MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE, ANIMAL RESOURCES AND BIOSECURITY

NEWSLETTER

CoVAB

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The Future of Vet Medicine: Makerere Finalists Urged to Innovate Beyond the Clinic



STI Minister Commends CoVAB's Groundbreaking Research

A word from the Principal



"CoVAB's partnerships with government agencies, industry stakeholders, development partners, and local communities continue to create meaningful opportunities for teaching, research, innovation, and community service.

Dear Reader,

I am pleased to present this edition of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB) Newsletter, highlighting activities and milestones achieved from July to September 2026. Over the past quarter, CoVAB has continued to demonstrate its standing as a centre of excellence in veterinary education, animal health, livestock development, biosecurity, research, and community engagement. Our commitment to advancing knowledge and innovation remains steadfast as we respond to emerging challenges and opportunities across the agricultural, livestock, and public health sectors.

I am particularly proud of the dedication demonstrated by our students, academic staff, researchers, and administrative teams. Through classroom learning, field placements, laboratory work, research projects, and outreach activities, our college community has continued to uphold the values of professionalism, integrity, and service that define CoVAB. The quarter witnessed remarkable progress across our academic programs and research initiatives.

We welcomed our new students, while continuing students actively participated in practical training and experiential learning activities that enhance their competence and readiness to serve society.

CoVAB's partnerships with government agencies, industry stakeholders, development partners, and local communities continue to create meaningful opportunities for teaching, research, innovation, and community service. These collaborations are essential to ensuring our graduates have the skills and knowledge needed to address contemporary challenges in veterinary medicine, animal resources, and biosecurity.

As we enter the final quarter of the year, I encourage us all to stay focused on our mission of advancing education, research, innovation, and community engagement. Together, we can continue to contribute to sustainable livestock development, animal health, public health, and national transformation.

Prof. Clovice Kankya,
Principal

DEANS



***Assoc. Prof. Claire M. Mugasa,** Dean of the School of Biosecurity, Biotechnological and Laboratory Sciences.*



***Dr. Eddie Wampande,** Dean, School of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Resources (SVAR)*

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Mr. Brooks Musinguzi, IT Officer | Ms. Eunice Rukundo, Deputy Chief-PRO

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MINISTERIAL COLLEGE TOUR: STI Minister Applauds CoVAB's Breakthrough Research



STI Minister, Rt. Hon. Eng. Asiimwe Jonard (center, dark suit), alongside Makerere University Vice Chancellor Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe (center, blue suit) and CoVAB Principal Prof. Clovice Kankya, pose for a picture with researchers in CeBioTech.

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.

"Universities must serve as engines of innovation, moving beyond scholarly work to commercial-isation."
Rt. Hon. Eng. Asiimwe Jonard

The Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation, Rt. Hon. Eng. Asiimwe Jonard, made his maiden official visit to Makerere University on 16 September 2026, commending the groundbreaking research advancing at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB). Anchored under the theme "Research Infrastructure, Emerging Technologies and Enterprise Creation," the visit highlighted the

pivotal role of academic innovation in driving Uganda's socio-economic transformation.

At CoVAB, he toured research innovations at the state-of-the-art flagship facilities at the Center for Global Biosecurity and Biomolecular Technology (CeBioTech). His tour included the Central Laboratory Animal Research Facility (CLARF), which provides vital pre-clinical trial support, and the RePROVaD project, which designs subunit vaccines for emerging infectious diseases like COVID-19 and Mpox. He also inspected the Anti-Tick Vaccine initiative, which addresses critical livestock productivity challenges, and BIOMARKER, which develops advanced antibody-based diagnostics.

Addressing college staff and researchers, Eng. Asiimwe emphasized that modern universities must serve as engines of economic growth by moving beyond scholarly publications toward commercialization. He praised CoVAB's vaccine development initiatives as a cornerstone of Uganda's national biosecurity agenda. To fast-track research into viable market enterprises, the Minister stressed

"Makerere remains committed to advancing veterinary science and innovation for Uganda's prosperity."
Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe

the importance of integrating social sciences, project management, and product development strategies into scientific workflows. The Minister outlined key national priorities where CoVAB is expected to lead, including advancing veterinary innovations toward official certification, leveraging artificial intelligence to strengthen the pathogen economy, and positioning veterinary science as a direct driver of agro-industrialisation. He also tasked the university with developing self-sustaining models for shared biosecurity laboratories and providing robust commercialisation support in intellectual property management, regulatory standards, and market access. Eng. Asiimwe pledged the government's continued support for Makerere University and encouraged adopting structured university–industry exchange models to foster long-term financial sustainability and impact.

