



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE, ANIMAL
RESOURCES AND BIOSECURITY

NEWSLETTER

CoVAB

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**Makerere's Visitation
Committee Engages
CoVAB on Graduate
Training and Research**

**Makerere University
Scientists Develop
Uganda's First Anti Tick
Vaccine**

**Two PhD Positions
secured under Global
Health EDCTP3 DiDiDi
Project**

A word from the Principal



Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to strengthening partnerships, enhancing transparency in our processes, and aligning our work with international best practices.

Dear colleagues, students, partners, and friends,

As we reflect on the second quarter of 2026, I am proud to share the strides CoVAB has made in advancing our mission of transformative teaching, innovative research, and impactful outreach. This period has been marked by significant achievements that include groundbreaking research outputs that continue to position CoVAB as a leader in veterinary and biomedical sciences.

Our faculty and students have demonstrated resilience and creativity, contributing to national development while engaging with regional and global challenges. The outreach programs carried out this quarter reaffirm our commitment to community service, ensuring that the knowledge generated within our college

translates into tangible benefits for society.

Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to strengthening partnerships, enhancing transparency in our processes, and aligning our work with international best practices. Together, we will continue to nurture excellence and innovation, ensuring CoVAB remains a beacon of knowledge and service.

I extend my gratitude to all who contribute to our shared vision. Your efforts make CoVAB stronger and more impactful every day.

Warm regards,

Prof. Frank Norbert Mwiine
Principal, CoVAB

HIGHLIGHTS >>

INNOVATION. Makerere University, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), successfully concluded a five day regional training on sustainable tick control and acaricide resistance management.



EDITORIAL TEAM >>

Prof. Frank Norbert Mwiine, Principal | Prof. Robert Tweyongyere, Dean SVAR |
Dr. Claire M. Mugasa, Dean SBLS | Ms. Harriet Musinguzi, Principal Comm. Officer |
Mr. Brooks Musinguzi, IT Officer | Ms. Eunice Rukundo, Deputy Chief-PRO

CONTENTS >>

RESTORATION: Makerere University’s drive to revamp the Buyana Stock Farm is bearing fruit, with the Students Hotel nearing completion.



INSIDE >>



- 02 Sustainable Tick Control; FAO and Makerere University Drive Innovation in Tick Resistance Management
- 04 Makerere’s Visitation Committee Engages CoVAB on Graduate Training and Research
- 06 EU Funded MAGNETISE Project to Strengthen Gender Equality in Higher Education Across Sub Saharan Africa
- 07 Makerere University Scientists Develop Uganda’s First Anti Tick Vaccine
- 08 Two PhD Positions secured under Global Health EDCTP3 DiDiDi Project
- 10 Dr. Nassuna Maria Gorreti Retires from CoVAB

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS



Participants pose for a group photo in front of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB)

Sustainable Tick Control: FAO and Makerere University Drive Innovation in Tick Resistance Management

Makerere University, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), successfully concluded a five day regional training on sustainable tick control and acaricide resistance management. The program, held at the RTC Laboratory in the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB) from June 22–26, brought together veterinary professionals, researchers, and laboratory technicians from across East Africa.

Mr. Ezana Getahun Kassa, FAO Country Representative in Uganda, emphasized FAO's commitment to tackling acaricide resistance. He highlighted the organization's

“This is not only a scientific challenge but a socio economic issue that directly impacts farmer livelihoods, food security, and public health.”
Mr. Ezana Getahun Kassa

role in developing global guidelines, promoting integrated tick control approaches, and strengthening surveillance and diagnostic capacity.

“This is not only a scientific challenge but a socio economic issue that directly impacts farmer livelihoods, food security, and public health.” Mr. Ezana Getahun Kassa

He warned that tick resistance to commonly used acaricides is increasing, leading to higher infestations, greater incidence of tick borne diseases, and significant economic losses for livestock farmers. Uganda's progress in developing the anti tick vaccine, combined with the Evidence Based Acaricide Tick Control (EBATIC) strategy, was

highlighted as a milestone in reducing reliance on chemicals.

