

**OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF UGANDA FLOWERS
EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION (UFEA)**



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CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Dear Esteemed Flower Exporters from Uganda,

2026 is now 2 months underway and the promise that it will be an interesting year is already fulfilled. With the most recent development that our cargo is stuck in Qatar, we are curious to see how this will develop.

Closer at home, there are enough interesting developments as well, but let us focus on UFEA. Our organization started this year well, with some progress on several topics. Mainly on Koppert imports, although it looks like the results are not working out. Some progress was realized on the MAAIF inspection costs for the Xyllela as well, as MAAIF contributed to the inspection costs, which were normally paid for by the cutting farms.

Follow-up letters from the breakfast meeting with the Export Led Growth Strategy Unit are promising. Presidential Adviser Susan Muhwezi has shared letters with NEMA and Uganda Airlines with requests for meetings regarding our challenges. We are now waiting for the requests to be honored. Hopefully, more news will follow.

Progress on JNC negotiations is still pending. UFEA was forced to share the bill with all members, which is an extra cost for the farms. It's therefore in all our interest that we conclude this quickly, and that meetings are kept to a minimum. For 2026, we agreed to pay only for 5 meetings, to keep costs under control. We have our trust that the JNC team will be solving the discussions soon.

No progress has been made on the URA topics. Although several engagements have been happening, and on smaller topics communication seems to be improving, for bigger topics this is not yet the case. It looks like every farm has pending topics to be solved, which is very frustrating.

The increment in floor wage by the ILO, which is followed by Fairtrade and MPS-SQ, leads to confusion and extra costs in the sector. UFEA has engaged MPS on this topic and requested more time. More clarification is also needed on the part of the allowances and in-kind benefits. It would be strange if it becomes more beneficial to the farms to stop giving

people lunch and medical care and convert this into fixed amounts per month. This is in no one's interest.

David organized an information-gathering activity focused on gaining more insight into the costs that different farms have, especially related to licenses, local government fees/taxes, certifications, etc. It is interesting and beneficial to compare these kinds of costs and to learn where we pay too much or where UFEA can come in to lobby for the sector.

The same was done for salaries. David is working on finalizing the comparisons, which will soon be shared. Not all farms decided to cooperate, which is everyone's right to decide, but results will only be shared with farms that participated in the exercise.

This month, we will be visiting Pearl Flowers in Ntungamo. We are very pleased with the invite from our far-away colleagues, and I thank the management of Pearl for this initiative. It will be an interesting opportunity for us to see this company and to share knowledge and experiences.

In the second half of the year, we expect FHL to shift to the new premises. UFEA will join FHL with an office in the same building. Better facilitation and a closer connection to Fresh Handling will be beneficial for the sector, and we are looking forward to this big milestone in 2026.

Sjoerd de Boer

Board Chairman

Uganda Flowers Exporters Association (UFEA)



Executive Director's Message

Dear Valued Members,

The beginning of 2026 has reaffirmed both the opportunities and responsibilities facing Uganda's floriculture sector. It's important that as a sector, we continue to demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and collective commitment despite an increasingly complex global operating environment.

The articles highlighted in this issue reflect an important reality — market access today depends not only on production excellence but on compliance, coordination, and proactive risk management across the entire value chain.

Phytosanitary compliance remains our foremost priority. Increased surveillance at destination markets, particularly within the European Union, requires all exporters to strengthen pest monitoring systems, greenhouse integrity, and packhouse controls. Recent farm audit reports remind us that compliance is a shared responsibility; the actions of one exporter directly influence the reputation and inspection intensity applied to all Ugandan shipments. Encouragingly, member responsiveness through corrective action and traceability updates under the False Codling Moth Systems Approach demonstrates the sector's growing maturity and readiness.

Global trends show growing buyer focus on sustainability, traceability, worker welfare, and legally compliant production systems. This makes continuous compliance, rather than last-minute audit preparation, essential for every farm. The sector's timely updates on traceability codes, strengthened Integrated Pest Management practices, and active participation in knowledge-sharing initiatives demonstrate encouraging progress and collaboration towards achieving these expectations.

UFEA's member engagement visits, knowledge-sharing sessions, and partnerships with regulators and industry stakeholders reaffirm our commitment to supporting farms in navigating these transitions. Discussions around biological control imports, skills development/improvements, and continued advocacy with government institutions illustrate our focus on reducing operational bottlenecks while positioning the sector for long-term growth.

