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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF UGANDA FLOWERS EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION (UFEA)



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Executive Director's Message

Dear Esteemed Members,

Welcome to Issue 3 of the Uganda Flower Exporters Association Newsletter covering April and May 2026.

The period under review reflects important progress in strengthened resilience, compliance, sustainability, and stakeholder engagement within Uganda's floriculture sector. I am pleased to note the improvement in phytosanitary compliance during Q1 2026, with both interception volumes and cases reducing compared to Q1 2025. This demonstrates the continued efforts by member farms to improve compliance systems and documentation practices.

At the same time, the increase in False Codling Moth (FCM) interceptions in roses highlights the need for continued vigilance, stronger pest management systems, and proactive compliance to safeguard market access and product quality.

During the period, UFEA continued engaging members and regulators on key sector issues, including the Government's recall of selected agrochemicals, environmental compliance requirements, and evolving sustainability expectations. Productive engagements were also held with Makerere University, the National Environment Management Authority, and the Federation of Uganda Employers, MPS and Fair trade to support skills development, ESG awareness, and sector competitiveness.

As international market requirements continue to evolve, I encourage all members to remain committed to continuous improvement, collaboration, and responsible business practices. Together, we can continue strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of Uganda's floriculture industry.

Sincerely,
Esther Nekambi
Executive Director
Uganda Flower Exporters Association (UFEA)

1.0 REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

1.1 Phytosanitary Interceptions – Q1 2026 Performance Update

UFEA reports an improvement in phytosanitary compliance in Q1 2026 compared to Q1 2025. Total interceptions reduced from **14,215 kg to 12,293.1 kg**, while cases declined from **10 to 6**, reflecting stronger compliance across member farms.

A major improvement was recorded in cuttings, which dropped sharply from **3,618 kg (5 cases in 2025)** to **4.1 kg (1 case in 2026)**, driven mainly by better documentation compliance.

Importantly, **no cargo was destroyed in both periods**, as all cases were resolved through corrective action. However, members are reminded that delays during corrective actions can affect product quality, making **swift response essential**.

Key Concerns

- False Codling Moth **(FCM)** in roses increased to **12,289 kg in 2026**, up from 10,597 kg in 2025
- Persistent documentation issues (production unit numbers, declarations, and special requirements)

While progress is noted, members are urged to strengthen **FCM control, improve documentation accuracy, and ensure rapid corrective action** to protect product quality and market access.

Compliance, including correct documentation must be proactive, by regularly reviewing/revising the EU requirements and additional declarations on the phytosanitary certificates.

UFEA will organize Export Managers learning session to review requirements, responsibilities in June 2026.

Q1 2026 INTERCEPTION REPORT

Notification date	Crop Commodity/ Variety	Quantity	Kilogram	Cause of interception
21.01.2026	**Roses**	2262	*kg*	Documentation
27.01.2026	**Roses**	2518	*kg*	Harmful organism
02.02.2026	**Roses**	840	*kg*	Documentation
05.02.2026	**Roses**	1594	*kg*	Documentation
26.02.2026	**Cuttings**	4.1	*kg*	Documentation
16.03.2026	**Roses**	5075	*kg*	Harmful organism

Q1 2025 INTERCEPTION REPORT

Notification date	Crop Commodity/ Variety	Quantity	Kilogram	Cause of interception
13.01.2025	**Roses**	3422	*KG*	Harmful organism
16.01.2025	**Cuttings**	1170	*KG*	Documentation
20.01.2025	**Roses**	2444	*KG*	Harmful organism
20.01.2025	**Roses**	1556	*KG*	Harmful organism
07.02.2025	**Roses**	1848	*KG*	Harmful organism
17.02.2025	**Cuttings**	2	*KG*	Documentation
17.02.2025	**Cuttings**	56	*KG*	Documentation
22.02.2025	**Roses**	1327	*KG*	Harmful organism
05.03.2025	**Cuttings**	1485	*KG*	Documentation
05.03.2025	**Cuttings**	905	*KG*	Documentation

1.2 MAAIF Recalls 18 Agrochemicals from market – UFEA Engages Members on Implications for Floriculture

On 1st April 2026, local media reported the Government of Uganda's recall of 18 agrochemicals from the market, following concerns over their extended effects on animals, plant health, human health and environmental concerns.


NEWS

WEEKENDVISION 3

Dealers have been given a June 30 deadline to comply with the directive

GOVT RECALLS 18 AGROCHEMICALS FROM MARKET OVER CANCER

Recalled agrochemicals

For some products, dealers have been given up to 30th June 2026 to ensure all banned and recalled chemicals are completely removed from circulation and retail shelves.