At the closing ceremony, Dr. Rose Ademun, Chief Veterinary Officer at MAAIF, called for stronger regional cooperation and improved surveillance systems.

“Without reliable diagnostic systems, producers may continue using ineffective acaricides, leading to increased resistance, unnecessary expenditure, and reduced livestock productivity.” Dr. Rose Ademun

Participants from Burkina Faso, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda received hands on training in internationally recognized diagnostic techniques such as Larval Packet Testing (LPT) and Adult Tick Immersion Testing (AIT). They also trained in laboratory quality management, data recording, and standardized reporting to support evidence based decision making.

Dr. Patrick Vudriko, head of the RTC Lab at CoVAB, emphasized the importance of harmonizing diagnostic protocols across the region.

“By equipping veterinary professionals with advanced diagnostic skills, we are laying the foundation for more resilient livestock health systems in East Africa.”
— Dr. Patrick Vudriko

The training strengthened regional networks, enhanced laboratory quality systems, and positioned Uganda as a leader in sustainable livestock health management. By fostering collaboration and building capacity, FAO and Makerere University are helping East Africa take decisive steps toward effective and sustainable tick control.



Dr. Patrick Vudriko guides participants through the Lab.



Participants inside the RTC lab during the hands-on exposure.



The Visitation Committee and the staff at CoVAB pose for a group picture after successful deliberations

Makerere's Visitation Committee Engages CoVAB on Graduate Training and Research

The Visitation Committee of Makerere University convened at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB) to evaluate progress in research, graduate training, and resource mobilization. The meeting brought together senior management, faculty, and stakeholders to reflect on achievements, challenges, and strategic interventions needed to sustain excellence in veterinary education and scientific research.

Africa's Research Gap

Makerere University Vice Chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, underscored the urgent need for Africa to scale up investment in graduate training and research. He noted that the continent contributes only about 3% of global research publications, a figure that highlights the scale of the challenge.

"Africa cannot achieve sustainable development without significantly increasing its capacity for research, innovation, and graduate training." – Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe

Citing a 2020 World Bank recommendation, Prof. Nawangwe reminded participants that Africa must produce one million PhDs by 2030 if it is to accelerate socio-economic transformation and compete effectively in the global knowledge economy.

Lessons from Global Models

Prof. Nawangwe drew comparisons with South Korea's remarkable transformation, noting how sustained investment in higher education and research propelled the nation into a global economic powerhouse. While Uganda was economically ahead of South Korea in the 1960s, today

South Korea produces nearly 12,900 PhDs annually compared to South Africa's 2,000, a stark reminder of the importance of prioritizing graduate education.

Graduate Training at CoVAB

The Principal of CoVAB, Prof. Frank Norbert Mwiine, presented the status of graduate training and research at the college. He highlighted the infrastructure and human resources that enable staff and students to contribute more than 150 publications annually. He emphasized the need for increased funding, specialized laboratories, and expanded scholarship opportunities to nurture talent and generate solutions to national and global challenges.

The committee was briefed on achievements such as program reviews, maintenance of practical

training, and increased graduation numbers. The Vet Teaching Hospital and university farm were highlighted as critical hubs for experiential learning, with students actively engaged in fieldwork at Lake Mburo National Park and Buyana farm.

Challenges and Strategic Interventions

Despite these successes, the committee noted pressing challenges. Postgraduate applicants have tripled in recent years, stretching supervision capacity. Graduate supervision remains heavily reliant on PhD holders, underscoring the need for more qualified staff.

"Postgraduate applicants have tripled in recent years, stretching supervision capacity and underscoring the need for more qualified staff." Said the college Principal

Technicians were recognized as the backbone of practical teaching, with calls for greater support and retention strategies.

"Technicians are the backbone of practical teaching. Without them, we cannot deliver quality training," he noted, while emphasizing the need to fill up the vacant positions.