The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, thanked the Minister for recognising the university's strategic contributions. He reaffirmed Makerere's steadfast commitment to advancing veterinary science, biotechnology, and commercial enterprise to secure Uganda's long-term economic resilience and prosperity.



The Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation, Rt. Hon. Eng. Asiimwe Jonard, listens to researchers inside one of the laboratories at the Centre for Global Biosecurity and Biomolecular Technology (CeBioTech)



Prof. Clovice Kankya (2nd R) assumed office as Principal of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB), taking over from Prof. Frank Norbert Mwiine(2nd L).

Prof. Kankya Takes Office as Principal, Unveils Ambitious Vision for CoVAB

On September 17, 2026, Prof. Clovice Kankya assumed office as Principal of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB), setting out an ambitious vision to transform the college into a leading hub of academic excellence, innovation, and societal impact. Prof. Kankya replaced Prof. Frank Norbert Mwiine.

In his maiden address, Prof. Kankya presented a six-pillar agenda to guide his leadership and shape the college's future. This included a shift from traditional lecture-based instruction to competence-driven learning, entrepreneurial thinking, and the ability to solve real-world challenges.

"I stand before you with a profound sense of gratitude, humility, and responsibility," Prof. Clovice Kankya, Principal, CoVAB

The new Principal said CoVAB must strengthen its contribution to national development by promoting research that goes beyond academic publication to generate innovation, technology, and lasting solutions for communities. He pledged to build strategic partnerships to enhance staff capacity, increase resource mobilisation, and expand the college's global engagement. Recognising staff as the institution's greatest asset, Prof. Kankya committed to addressing staff attrition, strengthening mentorship, and creating an environment that supports professional growth and academic excellence. He further emphasised governance, accountability, and transparency as foundations for institutional trust and sustainable development.



Assoc. Prof. Clair Mark Mugasa Appointed Dean of the School of Biotechnical Biosecurity and Laboratory Sciences

On 10th July 2026, Assoc. Prof. Claire Mack Mugasa was appointed Dean of the School of Biotechnical Biosecurity and Laboratory Sciences (SBLS), one of the two schools at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity. This marks her second appointment as Dean, underscoring her proven leadership and commitment to advancing academic excellence, research, and innovation in biotechnical biosecurity and laboratory sciences. As Dean, Assoc. Prof. Mugasa oversees several departments within the school, providing strategic direction and fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration. Her role is pivotal in strengthening Makerere University's capacity in laboratory sciences, biosecurity, and related fields that are critical to national and global health security.

Parliament Tours CeBIOTECH, Showcases Uganda's Expanding Science Innovation Pipeline



L-R. Dr. Enock Matovu, Prof. John David Kabasa interact with members of the Parliamentary Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation during their visit to the Centre for Biosecurity and Biomolecular Technology (CeBioTech)

Uganda's drive to transform scientific research into commercial solutions received a major boost as the Parliamentary Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation visited the Centre for Biosecurity and Biomolecular Technology (CeBioTech) at CoVAB. Lawmakers assessed the real-world progress of scientific ventures funded by the Science, Technology and Innovation Secretariat under the Office of the President (STI-OP). The high-level engagement brought together legislators, scientists, and innovators to address a vital national question; "How can Uganda turn investments in scientific research into practical technologies, enterprises, and solutions that respond to national development challenges?"

During the oversight tour of CeBioTech advanced laboratories, the committee evaluated four flagship innovation ventures:

- **CLARF:** A critical facility providing laboratory animal services and pre-clinical trial support.
- **RePROVaD:** An initiative designing subunit vaccines for emerging infectious diseases like COVID-19 and Mpox.
- **Anti-Tick Vaccine:** A strategic venture developing a local vaccine to protect livestock productivity and farmer incomes.
- **BIOMARKER:** A project developing antibody-based diagnostics to enhance national disease detection.

Committee members emphasised the need to link research funding to tangible products that benefit ordinary Ugandans. The scientists, meanwhile, highlighted key commercialisation bottlenecks, including specialised financing, regulatory compliance, intellectual property protection, and manufacturing capacity.



The Director of CeBioTEech, Prof. Enock Matovu, presents the ventures operating at the Centre during a meeting with the Parliamentary Committee on Science, Technology, and Innovations on 31st August 2026.



