# KENYA PLANT HEALTH INSPECTORATE SERVICE (KEPHIS)

# NEWSLETTER

**SEPTEMBER - 2026**





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# Message from the Managing Director



**Dear Stakeholders,**

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the September 2026 edition of the KEPHIS Newsletter.

September was a particularly significant month for the Service, marked by strengthened partnerships, scientific and technological advancement, stakeholder engagement and continued efforts to enhance Kenya's seed and phytosanitary systems.

A major highlight was the successful International Phytosanitary and Seed Quality Conference 2026, hosted by KEPHIS in partnership with the Centre for Phytosanitary Excellence (COPE) and other regional and international partners. The conference brought together 276 delegates from 16 countries to exchange knowledge and experiences on strengthening seed and phytosanitary systems for climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture.

This edition also highlights our continued investment in preparedness and institutional capacity. The training on rapid identification of emerging plant pathogens strengthened our laboratory teams' ability to detect threats before they become established in the country.

At our Nakuru Regional Office, new laboratory equipment will further enhance our diagnostic capabilities and support

more effective detection and identification of plant pests and diseases.

Beyond strengthening our technical capacity, we continue to embrace digital transformation to improve service delivery. The integration of our Integrated Export Import Certification System (IEICS) with the Trade Facilitation Platform demonstrates our commitment to making phytosanitary services more efficient, transparent and accessible to our stakeholders.

Our mandate can only be effectively delivered when we remain connected to those we serve. Throughout the month, our teams engaged farmers, students, industry players, international partners and members of the public through exhibitions, technical exchanges, academic visits and other stakeholder forums. These engagements provide valuable opportunities to share knowledge, understand stakeholder needs and demonstrate how our work contributes to food security, safe trade and sustainable agricultural development.

As you read this edition, I invite you to reflect not only on the activities undertaken, but also on the impact they collectively represent.

I thank the KEPHIS Board, Management, staff, partners and stakeholders for their continued commitment and support.

**Prof. Theophilus M. Mutui**
Managing Director,
Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS)

# The Editor's Note



**Dear Reader,**

Welcome to the September 2026 edition of the KEPHIS Newsletter.

This edition captures what was undoubtedly a busy and impactful month across the Service. From an international conference bringing together expertise from 16 different countries to laboratory training, stakeholder engagements, exhibitions, technical exchanges and farmer outreach, the stories in these pages demonstrate the breadth of KEPHIS' work and the people behind it.

Our cover story takes us to the International Phytosanitary and Seed Quality Conference 2026, where KEPHIS, COPE and partners created a platform for over 300 delegates to share knowledge and explore practical solutions for more resilient seed and phytosanitary systems.

But September's story extends well beyond the conference. Our scientists strengthened their preparedness to identify emerging plant pathogens, including diseases that have not yet been reported in Kenya. We also saw innovation in maize seed health and MLN risk management, including digital surveillance and approaches aimed at making the movement of seed safer and more traceable.

Across our regions, teams continued taking the KEPHIS mandate closer to stakeholders. At the Mombasa ASK Show,

the Service engaged farmers, traders, industry players and members of the public and received recognition through five awards. Nakuru welcomed students for practical exposure to seed testing and plant health diagnostics and later hosted a delegation from Cameroon for technical knowledge exchange.

These stories remind us that effective communication is not simply about documenting activities. It is about helping our stakeholders understand why the work matters:-to the farmer seeking quality seed, the exporter accessing international markets, the scientist detecting a plant health threat, the student discovering a career in agriculture and, ultimately, the country working towards food security and safe trade.

I therefore encourage you to explore the stories in this edition and appreciate the collective contribution of our staff, partners and stakeholders in delivering the KEPHIS mandate.

Thank you to everyone who contributed articles, photographs and information towards this edition. Your contributions enable us to continue telling the KEPHIS story.