The meeting also reviewed the new Graduate Training Handbook and frameworks for doctoral training, including PhD by research and PhD by coursework plus dissertation. The Research Information Management System (RIMS) was presented as a tool to track student progress and research outputs.

Innovation and Commercialization

Prof. Nawangwe called for the commercialization of research projects to ensure that innovations contribute directly to national development.

"Our research must move beyond laboratories and classrooms to create



Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, Prof. Frank Norbert Mwiine, Prof. Henry Alinaitwe, Prof. Buyinza Mukadasi at the graduate strategy meeting

Prof. Mwiine presented the status of graduate training and research

industries, businesses, and solutions that improve people's lives." – Prof. Nawangwe

He further stressed the importance of equipping staff and students with digital tools, arguing that technology access is essential for producing scientists and innovators capable of driving industrialization.

As part of Makerere's long-term strategy, the Vice Chancellor advocated for the establishment of specialized centers of excellence in areas such as Zoonotic diseases, Vaccines development and other specialized areas in the college. These centers, he noted, would not only advance

research but also stimulate the growth of discipline-specific academic journals, enhancing Africa's contribution to global scholarship.

Way forward

The Visitation Committee commended CoVAB for its resilience and innovation, while urging renewed efforts to mobilize human, financial, and infrastructural resources. The engagement provided a platform for senior management and staff to discuss graduate enrolment, research productivity, supervision, mentorship, and infrastructure, all critical to enhancing the quality, relevance, and impact of postgraduate education at Makerere University.

EU Funded MAGNETISE Project to Strengthen Gender Equality in Higher Education Across Sub Saharan Africa



Assoc. Prof. James Acai Okwee, Principal Investigator (PI), joins participants at the dissemination of the findings.

Makerere University, through its CoVAB, is at the forefront of the EU funded MAGNETISE project, an initiative designed to mainstream gender equality in higher education across Sub Saharan Africa. In June 2026, CoVAB hosted a high level workshop that convened policymakers, researchers, and gender experts to reflect on institutional progress, persistent gaps, and strategies for change.

The project, Mainstreaming Gender in Higher Education Institutions in Sub Saharan Africa (MAGNETISE), is supported by the European

Union and implemented through a consortium of African and European universities. Its focus is to move beyond policy formulation to practical implementation, monitoring, and accountability.

"We have had policies since the early 2000s, but the real question is: where is the implementation plan, and how do we track progress?" — Prof. James Acai Okwee, Project Lead and Deputy Principal, CoVAB

As the lead institution, CoVAB plays a central role in coordinating Uganda's contribution to the consortium.

Professor Okwee emphasized that the project is not about producing more policies, but about ensuring universities develop functional gender equality plans supported by tools, monitoring frameworks, and accountability systems. CoVAB is also spearheading training, student engagement programs, and the creation of a digital knowledge hub for gender equality

From the Gender Mainstreaming Department, Dr. Suzan Mbabazi reaffirmed the institution's commitment to gender equity, citing policies such as the Gender Equality Policy and Regulations Against Sexual Harassment. She noted that while structures like the Gender Mainstreaming Directorate and Institute of Gender and Development Studies have institutionalized equity, systemic challenges remain.

"Despite progress globally and locally, we must acknowledge persistent gaps, biases, and inequalities within higher education institutions." — Dr. Suzan Mbabazi

Preliminary survey findings presented by Dr. Peace Musiimenta revealed mixed progress, with policies in place but implementation inconsistent. Dr. Florence Ebila expanded on the institutional gender audit, highlighting gaps in leadership representation, gender responsive budgeting, and accessibility for vulnerable groups.

"The challenge is not just policy design, but operationalization at all levels of the institution." Dr. Florence Ebila



Makerere University Scientists Develop Uganda's First Anti Tick Vaccine

In the heart of Uganda, where cattle farming sustains millions of families, ticks have long been a silent enemy. These tiny parasites spread deadly tick borne diseases, weaken cattle, reduce milk production, and cause massive financial losses for livestock keepers.

