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From Uganda

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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF UGANDA FLOWERS EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION (UFEA)



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Message from the Executive Director

Dear Members and Partners,

Welcome to Issue 4 of our newsletter, covering June and July 2026, two months in which our industry moved quickly to keep pace with a regulatory environment that shows no sign of slowing down.

On the compliance front, we worked closely with MAAIF to interpret and disseminate the EU's revised RNQP Additional Declarations, and we are pleased that the European Commission has formally acknowledged Uganda's updated rose traceability codes; a milestone that keeps our growers firmly inside the EU market. At the same time, two significant pieces of national legislation, the Employment (Amendment) Act, 2026 and the Occupational Safety and Health (Amendment) Act, 2025, now require every member farm to revisit contracts, HR manuals and safety systems. I encourage all of you to treat this not as an administrative burden but as an opportunity: farms that get ahead of these requirements will operate with less risk, retain their workforce more effectively, and strengthen their standing with EU buyers who increasingly scrutinize labour and safety practice as closely as phytosanitary compliance.

Beyond regulation, this period reminded us that our sector's strength rests on its people. Our partnership with the Uganda AIDS Commission brought free HIV, TB and general health screening directly to workers at Pearl Flowers, and our continued dialogue with MAAIF on agrochemical transition shows what is possible when government and industry sit at the same table with a shared goal. I want to thank every farm that opened its doors, released staff for training, or engaged constructively in these processes for UFEA's advocacy is only as strong as the members who stand behind it.

Looking ahead, I invite you to join us for the next training on OSH Amendment Act, and to save the date for our Owners' Get-Together in September, details to follow. These gatherings matter: they are where policy meets practice, and where we hear directly from you about what UFEA should prioritize next.

As always, UFEA's door and my inbox remain open. Thank you for your continued trust and partnership.

Esther Nekambi

Executive Director

1.0 REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

1.1 Phytosanitary Control: MAAIF Updates Regulated Non-Quarantine Pests (RNQPs) Additional Declarations for Plants for Planting (Cuttings)

UFEA in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), organised a training on 1 July 2026 to update flower exporters on changes to European Union plant health requirements affecting plants for planting.

The training provided an opportunity for UFEA members to review and provide input on the proposed Regulated Non-Quarantine Pest (RNQP) Additional Declarations required under EU Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2026/1110, which amended Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072. Following this engagement, MAAIF finalized the revised crop list and updated RNQP Additional Declarations and shared with UFEA to disseminate to member farms to guide compliance.

Why This Matters

The revised requirements took effect on 6 July 2026. Exporters must ensure that phytosanitary certificates carry the correct Additional Declaration for the relevant crop. Incorrect or missing declarations may result in delays, interception or rejection of consignments at EU Border Control Points, disrupting market access and increasing costs.

Key Actions for Member Farms

- Use the final revised crop list and updated RNQP Additional Declarations shared.
- Ensure all phytosanitary certificates comply with the new requirements.
- Strengthen monitoring for RNQPs affecting your crops.
- Maintain full traceability of planting material from mother plants to export.
- Submit required monitoring and test results through the appropriate MAAIF/NPPO channels.

Protecting Uganda's Export Reputation

The updated RNQP Additional Declarations provide exporters with clear guidance for complying with the EU's revised plant health requirements. By applying the revised declarations correctly and strengthening farm-level compliance, UFEA members will help safeguard uninterrupted access to the European market and reinforce Uganda's reputation as a reliable supplier of high-quality cuttings.

1.2 Submission of Cut-flower Traceability codes: A quarterly requirement for Rose Farms

UFEA is pleased to inform members that the European Commission formally acknowledged Uganda's updated production traceability codes for rose exports to the European Union.

Following the submission by Uganda's National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) on 6 July 2026, the European Commission confirmed receipt of the updated list and notified Uganda

that it had been shared with all EU Member States. The updated traceability codes are therefore recognized and in use across the EU.

Production traceability codes are an important requirement for EU market access, enabling cut flowers to be traced back to their production sites and supporting compliance with EU plant health regulations.

UFEA appreciates the cooperation from farms and positive collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), the NPPO for the successful update of the traceability code database. Members are encouraged to continue using their approved traceability codes consistently and to share them with their European importers and agents where necessary. Please note that this update is a quarterly exercise led by UFEA; whenever called upon, your quick cooperation is paramount.

