

NEWSLETTER JULY- AUGUST 2024



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UGANDA FLOWERS EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION

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ED'S MESSAGE

Dear Esteemed Members,

I am pleased to extend the third issue of the UFEA Newsletter. In this issue, you will be informed of the on-going activities in the Secretariat.

In this issue there are updates on: the new EU requirements on FCM in cut roses, MAAIF caution to farms, reports on various lobby/networking activities, Capacity building activities and Updates on the Employer/Union negotiations.

Please be encouraged to check out the Uganda flowers catalogue by scanning the QR code using your smart phone camera or smart scanner or QR scanner options on your smart phone settings; a link will appear, open it and follow the instructions till you download the catalogue. You will be amazed at the information and best practices highlighted by individual farms.

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PHYTOSANITARY COMPLIANCE

FCM in cut roses from Africa: New EU requirements to enter into force from 26 April 2025

The new regulation (EU) 2024/2004 was published on 26 July 2024 in the EU Official Journal. This Regulation introduces, amongst others, additional phytosanitary requirements on cut roses originating from Africa prior to export to the EU, due to risks of introduction of False Codling Moth (FCM) into the EU territory. The new regulation is an amendment of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072 as regards the listing of pests and rules on the introduction into, and movement within, the Union territory of plants, plant products and other objects.

It should be noted that the initial draft of this EU Regulation had foreseen entry into force **6 months** after publication in the EU Official Journal. However requests for an extension of the transition period to a minimum of 1 year were put forward by UNION FLEURS, other key industry stakeholders and key origin countries in Africa during the consultation process and these were taken into account by the European Commission and EU Member States. The transition period was therefore adjusted to **9 months** in the final text of the EU Regulation, specifying that the new EU requirements will enter into force on **26 April 2025**

MAAIF warns on increase of interceptions

MAAIF has reported to UFEA of a concern the repeated failure by most farms to share corrective action plans and reluctance to implement measures agreed upon during MAAIF monthly audits. MAAIF is currently reviewing all farm audit reports, responses received on recommendations and will most likely enforce their mandate on farms whose non-compliances identified during audits are found to be repetitive. Their mandate allows MAAIF to locally intercept a product especially if it is evident those recommendations from past audits continuously not being implemented. Interception could include abrupt closure of sections of production site like green houses or entire site.

UFEA urges farms to share corrective action plans on a timely basis and implement recommendations agreed upon during audits. We request for increased cooperation from farms so as to keep up the good performance they have exhibited and self-regulation.

COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS

Closure of MPS GAP Non-conformance on Chemical Labelling - 23rd August 2024

In June 2024, the annual MPS certification audits revealed a significant major non-conformance related to chemical labelling under the MPS (GAP) scheme. Auditors found that chemical labels did not specify their use on crops in cuttings farms as required by the MPS GAP standard.

Recognizing the complexity of the issue, the farms sought assistance from the Uganda Flower Exporters Association (UFEA).

In response, UFEA provided MPS ECAS with a comprehensive explanation of the process for importing crop protection products (CPPs) by its member farms. The association also highlighted the concession agreement between UFEA and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries (MAAIF) concerning the importation of plant protection products (PPPs) not registered locally.

Following the submission of all relevant documentation, MPS ECAS reviewed the information and approved the resolution of the non-conformance. This collaborative effort underscores the commitment of both the farms and UFEA to maintaining compliance with MPS standards and ensuring effective chemical management practices.

We appreciate the hard work and cooperation of all parties involved in resolving this matter and look forward to continued adherence to requirements of standards, like MPS GAP standards.

UFEA is available to offer support for your compliance through refresher trainings, obtaining documentation evidence and seeking government intervention, when required.

EU Deforestation - Free Products Regulation - EUDR

The EUDR aims to combat the EU's role in driving deforestation through its demand for commodities linked to deforestation.

UFEA participated in an EU-EAC Market Access Program Upgrade Phase 2 (MARKUP II) webinar organized by the International Trade Centre (ITC). The EU Deforestation-Free Products Regulation (EUDR), will forbid agricultural products (coffee, cocoa) from entering the EU if they originate from deforested areas after December 31, 2024.