To keep up with our daily activities and updates, follow us on our social media platforms:

**Facebook & LinkedIn:**
Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service

**X & YouTube:** @KephisKe

Enjoy reading!

**Kellen Karuti**
Deputy Director, Corporate Communications - KEPHIS

# KEPHIS, COPE AND PARTNERS HOST SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO STRENGTHEN CLIMATE-RESILIENT SEED AND PHYTOSANITARY SYSTEMS




Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS), alongside the Centre for Phytosanitary Excellence (COPE) and key regional and international partners, successfully hosted a major international conference focusing on the vital seed and phytosanitary sectors. Held at KEPHIS Headquarters from September 14th to 17th, 2026, the four-day event convened over 300 delegates representing 16 countries.

Under the theme ***"Revitalizing phytosanitary and seed systems for climate resilient and sustainable agriculture,"*** the conference brought together a diverse group of public, private, national, regional, and international stakeholders. Attendees included government agencies, policymakers, agricultural industry leaders, international organizations, and donor agencies to share experiences, address current challenges, and foster collaboration.

Discussions throughout the event centered around five core sub-themes:

i. Plant health systems: Managing risks and protecting plant resources
ii. Technological innovations in plant science for sustainable agriculture
iii. Safe trade and market access
iv. Seed quality and variety development
v. Policy and regulatory frameworks

The event commenced with a tree-planting exercise led by Principal Secretary Dr. Paul Kipronoh Ronoh, Board Chairman Hon. Joseph M'eruaki and Managing Director Prof. Theophilus Mutui. The leaders also toured the exhibition area, engaging with exhibitors and underscoring the critical value of participating in international trade showcases.



While officially opening the conference on behalf of Cabinet Secretary Senator Mutahi Kagwe, Principal Secretary in the State Department of Agriculture Dr. Ronoh highlighted key milestones in market access and pest management.

> ***"For plant health, I am glad to note that KEPHIS, the Ministry of Trade, as well as my ministry have opened up markets for avocado and other produce to Malaysia, The Republic of China, The Government of India, among other countries,"*** stated Dr. Ronoh.

> ***"We have also been at the forefront in mitigating various pests and diseases that could affect our agricultural productivity. Through the promotion of integrated pest management, timely surveillance, county engagements, and farmer training, we have reduced the risks posed by destructive and invasive pests."***

Dr. Ronoh added that the high-level representation from Kenya, various African nations, and the wider global community underscores the conference's immense significance in strengthening certification systems locally and internationally.

Building on the momentum of this year's dialogue, organizers announced that the next international conference will take place in 2028.



*The Principal Secretary in the State Department of Agriculture Dr. Kiprono Rono(right) at the KCB Bank stand during the official opening of the International Phytosanitary and Seed Quality Conference 2026.*




*The Principal Secretary in the State Department of Agriculture Dr. Kiprono Rono(right), Chairman KEPHIS Board of Directors Hon. Joseph M'eruaki and KEPHIS MD Prof. Theophilus Mutui during the official opening of the International Phytosanitary and Seed Quality Conference 2026..*

# KEPHIS STRENGTHENS READINESS TO DETECT EMERGING PLANT DISEASES




Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) hosted a pre-conference training on **the rapid identification of emerging plant pathogens from 7th to 10th September 2026,** strengthening the capacity of its laboratories to detect potential plant health threats before they become introduced in the country. The hands-on training brought together laboratory personnel from the Plant Health Laboratory at headquarters, the Plant Quarantine and Biosecurity Station (PQBS, Muguga), Nakuru and Mombasa plant health laboratories.

With technical expertise from the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, participants focused on three diseases of concern: **cassava witches' broom disease, cassava frogskin disease and Banana Bunchy Top Disease. The mentioned diseases have not yet been reported in Kenya,** making early detection, surveillance and preparedness critical in preventing their introduction and establishment essential.