1.3 Employment (Amendment) Act, 2026: What UFEA Members need to know.

The New Amended Employment Act changes require review of HR practices, policies and management approaches.

The Act, which was assented to by the President on 29 April 2026, introduces 11 major amendments. For the floriculture sector, these changes have direct implications on workforce management, employee relations, compliance risks and operational decision-making.

UFEA in partnership with the Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE), recently organized a training for members on the Employment (Amendment) Act, 2026. Held on 21 July 2026, the session brought together Human Resource Managers & Officers, Other Senior Managers and Middle Level Managers to understand how the new law affects workplace management and employer responsibilities.

Why UFEA Members Should Pay Attention

Flower farms should urgently review their employment contracts, HR manuals, workplace policies and management practices to ensure alignment with the new requirements.

Key Areas Requiring Action

i. Casual and Seasonal Workers

The new law limits continuous casual employment to six months. Employers can no longer avoid this requirement by briefly ending and renewing casual engagements.

Continued engagement beyond the legal limit may create exposure where the employment relationship is considered permanent.

ii. Workplace Harassment

Sexual harassment and workplace harassment have received greater legal attention. Every employer must have a clearly displayed Sexual Harassment Policy with reporting, investigation and confidentiality procedures.

The law also criminalizes intimidation and harassment, including verbal, written or physical conduct that humiliates, threatens or degrades employees. Workplace communications, including digital messages such as WhatsApp, may be considered evidence in employment disputes.

***Management action**: Ensure policies are updated and all managers and supervisors are trained on respectful workplace conduct.*

iii. Termination and Dismissal

The amendments provide clearer separation between termination and dismissal.

Dismissal relates to misconduct and requires due process, including a hearing before a decision is made. Employers must also clearly distinguish between absenteeism and abscondment. Abscondment which involves absence of more than 30 days, may lead to dismissal, while absenteeism should be managed through disciplinary procedures.

Failure to follow proper procedures may result in claims for wrongful dismissal, compensation or reinstatement orders.

iv. Sick Leave and Employee Welfare

The law provides clearer requirements for managing medical incapacity:

- Two months' full pay during sick leave;
- Four months' half pay, subject to medical recommendations.

Employers should review their HR manuals and ensure managers understand the correct process for handling prolonged illness.

v. Migrant Workers, Redundancy and Severance

The amendments introduce provisions on migrant workers and reinforce the need for proper documentation and fair employment practices.

For restructuring, employers must comply with the required redundancy notification process, including notifying the Labour Commissioner and relevant representatives at least 30 days before collective termination.

Severance pay has also been standardized, providing a clearer formula of one month's salary for each completed year of service where applicable.

Management Compliance Checklist

- Audit casual and seasonal employment arrangements.
- Update employment contracts, HR manuals and policies.
- Review sexual harassment and workplace conduct policies.
- Train managers and supervisors on the new legal requirements.
- Strengthen disciplinary processes and documentation.
- Review redundancy and severance procedures.

Turning Compliance into Better Workplaces

The Employment (Amendment) Act, 2026, presents both responsibilities and an opportunity for employers to strengthen workplace practices. Proactive compliance will reduce legal risks, improve employee relations and support sustainable business operations.

1.4 Occupational Safety and Health Amendment (Act) 2025.

Extract from the Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) Policy Brief

What You Need to Know

- Applies to all employers, regardless of workforce size.
- Annual OSH audits are now mandatory, conducted by practitioners licensed by the Commissioner for OSH.
- Regular workplace risk assessments are now a legal requirement.
- Health surveillance programmes must be established for employees exposed to occupational hazards.
- Safety and Health Committees and employee safety representatives should be established and supported.
- Machinery and equipment operators must be appropriately trained and certified.
- Employers must maintain accurate records of accidents, incidents and occupational diseases.
- Workplaces must hold a valid OSH Registration Certificate, renewable every three years.
- Non-compliance may attract substantial penalties.