Equally important is collaboration. The progress achieved through shared farm data, peer learning, and active participation in association initiatives demonstrates the strength of collective action. As global compliance requirements rise, unity within the sector becomes one of our greatest strategic advantages.

Looking ahead, precaution and preparedness will remain essential. Farms are encouraged to plan agrochemical procurement early, strengthen internal documentation systems, review OSH compliance structures, and ensure all varieties and inputs meet regulatory and certification requirements. Early adaptation will safeguard market access and reduce costly disruptions.

I thank all members for your continued cooperation, transparency, and dedication to maintaining Uganda's reputation as a reliable supplier of high-quality flowers.

Together, we will continue to grow a resilient, compliant, and sustainable floriculture sector.

Thank you,

Esther Nekambi

Executive Director

Uganda Flowers Exporters Association (UFEA)

1.0 Regulatory Compliance

1.1 Advisory: Strengthening Phytosanitary Compliance

UFEA reminds all members to **maintain high phytosanitary standards** to protect Uganda's flower exports. Inspection authorities at EU ports routinely monitor shipments, and strong systems are key to preventing interceptions that can affect market access.

We concluded the Valentine period peacefully, without suspensions due to interceptions for quarantine pests. Whenever alerts were received, farms instituted quick response and robust internal controls. The exporters promptly submitted a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to MAAIF, which was verified for follow-up — a good practice for all farms going forward.

Key Compliance Reminders from review of monthly farm audits:

1. Strengthen pest surveillance

- Intensify scouting and monitoring, particularly for all harmful and specially FCM.
- Ensure traps/lures are properly placed and replaced on schedule.

2. Tightening greenhouse and packhouse controls

- Repair insect nets and enforce door discipline.
- Strengthen receiving/grading inspections as the “last line of defense.”
- Promptly remove and responsibly dispose of waste to prevent pest breeding.

3. Avoid documentary interceptions

- Verify traceability codes, botanical names, and any required declarations to prevent administrative rejections.

1.2 Regulator Guidance on Agrochemical Management

UFEA's Compliance Managers Knowledge and Experience Sharing Meeting held on 27th November 2025 provided important guidance from a representative of MAAIF's Agrochemical Control Division.

As certification requirements under standards such as MPS-GAP continue to tighten, chemical authorization and use remains among the most frequent sources of non-conformances in the sector. UFEA members must prioritise to maintain strong chemical management systems.

Important information for UFEA Members from MAAIF

1) Chemical Authorisation and Concession Compliance

- Farms using crop protection products not registered in Uganda must obtain UFEA

clearance and secure MAAIF approval *before importation and use*.

- Complete documentation is mandatory, including: UFEA clearance letter, MSDS, invoices, and procurement/import records.
- MAAIF advised that consolidated submissions (documentation) are preferred to reduce delays.
- Where Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) is required—especially for biological products—permit processing may take long (1–2 weeks). Farms should plan procurement early to avoid spray program disruption.

2) Personnel and Premises Registration (High Risk Area)

- Personnel/Entities responsible for importing/handling agrochemicals must be registered and certified by MAAIF.
- Each farm must have **at least** one trained staff member in **safe use and handling of agrochemicals**, as required during premises inspection. This is a five-day training done by MAAIF in conjunction with Makerere University and a certificate of competence given after passing an exam. The certificate is mandatory requirement during inspection of premises by MAAIF Agrochemical control inspectors.
- Chemical stores and handling facilities must be inspected and approved. MAAIF also indicated plans to conduct routine inspections, partly in response to complaints regarding misuse of chemicals in farms.

3) Chemical Register Updates, Restrictions and Bans

- MAAIF conducts quarterly updates of the national chemical register.
- Farms must monitor updates especially in case of active ingredients that have been reviewed and set for restrictions or bans and adjust spray programs accordingly.

4) Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) Management and Responsible Disposal

- Farms must maintain updated MSDS files for all agrochemicals and ensure they are accessible to compliance teams, chemical handlers and clinics.
- Obsolete chemicals and empty containers must be disposed of through licensed hazardous waste handlers.

Caution!!!