The training combined presentations and discussion with intensive practical laboratory sessions. Participants worked molecular diagnostic approaches for emerging cassava pathogens and tested a rapid method for detecting banana bunchy top virus using Recombinase Polymerase Amplification (RPA) and lateral flow devices. They also gained experience in preparing samples for Oxford Nanopore sequencing, assessing sequence quality and analyzing data to support pathogen identification. These advanced diagnostic approaches provide additional tools for strengthening KEPHIS' ability to identify unfamiliar or emerging pathogens, particularly where conventional diagnostic methods may require more time or resources.








Opening the training, the Acting Director of Laboratory Services, Dr. Florence Munguti reaffirmed KEPHIS commitment to using advanced diagnostics to safeguard agriculture and trade. Dr. Isaac Macharia highlighted the role of reliable laboratory results in phytosanitary decisions. At the close, participants were encouraged to apply their new skills and share them with colleagues across KEPHIS laboratories.

The training also identified practical priorities for continued preparedness against emerging plant health threats. These include enhanced monitoring of imported planting materials, strengthening field and laboratory diagnostic capacity and raising awareness among inspectors, county agricultural staff, farmers and others in the cassava and banana value chains. These efforts will help KEPHIS detect potential threats early and support a timely response before diseases become established.

The training therefore represents an important step in advancing Kenya's preparedness to manage emerging plant health risks while protecting agricultural production, supporting food security and safeguarding safe trade.

## Treat, Test, Trace: Innovations Advancing Maize Seed Health and MLN Risk Management.

New advances in maize seed health and phytosanitary management are providing practical tools to strengthen the safe, traceable movement of maize seed and germplasm and help reduce the risk of Maize Lethal Necrosis (MLN) in Kenya and across Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA).




*Dr. Suresh L.M presents during the International Phytosanitary and Seed Quality conference 2026.*

At the International Phytosanitary and Seed Conference 2026 in Nairobi, the work highlights two complementary innovations: The Maize Clean Seed Production Tracker, a GPS-enabled digital surveillance and decision-support platform, and an MCMV seed decontamination technology designed to reduce seed-associated contamination before movement.

The Maize Seed Tracker, developed through a partnership between CIMMYT and IITA and co-implemented by KEPHIS in collaboration with seed producers, provides a digital platform for monitoring seed-production fields, recording disease observations, capturing GPS locations and supporting risk-based decision-making. During March - November 2025, the system supported surveillance of 120 maize fields across 31 counties, strengthening disease monitoring and clean-seed production oversight.

The complementary research evaluated a prototype MCMV seed decontamination system developed under the leadership of Dr. Suresh, L.M for treating MCMV contaminated maize seed. The technology substantially reduced MCMV contamination, with treated samples testing negative in validation tests, demonstrating its potential to support safer seed delivery and movement. The system can be scaled according to seed volumes and operational requirements from a small unit capable

of treating approximately 800 pouches of 200 kernels each to a larger system with a capacity of up to 500 kg per treatment cycle. The equipment can be further optimized to meet specific seed quantities, throughput and operational requirements.

During the keynote address, Dr. Suresh, L.M. renowned Maize Pathologist, Plant Health Leader has contributed significantly in tackling MLN in the Eastern and Sothern Africa said:

> ***"Clean seed is our first line of defense against MLN. By treating and validating seed at its source, we can make seed movement safer within countries and across borders, reduce the risk of spreading MCMV, and protect valuable breeding material."***

Integrating seed decontamination, testing and the Maize Seed Tracker could provide traceability from production to distribution, strengthening transparency, seed health and regional biosecurity.

> ***"This is more than a seed-treatment technology. It is a pathway to a safer, traceable and more resilient seed system protecting the seed, protecting farmers and protecting the future of maize."***

Together, these approaches offer an opportunity to move toward proactive MLN risk management treating, testing, tracing and safely moving seed from source to farmer.