Next steps

UFEA is in process of organizing training for members to further understand OSH (Amendment) Act 2025

1.5 New EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR)

UFEA would like to inform members that the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) will become largely applicable from 12 August 2026. The regulation introduces harmonized packaging requirements across all EU Member States and applies to all businesses placing packaged products on the EU market, including exporters.

The PPWR aims to reduce packaging waste, improve recyclability, promote reuse, and strengthen producer responsibility. While many of the more stringent requirements such as recycled content targets, recyclability standards, and certain single-use packaging bans will be phased in from 2030 onwards, exporters should begin reviewing their packaging systems now to ensure future compliance.

UFEA encourages members to assess their current packaging practices and work closely with packaging suppliers and EU buyers to prepare for the new requirements and maintain seamless access to the European market.

2.0 LOBBYING AND ADVOCANY

2.1 UFEA–MAAIF Dialogue

Meant to Strengthen Collaboration between MAAIF-DCIC, UFEA and Farms.

UFEA held a dialogue with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) on 24 June 2026 to address key regulatory, phytosanitary and operational issues affecting the flower Industry in Uganda.

The dialogue focused on four priority areas: agrochemical transitions, regulatory engagement, sustainable production and export compliance.

2.1.1 Agrochemical Transition

MAAIF updated members on the review of 18 agrochemical molecules, resulting in the phase-out of nine products where alternatives are available and restriction of nine others where alternatives remain limited. UFEA raised concern of not being involvement during the review process and no communication from MAAIF on practical transition periods to enable farms to test and adopt suitable alternatives. MAAIF committed to continued engagement with UFEA, CropLife Uganda and input suppliers to support this transition.

MAAIF committed to involving UFEA in future technical consultations and improving communication on regulatory changes affecting exporters.

2.1.2 Support on Production, Importation and Use of Biological Solutions.

UFEA members highlighted the challenges faced while introducing; through importation and registration of biological products which are critical alternative and their increasing importance as a solution to conventional chemicals. MAAIF acknowledged the need and delays due to long trial periods and encouraged farms who desire to use these products to use regional registration pathways through the East African Community (EAC) to support quick access to approved products within the region. This should reduce length of product trials in Uganda.

2.1.3 Compliance with Export requirements and regulations

MAAIF highlighted common causes of export non-compliance during the year to date as mainly incorrect Additional Declarations, missing certification information, incorrect botanical names, traceability gaps and weaknesses identified during farm audits.

Interceptions due to harmful organisms have greatly reduced due to implementation and improvement in systems approach in the flower sector. Monthly and export audits by MAAIF have supported great compliance.

Greater improvement is expected with full development of the new Fresh Handling Limited (FHL) facility, which is intended to bring MAAIF inspection and laboratory services closer to exporters, with the aim of reducing delays and improving certification efficiency.

Action Points for UFEA Members

- Review agrochemical stocks against the published list and plan for transitions.
- Engage suppliers on approved alternatives and sustainable solutions.
- Strengthen traceability, pest scouting records and export documentation.
- Address farm audit findings, including greenhouse structures, hygiene and waste management.
- Ensure compliance with updated EU phytosanitary requirements.

2.1.4 Strengthening Government–Industry Partnership

The dialogue reaffirmed the importance of collaboration between government and industry. UFEA appreciates MAAIF's commitment to closer engagement and timely communication on matters affecting exporters.



John Mwanja - Assistant Commissioner Agrochemicals



Ephrance Tumuboine – Assistant Commissioner Phytosanitary Inspection & Quarantine

3.0 PARTNERSHIPS

3.1 Collaboration with Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC) to scale up Integrated Health Services within the sector.

UFEA has had engagement with Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC) to build a Partnership to support the services to address HIV and AIDS, TB and Malaria interventions in the flower industry. Programme for visiting farms will be shared after conclusive discussion with UAC.

To pre-test the collaboration, UFEA in partnership with the Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC), organized a successful workplace health outreach at Pearl Flowers Ltd in Rubaare, Ntungamo District on 26 June 2026. The outreach formed part of UAC's efforts to strengthen HIV prevention and promote healthier workplaces within Uganda's floriculture sector.

The campaign combined health education with free integrated health services, recognizing that the majority of flower farm employees fall within the 15–49-year age group, which remains the most affected by HIV. Workers received awareness sessions on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), stigma and discrimination, while also accessing a range of free health services, including HIV,

Hepatitis B, syphilis and STI screening, TB screening, blood sugar testing, and hypertension screening.

