

One group came up with nutritious porridge while another one had pork with a long shelf life

UCU students win innovation competition

By Donna de Weljer and Diana Babirye

Eight students of Uganda Christian University (UCU) have won \$2,000 (sh7.4m) in an innovations competition.

The students won the money for coming up with two agribusiness concepts, which the judges said would transform agriculture when implemented.

One group developed the concept of making nutritious porridge, while another one came up with the idea of making pork products with a long shelf life.

The award was from the Venture Hub Project, which is a two-year initiative implemented by the university's department of agriculture and biosciences.

The project is supported by the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture and the MasterCard Agribusiness Challenge Programme.

The Venture Hub Project is a two-year business incubation project that

PLANS FOR THE MONEY

The students, who came up with the nutritious porridge plan to invest the award money in improving their packaging and prototypes. They also want to make a tablet that can make porridge preparation easy. Such a tablet would be dissolved in hot water to make the porridge.

aims at promoting students' innovative ideas, increasing crop commercialisation and improving self-employment opportunities.

The group that developed the nutritious porridge project comprised Gerard Byakatonda, Doreen Kahindo, Ronald Ssewakambo and Arvin Akampulira.

"We found out that malnutrition was a big problem in Uganda. So we came up with a well-balanced product to solve this problem," Byakatonda, the group leader, said.

Malnutrition during early childhood inhibits growth.

Statistics from the health ministry indicate that 2.2 million children under age five are stunted and another 300,000 are too thin for their height.

The porridge the students came up with has natural sweeteners and does not require one to add sugar. The flour for making the porridge is a mixture of sweet potatoes, bananas, mushrooms and soya beans.

"The porridge is healthy and prevents diseases which could have been caused by using processed sugar," Byakatonda said.

"We started the project



A guest tasting the porridge that was made by the students of UCU. Courtesy photos



Students listen to guest making remarks about the porridge

using our savings and we are still looking for funders," Akampulira said.

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and prototypes. They also want to make a tablet that can make porridge preparation easy. Such a tablet would be dissolved in hot water to make the porridge.

The group that was behind the pork project consisted of Agatre Stephen, Brian C. and Robert Kananura.

This group roasts and packages pork in different forms.

According to Masanza, they are still doing research on pork products on the market and the time they take on a stock before expiry.

The dean of the faculty of science and technology at Uganda Christian University, Michael Masanza, hailed the projects, saying they make universities relevant to their communities.