Following the announcement, the Uganda Flower Exporters Association (UFEA) reached out to member farms to assess which of the listed chemicals remain in use within the floriculture sector. This exercise aimed to establish the potential operational impact of the directive on farm production systems.

The impact of the ban is very disruptive as no

prior consultations was done by government with the sector to prepare for the adjustment and yet some products like Daconil is an important fungicide for controlling key fungal diseases such as Japanese rust in chrysanthemum and powdery mildew in roses.

Uganda's high-humidity climate makes crops particularly vulnerable to these diseases, requiring effective and reliable protection.

Currently, there are no equally effective and economically viable alternatives, and banning Daconil would likely result in significant production and economic losses.

UFEA's wrote to MAAIF to seek for an engagement and explore possible exemptions for products identified by members as critical to production and crop protection within the sector under agreeable self-regulation.

2.0 VOLUNTARY STANDARDS COMPLIANCE

2.1 UFEA – MPS/Fairtrade engagement meetings on floorwage (Latest Updates).

UFEA has continued to engage MPS and Fair trade in writing and virtual meetings regarding the proposed floor wage adjustment following the World Bank's revision of the international poverty threshold from USD 2.15 to USD 3.00 per day, effective August 2026.

Most recent communication highlighted to the standard bodies (MPS and Fair trade) that Uganda's floriculture industry is facing increasing pressure to remain sustainable due to rising production costs, global market uncertainties, and the recent Middle East conflict, which has significantly increased freight, fuel, and fertilizer prices. These challenges have posed a serious threat to the survival of the sector, with risks of farm closures, job losses, and reduced participation if current certification and compliance changes are implemented without sufficient transition time. UFEA therefore calls for a review of the implementation approach to allow for a more gradual adjustment process while continuing supporting workers' welfare and the sustainability of Uganda's floriculture industry.

The Uganda Flower Exporters Association (UFEA) therefore requested for reconsideration of the proposed implementation timelines and approaches. There is need for additional time, flexibility, and a more gradual adjustment process that allows farms to adapt sustainably without jeopardizing business continuity and employment.

3.0 LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY

3.1 UFEA and NEMA Deepen Collaboration on Environmental Compliance

During April 2026, the Uganda Flowers Exporters Association (UFEA) and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) held two separate engagements aimed at strengthening environmental compliance, improving communication, and supporting the sustainable growth of Uganda's floriculture sector.

The engagements culminated in a high-level meeting on 30 April 2026 between UFEA members and the NEMA Executive Director, Mr. Barirega Akankwasah, convened by Mrs. Susan Muhwezi, Senior Presidential Advisor under the Export-Led Growth Strategy Unit (ELGSU). The meeting provided a platform to discuss key sector concerns, including permitting processes, certification timelines, communication gaps, consultant-related bottlenecks, and broader institutional coordination.

NEMA Executive Director clarified key regulatory requirements and highlighted ongoing efforts to improve service delivery and stakeholder engagement. UFEA members shared practical experiences from the sector, emphasizing the need for predictable, efficient, and transparent regulatory processes.

This high-level engagement was complemented by an earlier technical meeting on 16 April 2026 between UFEA member representatives, the Secretariat, and NEMA's newly appointed focal person, Ms. Sarah Kawala, held at Royal Van Zanten. The discussion focused on operational compliance matters affecting flower farms, including environmental audits, wetland and buffer zone requirements, compliance documentation, and the cost of environmental assessments. It helped clarify regulatory expectations and identify practical areas for improved coordination and efficiency.

Together, these engagements reflect a strengthening partnership between UFEA and NEMA, underscoring a shared commitment to sustained dialogue, improved compliance systems, and the continued competitiveness of Uganda's flower export industry.



Meeting with NEMA Focal Person



Group photo with NEMA Executive Director and Senior Presidential Advisor in the Export Led Growth Strategy Unit

3.2 INVITE Project Highlights Export Opportunities for Flower Sector

UFEA and some members namely: Oasis Nursery, Ugarose Flowers, Pearl Flowers and Xclusive Cuttings participated in a stakeholder engagement convened by the Private Sector Foundation Uganda under the Government of Uganda's Investment for Industrial Transformation and Employment (INVITE) Project, which highlighted export growth opportunities for firms through the Export Firm Support (EFS) component.

Implemented by PSFU, of which UFEA is a member, the project recognizes floriculture among priority high-value export sectors and offers support in areas critical to competitiveness, including market diversification, certification and standards compliance, branding, capacity building and participation in trade fairs.

Of particular relevance to UFEA members was the emphasis on expanding into emerging markets, especially the Middle East and Asia, while strengthening value addition and export readiness.

The engagement reaffirmed the importance of initiatives such as INVITE in supporting private sector growth and positioning Uganda's flower industry to leverage new export opportunities.