## KEPHIS BOARD TOURS: KEPHIS MUGUGA, JKIA, LOITOKTOK, NAMANGA AND TAVETA



The KEPHIS Board of Directors undertook a series of oversight visits to key KEPHIS facilities in August 2026, engaging staff and assessing operations supporting plant health, agricultural quality assurance, phytosanitary regulation and safe trade.

The visits covered KEPHIS Muguga, JKIA, Loitoktok, Namanga and Taveta, providing the Board with an opportunity to gain first-hand insight into the diverse operations through which KEPHIS implements its mandate across the country.

The Board started with a visit to KEPHIS Muguga, where they interacted with staff and toured key facilities supporting plant quarantine, tissue culture, plant health diagnostics, and pest and disease identification. The Board was taken through the technical work undertaken at the facility to detect and manage plant health risks and protect Kenya's plant resources. KEPHIS Muguga also hosts a COMESA Regional Reference Laboratory for Plant Health, giving the facility an important regional role in strengthening plant health systems and supporting the management of emerging pests and diseases.

The Board's oversight tour also extended to KEPHIS border offices at KEPHIS JKIA, Loitoktok, Namanga and Taveta, highlighting the critical role played by border points in protecting Kenya's plant resources and facilitating the movement of compliant plants, plant products and other regulated articles. At the border stations, the Board engaged staff and reviewed operations involved in phytosanitary inspection, certification and surveillance, particularly in relation to the movement of agricultural commodities across Kenya's borders.





These border offices serve as important points of control in preventing the introduction and spread of harmful pests and diseases while ensuring that consignments entering or leaving the country comply with applicable phytosanitary requirements.

At KEPHIS JKIA, the Board members toured phytosanitary inspection and certification operations supporting international trade. The visit included Airflo, where KEPHIS undertakes phytosanitary inspection of fresh produce, including cut flowers, destined for export markets.

Kenya's floriculture industry is an important component of the country's agricultural export sector, with approximately 8 million rose stems exported every day, mainly to the European Union and other international markets. The operations witnessed at JKIA demonstrated the importance of efficient phytosanitary inspection and certification in ensuring that Kenya's fresh produce meets the requirements of destination markets and maintains access to international trade. The visits brought into focus the interconnected nature of KEPHIS' work; from plant health diagnostics and quarantine, to border surveillance, phytosanitary certification and export inspection. The visit reaffirmed the Board's role in providing strategic direction and governance while supporting effective implementation of KEPHIS' mandate to safeguard plant health, assure the quality of agricultural inputs and produce, and facilitate safe trade.

## KEPHIS BOARD STRENGTHENS GOVERNANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY




Strengthening institutional performance and governance remains central to KEPHIS's commitment to delivering on its mandate and supporting Kenya's agricultural sector.

From 31st July to 4th August 2026, the KEPHIS Board of Directors participated in a training on national productivity facilitated by the National Productivity and Competitiveness Centre (NPCC). The training focused on strengthening institutional performance, competitiveness and results-driven leadership, equipping the Board with approaches to enhance productivity and support effective delivery of the KEPHIS mandate.

During the same period, the Board adopted the KEPHIS inaugural Legal and Governance Audit and Legislative Reforms, facilitated by the Office of the Attorney General. The adoption marks an important milestone in strengthening the Service's legal and governance framework while enhancing accountability, compliance and institutional effectiveness.

The legislative reforms will further provide a stronger foundation for KEPHIS to effectively regulate and safeguard plant health and seed quality, while supporting safe agricultural trade. Beyond strengthening the institution, the reforms contribute to a more robust agricultural regulatory environment, supporting food security, market access and the competitiveness of Kenya's agricultural sector.

## KEPHIS SHOWCASES ITS ROLE IN PROTECTING KENYA'S AGRICULTURE AT THE MOMBASA ASK SHOW



From protecting Kenya's crops from harmful pests and diseases to supporting the safe movement of agricultural produce, the work of the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) was highlighted during the Mombasa ASK Show, where the Service engaged farmers, traders, industry players and members of the public on its role in safeguarding agriculture.

