

BY JOSHUA KATO

To promote purposeful agriculture in schools, the 2026 Harvest Money Expo has introduced subsidised entry fees for secondary school students. Organisers say students will pay sh7,000 instead of the standard sh10,000. However, the subsidy applies only on Friday, February 27, the first day of the expo.

Organised by Vision Group, the annual agribusiness event will run from February 27 to March 1 at Kololo Ceremonial Grounds under the theme *Growth, Sustainability and Cooperations*.

The three-day interactive expo will bring together sector players, including model farmers, agro-input dealers in seed, fertilisers and veterinary drugs, breeders, machinery dealers, post-harvest specialists, value-addition enterprises and market linkages. It is supported by organisations such as the Embassy of the Netherlands, Tunga Nutrition, aBi Development, Uganda Development Corporation, Pearl Bank, Heifer International and Engineering Solutions. Entrance fees is sh10,000 per day for non-students, with an additional sh10,000 for training sessions.

"We have designated February 27 as the special day for students. We encourage them to come and learn about agriculture since it is also one of the subjects under the new curriculum," said Gervase Ndyanabo, the deputy managing director of Vision Group.

Selected schools will also exhibit farming innovations, including St Kizito Secondary School Namugongo, Iganga Secondary School, Bombo Army Secondary School and Gayaza High School. A secondary school with about 500 boarding students consumes at least 100kg of maize flour per meal. At

SCHOOLS TO ENJOY SUBSIDISED ENTRY RATES AT HARVEST EXPO

HARVEST
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EXPO 2026

the current market price of sh2,000 per kilogramme, this amounts to sh200,000. The posho is usually served with at least 50kg of beans, which, at sh3,000 per kilogramme, costs an additional sh150,000.

A survey conducted among several secondary schools shows that, on average, sh1m -2m is spent daily on meals for roughly 500 students and staff. Termly food budgets range between sh150m and sh400m, depending on diet and menu variety.

Yet many schools sit on large tracts of land that could be utilised for farming to offset food costs. Few institutions, however, fully exploit this opportunity, despite having a sizeable student population that could provide labour while learning practical agricultural skills. Unfortunately, in many schools, farming is still used as punishment rather than a productive learning activity.

AGRICULTURE AS A CAREER

According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, about 68% of Uganda's working population is employed in agriculture. In the 2022/2023 financial year, the sector contributed



Gayaza High school students with their plants for exhibition at the 2025 Harvest Money expo



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roughly 24% of GDP and 35% of export earnings.

"For many years, agriculture has

been perceived as an activity only for home consumption, especially by failures, the uneducated and the poor," said Monica Nakaziba, head teacher of Iganga Secondary School, one of the leading school farming institutions.

She emphasised that schools are ideal grounds for nurturing youth interest in agriculture. Beyond skills acquisition, students can pursue farming as a career, create jobs and professionalise farm management.

Kereson Katongole, the head teacher of St Agatha Secondary School in Rubanda district, warned that leaving the country's largest employer in the hands of

the elderly is a disservice that must change.

His school promotes agriculture through student clubs that teach agronomy and agribusiness. It also hosts the Western Region School Farm Camp, where learners share experiences and enterprise skills.

Through these clubs, students engage in banana growing, piggery, poultry, vermiculture, dairy, rabbit rearing, vegetable and mushroom farming, as well as value addition such as baking and wine-making. Clubs retain 10% of farm proceeds for reinvestment, while members receive start-up inputs to establish enterprises at home, helping meet scholastic and personal needs.