A participant gains hands-on experience in acaricide resistance diagnostics during a laboratory practical session at the RTC Laboratory, CoVAB, Makerere University.

Makerere, FAO Build Regional Network to Tackle Acaricide Resistance In Ticks

In a joint effort to combat acaricide resistance, Makerere University and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) strengthened regional collaboration by holding a five-day training to build technical capacity and strengthen a regional network. The second of its kind, the training brought together veterinary professionals, researchers, and laboratory technicians from five African countries. Held at the RTC Laboratory in the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity (CoVAB), the training focused on building technical capacity and strengthening a regional network for surveillance, diagnostics, and information sharing on tick and tick-borne disease control.

Acaricide resistance is a heritable genetic trait in tick populations that allows them to survive exposure to chemical treatments (acaricides) designed to kill them.

Participants from Burkina Faso, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Uganda received hands-on training in internationally recognised diagnostic techniques, including Larval Packet Testing (LPT) and Adult Tick Immersion Testing

(AIT). They also enhanced their skills in laboratory quality management, data collection, and standardised reporting.

In his opening remarks, FAO Country Representative, Ezana Getahun Kassa, noted that acaricide resistance is a growing threat to livestock productivity, farmer incomes, food security, and public health. He emphasised the need to strengthen collaboration among countries through knowledge exchange, harmonised diagnostic approaches, and integrated tick management strategies.

A major highlight of the training was Uganda's progress in developing an anti-tick vaccine and implementing the Evidence-Based Acaricide Tick Control (EBATIC) strategy. These innovations are expected to reduce dependence on chemical acaricides and support more sustainable livestock health management.

At the closing ceremony, Chief Veterinary Officer Dr. Anna Rose Ademun called for stronger regional cooperation to address challenges associated with acaricide resistance. She noted that limited diagnostic capacity, inadequate laboratory resources, and the spread of resistant tick populations through livestock movement continue to undermine disease control efforts. Participants were encouraged to serve as champions of standardized diagnostic practices in their respective institutions and contribute actively to the FAO Global Tick Laboratory Network, which connects laboratories across multiple countries.

According to Dr. Patrick Vudriko, Head of the RTC Laboratory at Makerere University, the training's most important outcome was the creation of a platform for sustained collaboration among laboratories and veterinary experts. The strengthened network is expected to improve the quality of acaricide resistance testing, facilitate data sharing, and support coordinated regional responses to one of the livestock sector's most pressing challenges.



Dr. Patrick Vudriko demonstrates a point inside the RTC Lab during one of the practical sessions.

The Future of Vet Medicine: Makerere Finalists Urged to Innovate Beyond the Clinic



Finalists of the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (BVM) at Makerere University gathered for an inspiring evening of mentorship and networking with distinguished employers, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs. The discourse centred on shifting trends within the veterinary ecosystem, emphasising that tomorrow's veterinarians must look far beyond clinical treatment. Speakers noted that the modern profession is no longer limited to treating sick animals. Instead, it expands to maintaining optimal animal health and productivity at the critical intersection of human health, food systems, technology, business, and public policy.

To remain relevant, the finalists were challenged to shift their mindsets from job-seeking to problem-solving. Experts urged the soon-to-be professionals to see unmet needs in livestock production, pet health, food safety, diagnostics, and conservation as fertile ground for innovation and new ventures.

"The future of veterinary medicine is deeply connected to One Health. Healthy animals, healthy people, and healthy ecosystems are inseparable,"
Dr. Gladys Kalema Zikusooka

"Instead of asking only, 'Who will employ me?', ask, 'What problems can I solve?'" Dr. Gladys Kalema Zikusooka, guest speaker.

Emphasising technological shifts, mentors advised students to embrace data science, artificial intelligence, and digital epidemiological modelling. The evening concluded with a call for lifelong learning. Finalists were urged to build strong personal brands rooted in integrity, leadership, and community empathy, using their BVM degree as a launchpad to safeguard public health and strengthen livelihoods across Africa.