On 3rd September 2026, KEPHIS was honored to host the Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Hon. Mutahi Kagwe, at its stand during the Mombasa ASK Show. The KEPHIS Board, led by the Board Chair, Hon. Joseph M'eruaki, alongside Board members and the KEPHIS team, took the Cabinet Secretary through the stand.

During the visit, the CS was taken through the KEPHIS mandate and the work being carried out to protect Kenya's agricultural sector. The team highlighted the Service's role in inspecting and certifying agricultural inputs and produce, conducting plant health surveillance and regulating the movement of plants and plant products.

A key area of focus was KEPHIS' work at the Port of Mombasa, where the Service inspects incoming agricultural commodities to prevent the entry and spread of pests and diseases. Through these inspections, KEPHIS plays an important role in protecting Kenya's agriculture and reducing the risk of pests and diseases that could have devastating effects on agricultural production.



The Service's participation at the Mombasa ASK Show also received notable recognition, with KEPHIS taking home five awards. The Service emerged as the Best Agricultural-Based Statutory Board Stand and secured second position in three categories: Best Stand that Interpreted the Current Show Theme (Agricultural Based), Best Innovation and Invention Stand and Best Agricultural-Based Organization that Disseminated Safety Information on Agricultural Products. KEPHIS also secured third position for Best Regulatory and Corporation Stand.

The achievement was marked by the presentation of a prestigious trophy to KEPHIS by Cabinet Secretary Hon. Mutahi Kagwe. KEPHIS Board Chair Hon. Joseph M'eruaki received the trophy, alongside Board members and the Management Team represented by Mr. Nicholas Tunya.

# KEPHIS NAKURU HOSTS RIFT VALLEY INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS STUDIES STUDENTS FOR ACADEMIC TOUR




*Rift Valley Institute of Business Studies students pose for a group photo with KEPHIS staff during their academic tour of the Nakuru Regional Office.*

On 9th September 2026, KEPHIS Nakuru Regional Office hosted 13 students and their lecturer from the Rift Valley Institute of Business Studies for an academic tour aimed at giving them a practical understanding of KEPHIS' mandate, functions and technical operations.

The visit commenced at the Conference Hall, where Madam Anne Cherutich welcomed the visitors on behalf of the Deputy Director, Nakuru. The students were then given an overview of KEPHIS' mandate and key functions, including its role in phytosanitary regulation, seed certification, compliance and the facilitation of safe agricultural trade.





*Participants at the Station's Conference Hall during an introductory session on KEPHIS' mandate and functions.*





*Seed Laboratory analysts take students through germination and purity testing during the academic tour.*

The group proceeded to the Seed Laboratory, where Seed Laboratory analysts introduced them to seed testing and quality assessment processes. They were taken through sample reception and traceability, as well as purity, moisture and germination testing, and had an opportunity to interact with some of the laboratory equipment.

At the Plant Health Laboratory, the students were introduced to plant disease diagnosis and molecular testing. In the Pathology Laboratory, they learned about plant pathogens and different sample types submitted for diagnosis and observed Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) specimens under microscopes. At the Molecular Laboratory, they were taken through DNA and RNA extraction, pipetting, laboratory procedures, conventional and real-time PCR, and gel electrophoresis.

The practical sessions generated active participation, with the students' asking questions and showing interest in the different areas of KEPHIS' work. The visit highlighted the value of exposing students to practical applications of what they learn in class, particularly in areas such as seed quality, plant health and agricultural regulation.

The engagement also pointed to the need for stronger collaboration between KEPHIS and learning institutions through regular academic visits, student sensitization and outreach programmes, particularly in agriculture-related institutions. Such engagements can help students gain practical knowledge, understand the role of KEPHIS in the agricultural sector and become more aware of potential career opportunities within the field.