Chemical compliance must be treated as a continuous system—not a last-minute audit activity.

UFEA Advisory Checklist:

- ✓ Confirm all unregistered crop protection products follow the UFEA–MAAIF concession procedure
- ✓ Maintain a complete documentation pack: clearance letter, MSDS, invoices,

import/procurement records

- ✓ Ensure at least one responsible staff member is MAAIF-trained/certified in safe chemical handling
- ✓ Verify chemical stores/handling areas meet inspection requirements and are audit-ready
- ✓ Keep MSDS accessible in all relevant areas (store, mixing point, clinic, compliance office)
- ✓ Track national chemical register updates and adjust spray programs for restricted/banned molecules
- ✓ Use licensed handlers for disposal of obsolete chemicals and containers

UFEA Members to Complete Q1 2026 Traceability Code Updates

UFEA thanks all member rose farms for their prompt cooperation in updating traceability codes for Q1 2026, in line with the National Framework for the Systems Approach to the Control of False Codling Moth (FCM).

Following UFEA's February communication requesting updates, we are glad to report that all farms have submitted their updated traceability codes. Only Jambo Roses and Thyma reported no changes this quarter. The consolidated list will now be submitted to the National Plant Protection Organization (MAAIF), who will forward it to the EU to ensure continued market access and compliance readiness.

Keeping Our Farms Safe: Updates on Uganda's OSH Law

On **4th February 2026**, Federation of Uganda Employers hosted a webinar to provide updates about the **amended Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act 2025**. The law strengthens workplace safety and health, making some practices **legally mandatory** for all sectors, including floriculture.

Key highlights for flower farms:

- Safety and Health Committees are now required in every workplace, regardless of size.
- Employers must monitor worker health, carry out medical checks, and report any accidents or disease outbreaks.
- Machinery and equipment operators must be trained and certified before use.
- OSH practitioners conducting audits or risk assessments must be registered and licensed.
- Proper disposal of chemicals, waste, and safe electrical practices are now clearly mandated.

For UFEA members, much of this aligns with existing standards like **MPS SQ and Fairtrade**, reinforcing best practices while providing a clear legal framework.

Action for members: Review your OSH policies, ensure certification and training compliance, and strengthen Safety and Health Committees across your farms.

2.0 Market standards compliance

2.1 Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Compliance: Don't risk your roses

Last year, UFEA reported an increasing crack down on unauthorized rose varieties reported by European authorities. Shipments were **destroyed**, growers blacklisted, and buyers exposed to **legal and financial penalties**. The message is clear: **IPR compliance is non-negotiable**.

For Ugandan rose growers - **MPS GAP certification** requires all varieties to be legally sourced, with the required documentation ready for inspection/audit.

Not strictly adhering to IPR rules can lead to **confiscated shipments, lost markets, penalties, reputational damage, and even loss of certification**.

UFEA urges all members to:

- Audit all rose varieties and confirm licenses are current
- Keep documentation complete and accessible

Compliance protects your business, your market access, and Uganda's reputation. Don't wait to React -act now!

3.0 UFEA Member Engagement meetings

In January and February 2026, UFEA conducted **strategic engagement visits** to two rose-growing farms namely Jambo roses and Ugarose Flowers and one cuttings farm Xclusive Uganda, to gain insights into operational realities, strengthen sector support, and document best practices for broader learning.

Appreciation to Member Farms

UFEA thanks the farm leadership teams for giving their time and sharing candid feedback. These engagements are invaluable in shaping targeted training, advocacy, and capacity-building initiatives that safeguard market access and enhance sector competitiveness.

Key Themes from the Visits

- **Phytosanitary Compliance:** Emphasis on False Codling Moth (FCM) management, greenhouse integrity, pest monitoring, crop protection, and robust documentation under Uganda's Systems Approach.
- **Investment Needs:** Upgrading greenhouse structures and expanding operations to strengthen productivity, resilience, and pest exclusion.
- **Sector Coordination:** Upcoming MPS SQ floor wage changes highlight the need for unified sector engagement, early planning, and coordinated advocacy.

- Best Practices: Increased use of farm data for decision-making, employee welfare, partnerships with research institutions.
- Promotional Activities: Opportunity to participate in IFTEX 2026 Flower Expo in Nairobi, Kenya
- Member Feedback: Discussions included engagement with regulators (MAAIF, NEMA), market access opportunities such as the Russia export initiative and improved data management across farms.

