



FOSCU SPEARHEADS AFLATOXIN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN TO SAFEGUARD UGANDA'S FOOD VALUE CHAIN

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Exploring The Nexus Between the Aflatoxin Burden in Uganda's Food System & Social-Economic Transformation



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Aflatoxins are a Critical Public Health and Economic Concern: Reflecting on Practical and Context-based Solutions to kick out Aflatoxins from Uganda



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Recognizing the persistent and escalating threat of aflatoxin contamination in Uganda, the Food Safety Coalition of Uganda (FoSCU) orchestrated a month-long awareness and advocacy campaign in February 2025. This targeted initiative aimed to educate and empower stakeholders across the entire food value chain, from farmers and aggregators to transporters, processors, marketers, consumers, and government officials.

Amplifying the Message: FoSCU's Television Outreach

The campaign's primary platform was Humanist TV Africa, where expert-led discussions were broadcast every Friday throughout February. The broadcasts featured prominent figures within FoSCU and the broader food safety community:

- **Prof. Kaaya Archileo:** A respected member of the FoSCU steering committee, bringing extensive research and academic expertise.
- **Mr. Kimera Henry:** CEO of CONSENT and Chairperson of the FoSCU steering committee, providing leadership and strategic direction.
- **Ms. Agnes Kirabo:** Executive Director of Food Rights Alliance, a FoSCU member, championing consumer rights and food security.
- **Mr. Bwambale Bernard:** FoSCU Coordinator, overseeing the campaign's implementation and ensuring its reach.

Key Themes and Focus Areas

The awareness campaign addressed critical aspects of aflatoxin contamination:

Risk Factors: Identifying the conditions and practices that contribute to aflatoxin development in crops.

Vulnerable Foods: Highlighting the specific foods commonly susceptible to aflatoxin contamination, such as maize, groundnuts, Rice, cassava, millet, sorghum, among others.

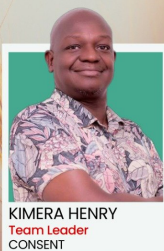
Contamination Practices: Exposing practices that increase the risk of aflatoxin contamination at different stages of the food value chain.

Health Impacts: Detailing the detrimental effects of aflatoxins on human and animal health, including liver damage, immune system suppression, and increased cancer risk, among others.

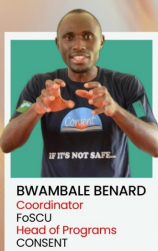
Socioeconomic Consequences: Examining the broader economic impacts of aflatoxin



The Effect of Aflatoxins on Animal Health and Productivity: Posing a Health Risk to Humans and Economic Loss to the Country



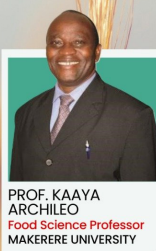
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contamination, including trade losses, reduced productivity, and increased healthcare costs.

Practical Solutions: Presenting actionable strategies for preventing and controlling aflatoxin contamination at each stage of the food value chain.

Challenges and Barriers Identified

During the campaign, several significant challenges hindering aflatoxin prevention and control efforts were identified:

- ➔ **Poor Agronomic Practices:** Inadequate soil management, improper planting techniques, and insufficient pest and disease control measures.
- ➔ **Suboptimal Post-Harvest Handling:** Deficiencies in drying, storage, and transportation practices, leading to increased fungal growth and aflatoxin production.
- ➔ **Limited Awareness and Capacity:** Lack of adequate knowledge and skills among food handlers regarding aflatoxin risks and mitigation strategies.
- ➔ **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Insufficient investment in infrastructure for aflatoxin testing, monitoring, and safe storage.
- ➔ **Weak Enforcement of Regulations:** Limited enforcement of existing food safety laws and regulations, leading to non-compliance with established standards.

A Call to Action for All Stakeholders

The campaign concluded with a clear call to action, urging various stakeholders to take proactive steps to prevent and control aflatoxin contamination:

- ➔ **Policymakers and Regulators:** Strengthen food safety regulations, allocate resources for aflatoxin control programs, and enforce compliance.
- ➔ **Farmers:** Adopt improved agronomic practices, implement proper post-harvest handling techniques, and utilize aflatoxin-resistant crop varieties.
- ➔ **Transporters:** Ensure proper storage and handling during transportation to prevent moisture buildup and fungal growth.
- ➔ **Food Aggregators and Processors:** Implement rigorous testing and sorting procedures to remove contaminated products and invest in proper storage facilities.
- ➔ **Researchers:** Conduct studies to identify effective aflatoxin control strategies and develop innovative technologies for aflatoxin detection and removal.
- ➔ **Civil Society Organizations:** Raise awareness, advocate for policy changes, and empower communities to implement aflatoxin prevention measures.
- ➔ **Religious and Cultural Leaders:** Promote food safety practices within their communities and advocate for the importance of aflatoxin control.
- ➔ **Consumers:** Demand safe food products, support businesses that prioritize food safety, and adopt safe food handling practices at home.

FoSCU's Ongoing Commitment

FoSCU reaffirms its unwavering commitment to continue driving awareness, building capacity, fostering research and innovation, and advocating for effective policies to combat aflatoxin contamination in Uganda's food supply. The coalition recognizes that aflatoxin control is a shared responsibility and remains dedicated to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to achieve a safer, healthier, and more prosperous future for all Ugandans.



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