hay made from Paspalum grass, hydroponic fodder cultivation, and the use of organic market waste such as bean pods and pineapple residues as livestock feed.

Makerere University and Partners Celebrate INSSPIRE Project Success



Makerere University and partners marked the successful conclusion of the INSSPIRE Project at a final dissemination conference in Kampala. Focused on food systems and climate action, the initiative enriched curricula, introduced real-life learning labs, and fostered international collaboration, preparing students to become leaders in resilience and innovation.

The Final Dissemination Conference

Makerere University and its partners recently celebrated the successful conclusion of the INSSPIRE Project at the Final Dissemination Conference held on November 18th, 2025, at the Imperial Royale Hotel in Kampala. The event marked the end of a three-year journey dedicated to advancing innovation, research, and capacity-building in higher education, with a strong focus on food systems and climate action.

Hosted at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB), the conference brought together stakeholders from leading universities across Europe and Africa. Participants reflected on the project's achievements, shared lessons learned, and explored opportunities for future collaboration. The theme, "Advancing Evidence-Based and Inclusive Education for Food Systems and Climate Action," underscored the project's commitment to tackling global challenges through innovation and shared learning.

The three-year initiative enriched curricula, introduced learning labs, and fostered COIL exchanges, reaching 60 lecturers, 850 students, and 500 community stakeholders while advancing food systems and climate action

Transforming Higher Education

Over the past three years, INSSPIRE has made significant strides in transforming higher education. The project enriched curricula to ensure academic programs are both rigorous and

relevant to societal needs and the evolving job market. It introduced real-life learning labs, giving students hands-on opportunities to apply knowledge in addressing community challenges. Additionally, the adoption of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) connected students across countries, fostering cross-cultural exchange and collaborative problem-solving. These innovations have strengthened the link between academia and society, preparing graduates to become solution-oriented leaders in food systems transformation and climate resilience.

Partnerships and Recognition

Speaking on behalf of Vice Chancellor Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, Prof. Julius Kikoma commended the achievements realized through strong partnerships among universities in the Netherlands, Spain, Slovenia, Kenya, Uganda, Benin, and South Africa. He emphasized that the project comes at a critical time when Africa faces urgent challenges of food security and climate change, noting Uganda's vulnerability to floods and climate shocks. He stressed that universities must rise to the challenge by generating evidence, influencing policy, and driving

innovation.

Special recognition was given to Dr. Charles Drago Kato, whose leadership of the Makerere INSSPIRE team was central to the project's success. Gratitude was also extended to Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the lead institution, for fostering collaboration across Europe and Africa. Partners including Erasmus+, the European Union, RUFORUM, FAO, and national agencies were praised for their support in strengthening long-term academic partnerships.

Project Impact highlight

Dr. Denyse Snelder of VU Amsterdam highlighted the project's broad impact, noting that 60 lecturers were actively engaged, 850 students reached through enriched courses, and 500 community stakeholders involved. She also emphasized the establishment of a community of practice with 18 universities across Africa and Europe, strengthening South-to-South and triangular cooperation. The INSSPIRE Project has prepared students for labor market success by equipping them with the skills to drive food systems transformation and adapt to climate change. Its legacy lies in building a network of universities and communities committed to evidence-based, inclusive, and sustainable education.

CeBIGH Launches Biorisk Management Program to Equip Uganda's Lab Technologists

The Center for Biosecurity and Global Health (CeBIGH), in partnership with CoVAB's Department of Biosecurity, Ecosystems and Veterinary Public Health, hosted a three-day Biorisk Management Training in Kampala. The program brought together key partners and participants from across sectors to strengthen laboratory capacity, advance biosafety and biosecurity, and reinforce Uganda's commitment to global health security.



Participants posing for a photo in front of CEIGH at the training held on October 20th to 22nd, 2025

Training Overview

The Center for Biosecurity and Global Health (CeBIGH), in collaboration with the Department of Biosecurity, Ecosystems and Veterinary Public Health (BEP) at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB), successfully conducted a three-day Biorisk Management Training from October 20–22, 2025. Hosted at the CeBIGH Conference Room, the training brought together key partners including VIQAP Consultancy Services, the Uganda Medical Laboratory Technologists Association (UMLTA), the Biosafety and Biosecurity Association of Uganda (BBAU), and the Uganda National Health Laboratories and Diagnostic Services. This joint initiative was designed to strengthen the capacity of laboratory technologists by equipping them with essential knowledge and practical skills to manage biological risks and uphold public health standards.