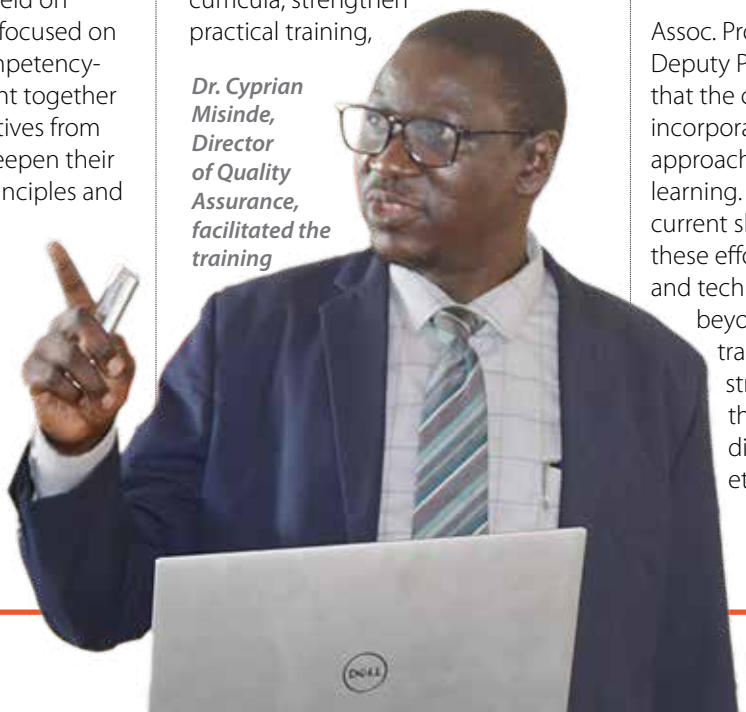


Some of the participants at the Competency-Based Training at CoVAB on 26th August 2026

CoVAB Staff Advance Competency-Based Teaching and Learning

CoVAB has taken further steps in entrenching Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET), following a training session organized by the University's Quality Assurance Directorate. Dr. Cyprian Misinde led the training, held on August 26th, 2026, which focused on Mapping Curricula to Competency-Based Education. It brought together academic staff representatives from various departments to deepen their understanding of CBET principles and align program objectives, learning outcomes, and assessment methods with industry-responsive standards.

The reform is aimed at equipping graduates with practical skills, innovation, and adaptability for the evolving world of work. Building on the Ministry of Education and Sports' directive for all universities to transition to CBET by 2027, CoVAB has intensified efforts to redesign its curricula, strengthen practical training, and further adopt learner-centered approaches.



Dr. Cyprian Misinde, Director of Quality Assurance, facilitated the training

"Competency-based education focuses not only on what students know, but also on what they can do. Your role as lecturers and technicians is therefore central to producing graduates who are practical, innovative, and equipped to contribute meaningfully to Uganda's development," said Dr. Misinde while explaining the changes introduced with the onset of competence-based training.

Assoc. Prof. James Acai Okwee, Deputy Principal of CoVAB, noted that the college had already been incorporating competence-based approaches in its teaching and learning. He emphasised that the current shift will further reinforce these efforts, enabling lecturers and technical staff to move beyond traditional knowledge transmission and embrace strategies that foster critical thinking, entrepreneurship, digital literacy, teamwork, and ethical leadership.

School Of Biosecurity, Biotechnical And Laboratory (SBLS) Urges Year 1 Students To Aim For Excellence



Assoc. Prof. Claire Mack Mugasa, Dean of SBLS, (2nd R) addresses the incoming Biomedical Laboratory Technology class at Makerere University, congratulating them on making 'one of the best decisions of your lives'.

The School of Biosecurity, Biotechnical and Laboratory (SBLS) ushered in a new academic year with a vibrant orientation for its undergraduate and postgraduate students. The school offers the Bachelor of Biomedical Laboratory Technology (BBLT) alongside several master's and PhD programs and continues to position itself as a hub for training professionals in biosecurity, infectious disease management, and biotechnology. In her address to the incoming class, Associate Prof. Claire Mack Mugasa, Dean SBLS, congratulated students on making what she described as "one of the best decisions of your lives." She emphasised that SBLS transforms knowledge into solutions for society and that laboratories serve as the cornerstone of discovery. Prof. Mugasa urged students to embrace active learning, discipline, and self-direction, reminding them that success at university is not accidental but the result of consistent effort and curiosity. "Your growth will depend on your determination to make the most of the opportunities before you," she said, encouraging learners to see themselves as future leaders and agents of change. The orientation also underscored the employability of SBLS graduates, with alumni working across Uganda's public and private sectors, including the army and police, and internationally.



ENROLL FOR A SHORT COURSE AT COVAB

Learn • Apply • Grow:

AFRISA is currently enrolling for short courses in reproductive technology, farm management, and nutrient recycling.

Training takes place from Monday to Wednesday at the College of Veterinary Medicine campus.





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