# CAMEROON DELEGATION VISITS KEPHIS NAKURU FOR TECHNICAL EXCHANGE ON SEED AND PLANT HEALTH




*Group Photo of the Cameroon Delegates with KEPHIS officers during the Visit*

On 18th September 2026, a delegation from Cameroon visited the KEPHIS Nakuru Regional Office for a technical tour of the Station's seed and plant health laboratory facilities, following the International Phytosanitary and Seed Quality Conference 2026 held from 14th to 17th September 2026.

The visit provided the delegation with practical exposure to KEPHIS' mandate of safeguarding plant health, assuring the quality of agricultural inputs and supporting safe movement and trade of agricultural produce. It also created an opportunity for technical knowledge sharing and exchange of experiences in seed testing, plant health diagnostics and phytosanitary systems, areas that are central to strengthening agricultural production and trade in Kenya and beyond.

The delegation was received at the Station by Mr. Wilson Sitienei, who represented the Deputy Director, Nakuru. The technical tour began at the Seed Laboratory, where the delegates were taken through key stages of seed testing, including purity, moisture and germination testing, as well as seed identification and the role of laboratory analysis in seed quality assurance and certification.

The tour then proceeded to the Plant Health Laboratory, where Mr. Evans Wekesa guided the visitors through the Pathology and Molecular Laboratory sections. The delegates were introduced to plant disease diagnosis, including the examination of different sample types and microscopic identification of pests such as Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) juveniles.

They were also introduced to molecular diagnostic procedures used in the detection and identification of plant pathogens.





*Cameroon delegates being taken through activities and procedures in the Seed and Plant Health Laboratories.*

Throughout the tour, the delegates actively engaged KEPHIS technical staff, seeking clarification on laboratory procedures, equipment and diagnostic approaches. The practical sessions provided an opportunity to exchange experiences while demonstrating how laboratory testing and diagnostics support seed quality assurance, plant health protection and phytosanitary regulation.

The visitors expressed their appreciation for the technical capacity demonstrated during the tour and further commended KEPHIS for its role in strengthening Kenya's plant health and seed systems.

Furthermore, the technical exchange highlighted the value of continued collaboration and professional interaction among plant health and seed quality institutions. Sharing technical experiences and approaches across countries can contribute to stronger plant health systems, improved seed quality assurance and safer agricultural trade.






The engagement, coming shortly after the International Phytosanitary and Seed Quality Conference 2026, further provided a platform for translating the broader objectives of the conference into practical technical exchange and strengthening professional linkages between institutions working in seed and plant health.

# KEPHIS NAKURU RECEIVES NEW LABORATORY EQUIPMENT TO STRENGTHEN PLANT HEALTH DIAGNOSTIC CAPACITY TOWARDS EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT REGULATORY CERTIFICATION




*Some of the new Lab equipment received at the KEPHIS Nakuru PHL Molecular Lab.*

The Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) Nakuru Regional Office received four new pieces of laboratory equipment, alongside consumable plates, to strengthen its capacity to support plant pest and disease diagnosis and other laboratory activities on 22nd September 2026. The equipment included a -80°C freezer, refrigerator, conventional PCR machine (Mastercycler X40) and Real-Time PCR machine (QuantStudio 7 Pro). These items will improve sample preservation, preparation, analysis and overall laboratory efficiency. The equipment was acquired through the Horticultural Fund, with the facilitation and support of the KEPHIS Managing Director, Prof. Theophilus M. Mutui.

The new additions support different stages of the laboratory workflow. The -80°C freezer will facilitate ultra-low-temperature preservation and storage of biological samples and materials, while the refrigerator will support the appropriate storage of temperature-sensitive materials.

The Mastercycler X40 will enhance the laboratory's conventional PCR capabilities, supporting the amplification and analysis of samples for molecular diagnostic work.