While flowers are not covered by the EUDR, other EU regulations, such as the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive and Human Rights Due Diligence, will impact the flower sector due to their comprehensive due diligence and supply chain requirements. Additionally, the EU Green Deal addresses deforestation and other environmental concerns through strategies, budgets, and legal instruments designed to promote a green transition and protect citizens and the environment.

Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation for Uganda - Mission II (29th July - 2nd August 2024)

UFEA took part in a five-day Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) to assess the National Plant Protection Organisation's (NPPO) ability to manage phytosanitary controls. This evaluation built on a prior assessment from May 2024, which had identified several weaknesses such as inadequate NPPO structure, infrastructure, human resources, and data management systems.

The second PCE focused on strategic planning by conducting a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities Threats (SWOT) analysis of the NPPO's phytosanitary control capacity. The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) facilitators introduced the Logical Framework approach for project design, monitoring, and evaluation.

UFEA participated in the national dialogue and training (12th -16th August 2024) on preparedness and early response to pest outbreaks. Training of agricultural experts in PRA (pest risk analysis) on skills for practice/implementation of PRA.



WAGAGAI HOSTS INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION (IPPC) SECRETARY GENERAL

On 8th July 2024, Wagagai hosted a meeting with IPPC Secretary General, MAAIF and Private Sector (UFEA and Hortifresh). The IPPC representatives were Dr Osama El-Lissy (Secretary General of IPPC) and Dr. Arop Deng Team Leader of the Integration and Support Team (IST)

The meeting was aimed at demonstrating to the IPPC officials, the NPPO's capacity to implement phytosanitary control in the export and in the surveillance of regulated pests with the help of digital tools.

Both UFEA and MAAIF hailed the good working relationship between the flower sector and MAAIF and which was noted to be the major reason for the high levels of regulatory compliance in the flower sector.

UFEA Chairman highlighted a few key challenges that the flower sector grapples with. These include:

- The high cost of *Xylella fastidiosa* surveillance
- The sector is largely on its own with no special consideration as most of the costs are born by the companies themselves

Wagagai demonstrated the process of applying for an e-phytosanitary certificate for exports.

MAAIF demonstrated the use of the Africa Phytosanitary Program (APP) app in the *Xylella fastidiosa* surveillance process. Then IPPC officials witnessed the demonstration of the use of the APP tool during *Xylella* surveillance. The demonstration was done by MAAIF inspectors in a Green House as well as in the laboratory. Demonstration involved showing the sampling techniques, Sample handling, Sample traceability and analysis techniques.

Dr. Osama expressed gratitude at the amount of work done by Uganda; he said that Uganda has implemented everything required of her by the IPPC. He was intrigued by the Public Private Partnership spirit demonstrated by the collaboration between UFEA and MAAIF adding that this will help the flower sector goals align with the goals of the IPPC: To protect and To facilitate safe trade. He also thanked Wagagai for the hospitality and congratulated her for the excellent business conduct and social responsibility.