For years, farmers relied heavily on chemical acaricides. But over time, ticks developed resistance, forcing farmers to spray more often at higher costs, with diminishing results. It became clear that Uganda needed a new solution, one developed locally for local conditions.

At the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB), a dedicated team led by Professor Margaret Saimo Kahwa took on the challenge. After years of research into tick biology and disease transmission, the scientists identified

The breakthrough came when researchers formulated a vaccine that protects cattle against multiple tick species and tick borne diseases. In 2019, the innovation gained national attention during Makerere's Agricultural Day exhibition, where President Yoweri Museveni recognized its importance.

proteins capable of triggering immunity in cattle.

"Our goal was ambitious: to create Uganda's first locally developed anti tick vaccine." — Prof. Margaret Saimo Kahwa

The breakthrough came when

researchers formulated a vaccine that protects cattle against multiple tick species and tick borne diseases. In 2019, the innovation gained national attention during Makerere's Agricultural Day exhibition, where President Yoweri Museveni recognized its importance.

By 2021, Makerere signed a partnership with Alfasan Uganda to prepare for large scale production. With support from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, the National Drug Authority, and biosafety regulators, the project advanced steadily.

In 2024–2025, production facilities were established in Namanve, and Makerere announced that the vaccine had achieved 86% efficacy.

"This vaccine could reduce calf mortality, boost milk and meat productivity, and cut dependence on costly imported chemicals."

Though clinical trials and regulatory approval remain, the achievement symbolizes Uganda's growing capacity to deliver homegrown solutions to African challenges. For farmers, it represents hope for healthier cattle, better incomes, and a stronger agricultural future.



A section of CoVAB staff that were part of the graduate studies discourse

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

Dr. Dennis Muhanguzi Receives Editorial Contribution Award 2026 from BMC Veterinary Research

CoVAB's Dr. Dennis Muhanguzi has been honored with the Editorial Contribution Award 2026 by BMC Veterinary Research, a journal published under Springer Nature. The award recognizes his outstanding dedication to the peer review process and his commitment to maintaining the highest standards of scientific

accuracy in veterinary research publications. Dr. Muhanguzi, has played a pivotal role in strengthening the journal's editorial practices. His meticulous assessment of submissions and rigorous management of peer review have ensured that published articles meet the journal's reputation for transparency, rigor,

and credibility.

"This recognition places him among a distinguished group of editors worldwide who have advanced scholarly publishing through editorial excellence."

BMC Veterinary Research is an open-access journal covering all aspects of veterinary science and medicine, including epidemiology, diagnostics, prevention, and treatment of animal diseases. Known for its fast decision times and global reach, the journal recorded more than 5.6 million article downloads in 2025, reflecting its influence in the scientific community.



SVAR gets a new Dean (2026–2030)

Dr. Eddie Wampande is the new Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (SVAR), at CoVAB. He succeeds Dr. Robert Tweyongyere, who served two consecutive terms. The CoVAB community warmly welcomed the transition and expressed gratitude for Dr. Tweyongyere's dedicated leadership.

Focus on Practical Training and Research

Outlining his agenda, Dr. Wampande emphasized aligning undergraduate and graduate programs with university policies while prioritizing practical training. His plan includes expanding local and international placements, integrating online and in-person lectures, and improving graduate training by shortening cycles and making them more practice-oriented.

"We must ensure our graduates are not only academically strong but also

industry-ready." — Dr. Eddie Wampande

Building Research and Partnerships

A key priority will be strengthening SVAR's research culture through the formation of research teams and targeted resource mobilization. Dr. Wampande also committed to increasing collaboration with institutions such as NARO, MAAIF, and STI-OP, and to holding regular seminars to keep staff and students engaged with national priorities.

"Collaboration is the backbone of



impactful research and innovation." — Dr. Eddie Wampande

To support staff development, the School will introduce continuous professional training programs.

Resource Mobilization and Community Engagement

New initiatives include offering non-degree short courses, expanding consultancy services to generate local revenue, and forming alumni networks to strengthen ties with industry and partners. Dr. Wampande also pledged to enhance staff welfare, promote social responsibility, and introduce awards to recognize outstanding contributions.