A major addition is the **QuantStudio 7 Pro Real-Time PCR system**, which represents a significant upgrade from the laboratory's previous Real-Time PCR equipment.



The system comes with its own Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS), CPU and monitor, and features a touchscreen interface, proximity sensor, voice recognition and voice-command capabilities.

Beyond these features, the new system enhances the laboratory's molecular diagnostic capability by supporting more efficient and effective sample analysis, while its integrated functionality is expected to facilitate laboratory operations and molecular testing.

## Staff Training and Practical Demonstration

Following installation, calibration and set-up of the Real-Time PCR system, PHL staff underwent a two-day user training facilitated by CUBS Scientific. The training was conducted by **Bryson Owiti, Biomedical Engineer, and Roy Muthomi, Laboratory and Application Scientist.**

The training covered the set-up, operation and navigation of the equipment, with staff engaging directly with the machine to familiarize themselves with its functions. Samples were also prepared and run through the new Real-Time PCR system as part of the practical sessions, giving staff hands-on experience in its application.

PHL Staff were guided on the importance of consulting the manufacturer's manual and adhering to recommended operating procedures for safe and effective use. The training also covered the proper handling, labelling and installation of consumable strips to minimize contamination and support reliable results.

## Strengthening Plant Health Diagnostics

The new additions collectively enhance the Nakuru Plant Health Laboratory's ability to support plant health activities through




improved sample handling, preservation and molecular diagnosis.

The strengthened capacity will support KEPHIS in the detection and identification of plant pests and diseases, providing technical information for surveillance, inspection and other plant health interventions.

The investment demonstrates KEPHIS' commitment to strengthening laboratory infrastructure and equipping technical teams with modern tools that support the Service's mandate to safeguard Kenya's plant health and agricultural resources

# KEPHIS NAKURU BRINGS CLIENTS AND STAFF TOGETHER TO UNPACK THE NEW TFP–IEICS INTEGRATION




On 25th September 2026, KEPHIS Nakuru Regional Office hosted a joint training for staff and clients on the integration of the Trade Facilitation Platform (TFP) with the Integrated Export and Import Certification System (IEICS). The session brought together importers, exporters and clearing agents alongside KEPHIS officers to understand how the integrated system will change the processing of import and export certification.

The session was chaired by Mr. Wabwayi Ndalira of the Phytosanitary Department, while Ms. Ann Cherutich delivered the opening remarks on behalf of the Deputy Director, KEPHIS Nakuru, welcoming participants and officially opening the training.

The training followed the operationalization of IEICS, which replaced the previous KEPHIS Import Certification System (ICS) and Export Certification System (ECS), necessitating the re-establishment and enhancement of the link with TFP. Under the integrated arrangement, information captured on the KRA iCMS Import Declaration Form or Base Document flows through TFP, which generates the Unique Consignment Reference (UCR), and into IEICS, where relevant consignment details are automatically populated for Plant Import Permit and Phytosanitary Certificate applications.

Participants were taken through the differences between the previous and new processes, including challenges associated with mismatched master data, multiple sign-ins, printed documents, physical follow-ups for approvals and misplaced paperwork. The integration is expected to reduce repeated data entry, improve consignment tracking, strengthen compliance and reduce costs for clients. Participants were also reminded that applicants remain responsible for reviewing and confirming auto-populated information before submitting their applications.




Ms. Angeline Mwova of KEPHIS took participants through the application processes in IEICS and the benefits of the integration, while Mr. Kennedy Wanyeki from the KEPHIS Headquarters ICT Department explained the technical aspects of the system. Mr. Joseph Mukite of KenTrade covered the role of TFP and the generation of the UCR, noting that the current UCR fee remains payable pending formal approval of proposed changes, including a reduction and exemptions for eligible exporters.

During the interactive session, clients raised concerns and suggestions aimed at making the new process easier to navigate. They called for a simpler end-to-end process and proposed consolidation of payment prompts, rather than having separate payments for charges such as the UCR and HCD.