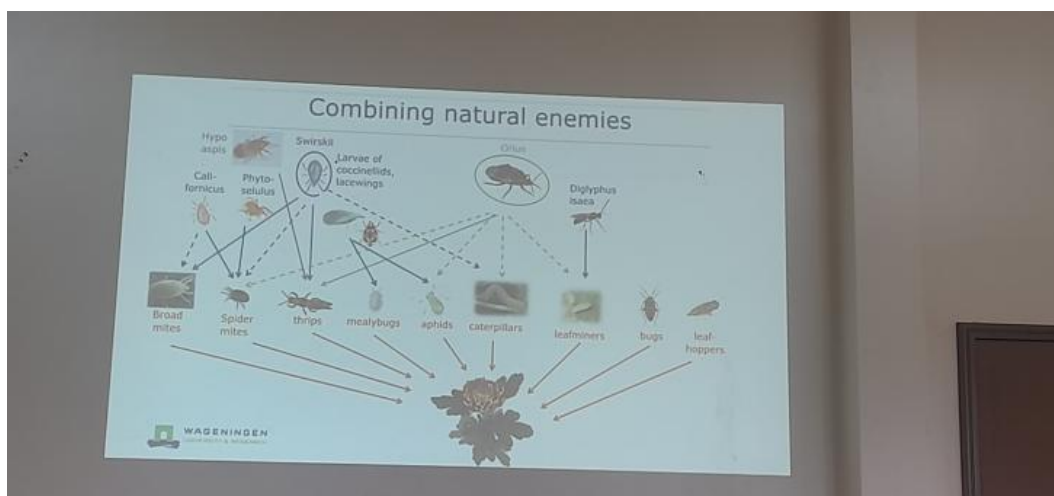
Dr. Osama El-Lissy visit to Wagagai

THE FUTURE - PROOF AND BIOCONTROL BASED CHRYSANTHEMUM PRODUCTION PROJECT FIRST LOCAL MEETING ON 11TH JULY 2024

Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute Kabanyolo hosted the first local meeting for the "Future Proof and Biocontrol Based Chrysanthemum Production" project. The project's goal is to reduce pesticide use in chrysanthemum production by using generalist predators, which can feed on multiple food sources, instead of specialist predators whose food sources are specific. Key participants included Wageningen University & Research, Makerere University, NARO NaCCRI, and partner Cuttings Farms like Dekker Chrysanten, Xclusive, Fiduga and Deliflor.

A Makerere University PhD student is part of the project team and will handle data collection on farms, while another project team member is a researcher from Wageningen – Green House Horticulture; he will study greenhouse micro-climates. The project will focus on challenge of thrips, a major pest in both Uganda and the Netherlands, and aims to manage this along with other pests. Initial tasks include pest inventory, experimental design, and evaluation. Pest samples got from the farms participating in the project are currently being analyzed in the Netherlands.

Dr. Michael Hillary Otim from NARO suggested consulting the Ministry of Agriculture (MAAIF) on insect sample transfer/movement across borders like in case of the need to conduct analyses outside Uganda.



First local meeting on biocontrol based chrysanthemum production project

Consultative Stakeholder Meeting on Draft NSSF Regulations: Key Highlights

On August 9, 2024, UFEA actively participated in a crucial stakeholder consultative meeting concerning the Draft NSSF (Voluntary Contributions and Benefits) Regulations, 2024. This meeting marks a significant step in refining the framework for voluntary contributions to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), following its recent amendments.

In 2023, the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (MoGLSD), in collaboration with NSSF and a Technical Working Group (TWG), crafted the draft regulations to facilitate the implementation of voluntary contributions under the National Social Security Fund Cap 230. The objective is to enhance the flexibility and accessibility of the fund for contributors.

Stakeholder Meeting on National Policy on HIV/AIDS and TB in the Workplace

On August 14, 2024, stakeholder consultative meeting took place, marking a major leap forward for Uganda's National Policy on HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis (TB) in the workplace! This dynamic event showcased a united front dedicated to transforming workplace health standards and tackling these pressing issues head-on.

Key Objectives Driving Change

This policy is set to revolutionize the workplace environment with its bold objectives:

1. Integrate TB with HIV/AIDS: Seamlessly include TB within the existing HIV/AIDS framework for cohesive management.
2. Eliminate Stigma: Fight against stigma and discrimination related to these diseases.
3. Boost Access to Services: Enhance access to prevention, treatment, and support services.
4. Prioritize Budgets: Secure dedicated funding for HIV/AIDS and TB initiatives.
5. Address Inequities: Tackle disparities affecting workers dealing with these health issues.

With the collaborative spirit and unwavering commitment demonstrated, Uganda is on track for transformative changes in workplace health. Stay tuned for more exciting updates as we continue to advance this crucial initiative!