About SVAR

The School of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity is a leading center for training, research, and innovation in veterinary medicine and animal biosecurity in East Africa.

Two PhD Positions secured under Global Health EDCTP3 DiDiDi Project

CoVAB secured two PhD positions under the Digital Dashboards in Diagnostic Innovations (DiDiDi) project. This initiative is implemented in partnership with Leiden University Medical Center (Netherlands) and the University of Glasgow (UK).

Designed to strengthen international collaboration in health research, DiDiDi focuses on developing innovative diagnostic tools and digital platforms that can improve disease surveillance and response. The project not only enhances CoVAB's role as a regional leader in veterinary and biomedical sciences but also provides young researchers with exposure to advanced training and international networks.

"This partnership reflects CoVAB's commitment to combining academic excellence, international collaboration, and practical innovation to address pressing health challenges."



Buyana Students Hostel nearing completion

Buyana Students Hotel Construction Almost Complete

Makerere University's drive to revamp the Buyana Stock Farm is bearing fruit, with the Students Hotel nearing completion. The project marks a turning point in restoring the farm's role as a model hub for training and research.

The farm currently accommodates 80 veterinary students for practical sessions, far exceeding its original capacity of 29. To address this strain, upgrades are underway in fencing, water supply, and student housing.

Prof. Frank Norbert Mwiine, Principal of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB), underscored the urgency:

"It is important that the College and

the University as a whole double efforts to ensure the farm gets back to acceptable levels."

He emphasized that Buyana must be fully utilized — not only for student training but also for research, outreach, and revenue generation.

Staff at the college and the farm share this optimism:

"We are excited to see Buyana taking shape again. The improvements will not only ease the strain on facilities but also open new opportunities for research, incubation, and skilling. This is a turning point for our students and the communities we serve," said the farm manager.



Dr. Nassuna Maria Gorreti Retires from CoVAB



Dr. Nassuna with colleagues during her retirement celebration.

The Department of Veterinary Medicine at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB) bid farewell to Dr. Nassuna Nassuna Maria Gorreti, a dedicated academic and mentor whose career has left an indelible mark on veterinary education and research.

Dr. Nassuna's retirement was celebrated in a warm gathering of colleagues, and friends, who paid tribute to her years of service and commitment to advancing veterinary

science. Throughout her tenure, she played a pivotal role in strengthening practical training, mentoring graduate students, and supporting the growth of CoVAB's teaching and research programs.

"Dr. Nassuna's contribution to CoVAB goes beyond teaching—she nurtured generations of veterinarians and researchers who continue to shape Uganda's animal health and biosecurity landscape." – CoVAB Leadership

Her work was particularly impactful

in building capacity for graduate training, ensuring that students received not only theoretical knowledge but also hands-on skills essential for professional practice. Colleagues highlighted her dedication to supervision, mentorship, and the development of technicians, whom she often described as the backbone of veterinary training.

The retirement event also reflected on CoVAB's broader achievements, including program reviews, increased graduation numbers, and expanded field training opportunities at Lake Mburo National Park and Buyana farm. Dr. Nassuna's contributions were recognized as part of this collective success story.

"We celebrate Dr. Nassuna not only for her professional excellence but also for her kindness, patience, and unwavering support to students and staff." – Colleague

As she transitions into retirement, Dr. Nassuna leaves behind a legacy of resilience, innovation, and mentorship. Her influence will continue to inspire CoVAB's mission to train veterinarians and researchers who contribute to Uganda's socio-economic transformation.

The College expressed gratitude for her service and wished her well in her next chapter, affirming that her impact will remain deeply woven into the fabric of Makerere University.



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BIOSECURITY (CoVAB) MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

P.O Box 7062, Kampala, Uganda

Tel: +256 414 554 685

Email: principal.covab@mak.ac.ug, pr.covab@mak.ac.ug

Website: www.CoVAB.mak.ac.ug