UFEA will strengthen peer learning, support trade visibility initiatives, and continue direct engagement visits to monitor emerging opportunities and challenges.

These visits reaffirm the **floriculture sector's growth potential** and the importance of collaboration between UFEA and its members in driving sustainable expansion and safeguarding market access.

3.1 UFEA Members Engagement with Koppert on Biological Control Imports.

On 5th February 2026, UFEA members representing cuttings farms met with Koppert Biological Systems to discuss challenges around the 25% import duty on biological control products and explore alternative importation approaches. The meeting, moderated by UFEA, focused on ensuring affordable, compliant access to these essential crop protection inputs.

Koppert presented a new model, following guidance from the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), where farms would become direct importers. This approach allows farms to benefit from duty exemptions, provided they secure import permits, forecast their needs in advance, and manage customs clearance through appointed agents. Koppert would continue to consolidate orders, manage shipments, and assist with handling.

The meeting highlighted key concerns from members, including the costs of phytosanitary certificates, handling, and cold storage, as well as the financial viability of the new model for smaller shipments. Koppert clarified cost structures and assured that where shipments are combined, expenses could be shared among farms.

Members agreed to review both the current and proposed models, evaluate their feasibility, and provide consolidated feedback to UFEA.

3.2 Farm Profiles – Update

UFEA is currently updating its Member Farm Profiles to ensure the Association has accurate and up-to-date information on all member farms. This exercise is key for effective sector planning, regulatory engagement, advocacy, and supporting market access initiatives.

We are pleased to acknowledge that 60% of member farms have already submitted their updated profiles—thank you for your prompt cooperation! For farms that have not yet updated their profiles, we kindly urge you to do so without delay. If your existing profile remains accurate, a confirmation will suffice.

Accurate and current farm profiles are essential for:

- Demonstrating transparency and compliance to regulators,
- Strengthening collective sector representation, and
- Supporting UFEA initiatives and member services.

UFEA looks forward to receiving the remaining updates and thanks all members for their continued commitment to a well-documented and competitive floriculture sector.

3.3 UFEA Phytosanitary Knowledge Sharing at Xclusive Cuttings

On **13th February 2026**, UFEA visited **Xclusive Cuttings** for a knowledge and experience sharing session on **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)**. The session brought together farm managers, agronomists, and crop protection teams from leading cuttings and rose farms.

Key takeaways:

- **Prevention first:** Physical, cultural, and biological methods reduce reliance on chemicals.
- **Monitoring & thresholds:** Scouting data and crop value guide timely interventions.
- **Teamwork matters:** All workers, including scouts and harvesters, play a role in pest control.
- **Documentation & evaluation:** Record keeping and regular review ensure IPM effectiveness.
- **Sustainable practices:** IPM protects the environment, preserves biodiversity, and prevents pest resistance.

UFEA thanks **Xclusive Cuttings** for hosting, sharing expertise, and setting a high standard in **phytosanitary compliance**. This session reinforces the value of peer learning in strengthening Uganda's floriculture sector.



4.0 LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY

4.1 UFEA Engages in Shaping Uganda's Skills Future

On 24th February 2026, UFEA participated in a consultative meeting on **the new Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act 2025**, organised by the Federation of Uganda Employers and facilitated by Enabel. The Act introduces **Sector Skills Expert Committees (SSECs)**, industry-led platforms to ensure training matches labour market needs.

During the meeting, participants discussed the role of SSECs in **curriculum development, quality assurance, and skills gap identification**. The TVET Council emphasized that these committees will give employers a strong voice in shaping the skills of tomorrow, supporting youth employability, industrialization, and sector growth. The participants were tasked to identify suitable representatives on the SSEC from the respective sector.

For the floriculture sector which falls under agriculture a key priority sector, this is a unique opportunity to influence training programs, ensuring that skills from greenhouse management to post-harvest handling meet industry standards.



5.0 Upcoming Events

1. UFEA members (Owners, MDs, GMs) visit to Pearl Flowers on 20th March 2026
2. UFEA-NOTU-UHISPAWU meeting 25th March 2026
3. Makerere University – UFEA MoU follow-up engagement meeting 26th March 2026

Your Feedback column

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