Exciting Launch of GROW Loan Facility for MSME women entrepreneurs

On August 28, 2024, Uganda launched the GROW Loan Facility to support women entrepreneurs, a significant step in enhancing female business leadership. Funded by a World Bank grant of USD 217 million, this initiative is part of the Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) project. The project aims to improve access to entrepreneurial services for women, especially in both host and refugee districts, aligning with Uganda's National Development Plan III (NDP III) to boost women's economic empowerment, leadership, and decision-making.



H.E Vice President giving her remarks before officially launching

CAPACITY BUILDING

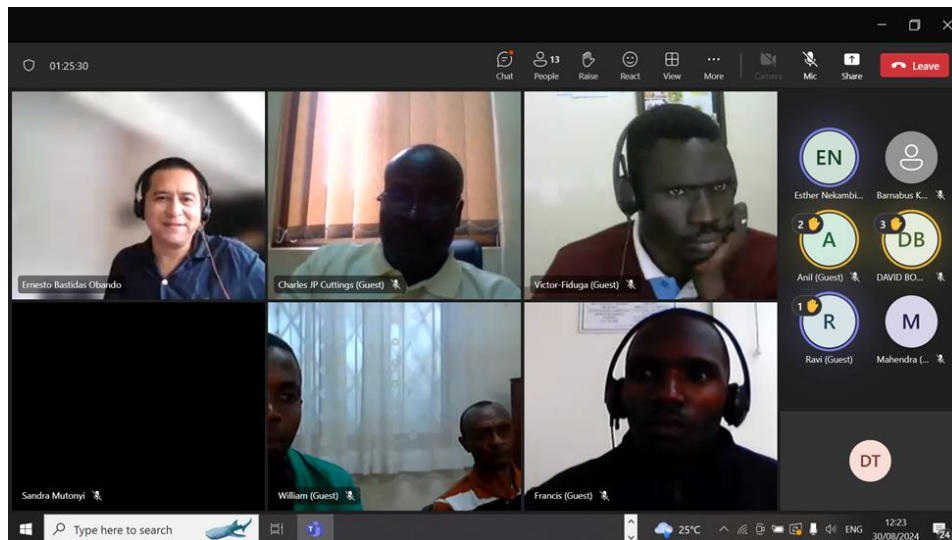
Engagement Meeting between UFEA, Flower farms and Eurofins - 30th August 2024

On August 30, 2024, UFEA coordinated an important engagement meeting with Eurofins, a global leader in analytical testing, who has been a long-time partner with Uganda's flower sector, providing essential analyses for various needs on the farms. These tests cover a broad spectrum, from water and soil to plant analysis, crucial for optimizing farm outputs.

He detailed some of the advanced testing techniques employed at Eurofins laboratories and announced a new focus on soil biology, complementing their existing water and nutrient sample analysis services.

The meeting marked a positive step towards improving collaboration and addressing the needs of Uganda's flower farms, setting the stage for a more effective partnership with Eurofins.

For more information on Eurofins services or upcoming meetings, please contact UFEA for more information.



Meeting participants for the UFEA -Eurofins engagement meeting

Building Workshop on Responsible Business Conduct 16th to 17th July 2024

UFEA attended a two-day workshop on Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) organized by the Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) and the International Organization of Employers (IOE). The workshop, involving local employers, government representative, Federation of Uganda Employers and Employer Organizations from other African countries. The workshop highlighted focused on the impact of businesses on people and the environment.

Emerging RBC legislation emphasizes disclosure, due diligence, and market access laws, with the EU supporting RBC in Uganda, especially in the coffee sector through initiatives like the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) and the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR).