A follow-up virtual meeting, to which the flower sector was invited was convened on 27th April 2026 with the aim of further explaining the Export Firm Support - EFS-INVITE Call 3 Application and interesting them in the support facility

Eligibility Criteria of Applicants

- Be formally registered and operating under Ugandan law
- Have been in operation for at least one year
- Employ at least two formally employed staff
- Have a valid export license (where applicable)
- Demonstrate interest in expanding market share or exporting new products



- Be engaged in manufacturing, semi-manufacturing, or high-value commodities

3.3 UFEA – MAAIF engagement meeting on 26th May 2026

On 26 May 2026, the Uganda Flowers Exporters Association (UFEA) met with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) Department of Crop Production and Protection to strengthen engagement and explore opportunities for collaboration.

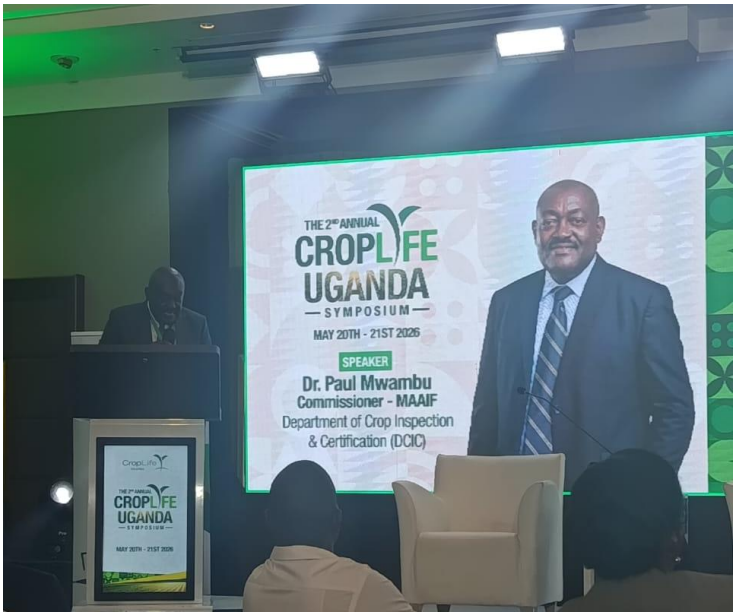
The discussions covered key issues affecting the flower sector, including crop protection, access to biological pest management solutions, horticulture development, and the policy environment. MAAIF also shared updates on the establishment of a dedicated Horticulture Division and the ongoing development of a Comprehensive Horticulture Development Strategy.

UFEA highlighted the importance of regular dialogue between Government and industry to ensure that sector priorities, challenges, and opportunities are well understood and addressed.

The meeting provided a valuable platform for building stronger linkages between Government, the private sector, research institutions, and academia. Both parties expressed interest in maintaining engagement and working together to support the competitiveness and sustainable growth of Uganda's floriculture industry.

The engagement marks an important step towards fostering closer collaboration and creating a foundation for future discussions on issues critical to the development of the flower sector.

3.4 Second Annual Crop Life Symposium 2026: Updates



On 20 May 2026, UFEA participated in the 2nd Annual CropLife Uganda Symposium, which brought together regulators, agrochemical manufacturers, researchers, farmers, and exporters to discuss emerging trends in crop protection and sustainable agriculture.

Discussions focused on the importance of efficient, science-based regulatory systems in ensuring timely access to safe and effective agricultural technologies. Participants highlighted the need to accelerate the registration of innovative crop protection products, strengthen regional harmonization, and improve access to alternatives as certain agrochemicals are phased out or restricted.

CropLife Uganda also called for broader participation of agro-input dealers within the association as a means of strengthening industry self-regulation, promoting responsible stewardship, and supporting efforts to combat counterfeit agricultural inputs. Such initiatives are of particular importance to the flower sector, which relies on access to genuine, high-quality crop protection products to maintain productivity and meet export market requirements.

The symposium provided an important platform for dialogue between Government and industry and reinforced the value of collaboration in addressing regulatory, crop protection, and sustainability challenges affecting Uganda's agricultural sector.

4.0 PARTNERSHIPS

4.1 UFEA and Makerere Advance Skills Development Collaboration

On 15 April 2026, UFEA, in collaboration with Makerere University, held a follow-up technical engagement at Selecta Wagagai to advance collaboration on demand-driven skills development for the floriculture sector.
The meeting focused on aligning proposed short courses with sector job roles and skills needs, while reinforcing industry–academia collaboration in development of practical, industry-relevant training programs.
A field tour provided insights into production systems, sustainability initiatives, and technical operations, while highlighting priority skills gaps in areas such as biological crop protection, water treatment, and greenhouse systems.
Participants agreed on next steps for training needs assessment, curriculum development and implementation, marking an important shift from dialogue to practical action under the UFEA–Makerere partnership.