The event attracted an impressive level of participation, thanks to the strong support and mobilization by the management of Pearl Flowers Ltd. By bringing essential health services directly to the workplace, employees were able to access information, counselling, and screening in a convenient and supportive environment.

UFEA extends its sincere appreciation to the management of Pearl Flowers Ltd for hosting the outreach and to the Uganda AIDS Commission and its partners for delivering these vital services.



Group photo with UAC team



Employees undergoing testing



Employees Awareness Session

3.2 Makerere University -MOU Activities

The technical working group developed a draft which was submitted by UFEA to Makerere University for review. A questionnaire will be share with farms in the next week to zero down on the Capacity Needs Assessment which aims to identify knowledge gaps, skills need, and capacity development priorities among management and production staff within flower farms in Uganda. The

information collected will be used to design a relevant and effective training program that responds to organizational and individual performance needs.

4.0 TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

4.1 UNBS Strengthen UFEA Members' Import Compliance

UFEA in partnership with the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), organised a training on 5 June 2026 to strengthen members' understanding of import inspection procedures and logistics quality assurance.

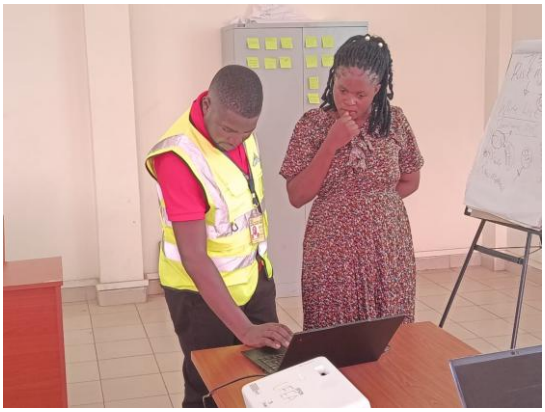
Opening the session, Mathias Kaleebi, UNBS Focal Person for the flower sector, highlighted the progress made through UFEA's engagement with UNBS, including improved access to exemptions for selected imported production inputs. He encouraged members to use the UNBS digital platform to apply for exemptions, track applications and ensure every import transaction is completed with a valid Import Clearance Certificate (ICC).

The training also covered import inspection procedures, quality assurance and compliance requirements, emphasising that proper documentation and effective logistics management help reduce delays, avoid penalties and support efficient trade.

Key Takeaways

- Use the UNBS online platform to apply for exemptions and track import applications.
- Ensure every import is supported by a valid Import Clearance Certificate (ICC).
- Work with reputable clearing agents and maintain complete import documentation.
- Strengthen logistics and quality assurance systems to improve compliance and efficiency.

The training reaffirmed the value of continued collaboration between UFEA and UNBS in supporting member farms to navigate import requirements and strengthen compliance.





Participants interacting with the UNBS online system for import clearance and PVOC exemption

4.2 Occupational Safety and Health

On 19 June 2026, the Uganda Flowers Exporters Association (UFEA), in collaboration with the Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE), conducted a training on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and Decent Work for HR Officers, Health and Safety Officers and Health and Safety Committee members from member farms.

A key message from the training was that occupational safety and health has evolved beyond preventing workplace accidents. Today's OSH function also encompasses environmental management, workplace security, employee wellbeing, ESG commitments, ISO standards and broader legal compliance.

Participants were urged to review their OSH policies and systems to align with the Occupational Safety and Health (Amendment) Act, 2025. This includes preparing disease surveillance plans, conducting annual workplace safety audits, meeting statutory reporting obligations and ensuring safety practitioners and equipment operators comply with the new registration and licensing requirements.



Participants being taken through key Amendments

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark Your Calendar

- UFEA ED Farm Visit to Aurum Roses - 6th August 2026
- Owner's get together @ Xclusive Cuttings farm - preferred date by members is Friday 18th September 2026

Members are encouraged to visit UFEA website and give feedback on content: www.ufea.co.ug

Your Feedback column

We value your input. Please share your feedback and suggestions on this issue through our short survey:

https://forms.gle/QgXyfNdwb9wMLibJ7

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