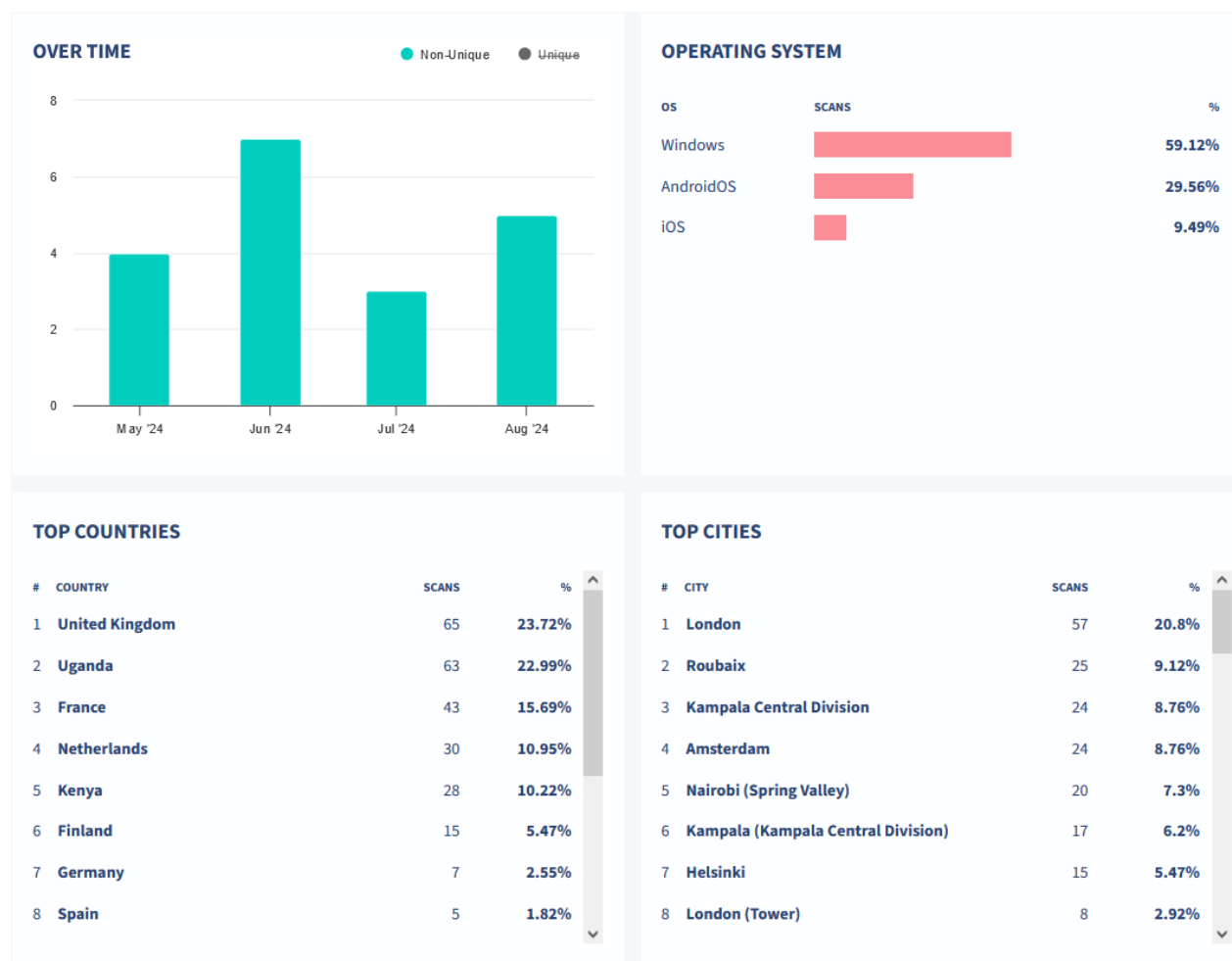
EMPLOYERS AND UNION NEGOTIATIONS

The final of a series of Joint Negotiation Council (JNC) meetings on salaries and wages took place on 22nd July 2024. The negotiations were finalized during the meeting; the CBA is now out to the various farms for ratifying by the Management Heads at the respective farms.

PLANNED EVENTS TO BE CONFIRMED BEFORE DECEMBER 2024

- Engagement meeting between UFEA members and URA
- Training of UFEA members on the application of EU GSP rules of origin and the use of the REX system
- Training of farms on ESG in September
- Training of farms in developing Water Source Protection plan in September 2024.

Statistics of viewers of the Uganda Flower Farms Catalogue (May 2024 to date)



Your Feedback column

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