Agreed actions

- Makerere University to develop departmental questionnaires
- Selecta Wagagai to share competence mapping tools
- UFEA to consolidate and share farm-based training needs
- Feedback on training needs from all teams
- Initiation of budgeting by Makerere based on participant numbers and modules

Department Name	Roles	Technical Committee members responsible
Production	Crop protection, propagation, crop management, crop maintenance	*UFEA, Charles Omulo, John Ouma, Jonathan Mugweri, Osbert Taremwa*
Technical	Irrigation, electrical systems, machinery, greenhouse structures, construction/civil works	*UFEA, Charles Omulo, John Ouma, Jonathan Mugweri, Osbert Taremwa, , Chris, Herbert*
Logistics	Packing, cold rooms, storage, transport, planning	*UFEA, Joseph Balondemu, Shamim Kavuma, Ojok Simon*
Finance	Accounting, audit, procurement, reporting	*UFEA, Joseph Balondemu, Shamim Kavuma*
HR & Administration	OHS and staff welfare	*UFEA, Joseph Balondemu, Ojok, Shamim Kavuma*
Compliance & QMS	Standards and laboratory functions	*UFEA, Joseph Balondemu, Ojok, Shamim Kavuma*
Research & Development	Data analysis, research methods, reporting	*UFEA, Charles Omulo, John Ouma, Jonathan Mugweri, Osbert Taremwa*

Department Mapping to be led by technical committee in training/skills Needs Assessment



UFEA Technical Committee with Makerere University Team led by Dr. Okello Cyrus

5.0 TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

5.1 UFEA Members Strengthen ESG Understanding Through FUE Training

UFEA participated in a training on Sustainability Reporting in the ESG Era facilitated by the Federation of Uganda Employers, bringing together farm representatives from Human Resources and Compliance departments. The session focused on enhancing understanding of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles and their growing importance in business operations and reporting.

The training highlighted the shift from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a voluntary activity to ESG as a key business requirement driven by regulations, international market standards, and investor expectations. Participants were encouraged to view ESG beyond compliance and recognise its role in improving business performance, risk management, and market access.

Community engagement emerged as a key area of discussion, with emphasis placed on maintaining consistent and proactive relationships with surrounding communities to build trust and support long-term sustainability.

The session also underscored the importance of integrating ESG across the value chain, strengthening reporting systems, and aligning with international frameworks such as IFC standards and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Members were encouraged to continue strengthening ESG integration within their organisations as part of sustainable business growth and competitiveness.



6.0 EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENTS

6.1 Work Redefined: Are Flower Farms Ready for the Digital Workplace?

UFEA recently participated in a sensitisation by the Federation of Uganda Employers on employer readiness for the digital age—highlighting emerging risks and responsibilities as workplaces evolve.

With increasing use of remote work, digital platforms, and cloud-based systems, employers face growing compliance gaps, particularly in data protection, employee supervision, and occupational safety. Current legal frameworks provide limited guidance, placing greater responsibility on employers to establish internal controls.

Key risks identified include weak data protection systems, informal remote work arrangements, overtime claims, employee burnout, and digital misconduct on communication platforms.

The session underscored a clear message for employers: digital work arrangements do not reduce responsibility. Employers must formalize policies, align contracts, strengthen data protection, and shift toward performance-based management systems.

For UFEA member farms, this presents both a risk and an opportunity—to proactively adapt systems, build capacity, and strengthen compliance in an increasingly digital operating environment.

7.0 JNC PROGRESS UPDATE

7.1 UFEA – NOTU Dialogue Meeting 27-4-2026

The mediation meeting convened by NOTU for Uganda Horticultural Industrial, Service Providers Allied Workers Union (UHISPAWU) and Uganda Flowers Exporters Association (UFEA) to resolve a disagreement in the JNC negotiations which stalled since October 2025. UFEA sought the intervention and guidance from NOTU on matters concerning mutual respect between the negotiating parties in the Joint Negotiation Council (JNC), following disrespectful, aggressive and indiscipline in behaviour by Union during negotiation meeting on 18th September 2025, an act that stalled the negotiation process.

The two parties committed to continuing the negotiation process while exhibiting high levels of respect during future engagements.

8.0 UPCOMING EVENTS

- Engagement meeting with ministry of water to review the commercial flower farm integrated catchment management partnership – Date TBC
- Training on import procedures and PVOC exemption by UNBS – 5th June 2026
- Training on OHS and Decent Work – 19th June 2026
- Export and Production teams learning session on EU requirements and additional declarations on the phytosanitary certificates **- June 2026.**

Your Feedback column

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