Continuous Professional Development

As part of a broader campaign to promote Continuous Professional Development (CPD), the training emphasized the importance of biosafety and biosecurity across diverse sectors such as human and animal health, environmental science, biocontainment, and research laboratories. Participants included technologists from both government and private institutions, graduate students enrolled in MSc programs such as Global Biosecurity and Infectious Disease Management, Clinical Epidemiology, and Biomedical Laboratory Technology, as well as early career biomedical scientists. This diverse participation reflected a shared commitment to advancing biosafety and biosecurity practices through interdisciplinary collaboration, skillbuilding, and professional growth.

The training helped in strengthening lab design, operations, waste management, and resilience against evolving biosafety challenges.

Key Learning Areas

Over the course of the three days, participants gained both theoretical and practical knowledge across a wide range of critical topics in biorisk management. Sessions emphasized core biosafety and biosecurity principles and practices, while also introducing international standards and frameworks such as ISO 35001, ISO 15189, ISO 15190, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR), and the Cartagena Protocol. A key highlight was the exploration of risk management through the AMP model—Assessment, Mitigation, and Performance.

Evaluation—which provided a structured approach to identifying and addressing biological risks.

Risk Management Models

In addition, participants received essential insights into laboratory design, operations, and biological

waste management, ensuring they are better equipped to maintain safe and secure laboratory environments. The training also introduced emerging fields such as Cyberbiosecurity, DualUse Research of Concern (DURC), and responsible life sciences research, offering a forwardlooking perspective on

evolving biosafety challenges. By bridging foundational knowledge with cuttingedge issues, the program prepared participants to navigate complex risks in modern laboratory and research settings, reinforcing Uganda’s commitment to global health security and resilience.

SAF and CoVAB Launch Graduate Trainee Program to Bridge Academia and the Poultry Industry



Sekajja Agro Farms Ltd (SAF), in partnership with CoVAB launched a six-month Graduate Trainee Program to bridge the gap between academic instruction and industry practice. They will be offering finalyear students and recent graduates hands-on training across the poultry value chain to build employability, innovation, and technical capacity in Uganda’s poultry sector.

Sekajja Agro Farms Ltd (SAF), a fully integrated poultry enterprise in Buyuki Nama Sub-County, Mukono District, has officially begun admitting students into its newly established Graduate Trainee Program in partnership with Makerere University’s College

of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB). This initiative is designed to bridge the gap between academic instruction and industry practice by offering final-year students and recent graduates immersive training across the poultry value chain.

Program Launch

At a recent meeting held at CoVAB, the SAF team led by Dr. Abu Mayanja, Chief Operations Officer, outlined the program’s scope and confirmed that admissions are currently open. Students selected will immediately begin training in feed mill production, hatchery management, broiler farming, out

grower coordination, and abattoir services. Dr. Mayanja emphasized that the program is already enrolling participants to enhance graduate employability, foster innovation and research, and build technical capacity in Uganda’s poultry sector.

Bridging Academia and Industry

The Graduate Trainee Program runs for six months and combines mentorship with hands-on experience across SAF’s integrated operations. Dr. Mayanja noted that this structured approach addresses the significant human resource gap in Uganda’s poultry industry, where most workers acquire skills informally. By admitting students now, SAF and CoVAB are ensuring that graduates leave with industry-ready competencies and entrepreneurial insights.

Six months of mentorship and hands-on training across feed mill, hatchery, broiler farming, outgrower coordination, and abattoir services.

Partnership with CoVAB

CoVAB staff, including Dr. Sylvia Nalubwama, highlighted that the partnership aligns with Makerere University's mission to provide education that meets societal needs through practical, skills-based training. She confirmed that while the formal Memorandum of Understanding is being finalized, the urgency of workforce gaps has prompted immediate student admissions and program rollout.

Terms of Engagement

The terms of engagement include facilitation for students such

as rent, internet access, and meals. Admission is merit-based, with applicants undergoing a competitive interview process. SAF and CoVAB also discussed collaboration with BTNET institutions, certification for trainees, and aligning academic programs with industry expectations to ensure graduates meet professional standards.

Student Perspectives

Final-year students present at the meeting expressed excitement about the opportunity and raised questions about remuneration and post-training employment. SAF

representatives acknowledged these concerns but emphasized that the true value lies in the unique exposure to commercial and operational aspects of poultry production. They assured students that the program, now admitting participants, is designed to equip them with critical skills and entrepreneurial competencies essential for driving growth and innovation in Uganda's poultry sector.

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