Speaking on behalf of the clients, Ms. Felista Tanui thanked the facilitators and participants and expressed appreciation for the training. Mr. Justus Kyalo gave the vote of thanks on behalf of the KEPHIS Nakuru team, encouraging clients to remain open to further training opportunities as the integration is rolled out.

The engagement provided an opportunity for KEPHIS to clarify the changes brought about by the TFP–IEICS integration while receiving direct feedback from clients who interact with the certification systems. Continued sensitization and follow-up training will support clients as they transition to the integrated system, while feedback from the engagement will help inform efforts to improve the user experience and efficiency of the certification process.

***Article by Wabwayi & Hellen Nadi Mazegu.***

# PUTTING FARMERS AT THE HEART OF PLANT HEALTH AND QUALITY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION - THARAKA NITHI COUNTY



On 24th September 2026, KEPHIS teams from Headquarters and the Embu Regional Office joined farmers at the Kilimo Kraft Expo in Tharaka Nithi County, where more than 200 farmers visited the KEPHIS stand and engaged with our team.

The interactions provided an opportunity for farmers to learn more about KEPHIS services and how these services support their farming activities. Key areas covered included seed certification, which helps ensure that seed sold to farmers meets the required quality standards for better crop performance and yields; plant health services, which support the prevention and management of pests and diseases; and laboratory testing of agricultural inputs and produce, which supports quality, safety and compliance with required standards.

KEPHIS showcased its mandate and the role it plays in safeguarding Kenya's agricultural sector through the regulation and management of plant health, seed quality and variety protection. The Service continues to work closely with farmers, seed companies, exporters, researchers, agro-dealers, county governments and other stakeholders to ensure that agricultural production is supported by quality inputs and a healthy plant environment.

The Expo also provided KEPHIS with an opportunity to interact directly with farmers and agricultural stakeholders, create awareness on plant health and seed quality requirements and demonstrate the importance of using certified seed and complying with phytosanitary measures.

Beyond sharing information and engaging directly with farmers, the expo gives KEPHIS an opportunity to listen and understand the challenges farmers encounter in their day-to-day activities and provide practical guidance relevant to their needs.

These engagements strengthen collaboration between KEPHIS and farmers, supporting efforts to promote plant health, quality agricultural inputs and produce, food security and safe trade.

As agriculture continues to evolve, innovation and technology remain key drivers of sustainable agricultural transformation. KEPHIS remains committed to embracing modern technologies, strengthening surveillance and inspection systems, enhancing diagnostic capabilities, promoting digital solutions and working with partners to ensure that Kenya's agricultural sector remains resilient, productive and competitive.

## WORLD CLEANUP DAY 2026 | FROM CLEAN PLATES TO CLEAN CITIES




A clean environment is more than just a healthy place to live it is part of creating communities where agriculture can thrive. On 20th September 2026, KEPHIS joined partners and the community in Kisii County to mark World Cleanup Day under the theme ***"From Clean Plates to Clean Cities."***

As part of the initiative, KEPHIS donated 5,000 seedlings and five waste bins to support tree planting, waste collection and segregation within schools. The initiative encouraged environmental responsibility among learners while contributing to greener and cleaner communities.






Held in partnership with NEMA, the event was graced by Hon. Simba Arati, Governor of Kisii County, alongside various government officials, partners and community members who came together to champion environmental conservation.

For KEPHIS, environmental conservation is closely linked to the health and productivity of Kenya's agricultural sector. Clean surroundings could help reduce conditions that might harbor and facilitate the spread of plant pests and diseases, contributing to healthier crops, improved productivity and food security.

The initiative formed part of KEPHIS' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts and reflected the organization's commitment to giving back to communities while promoting a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.



# KEPHIS AND MINOR USE FOUNDATION (MUF) STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION ON RESIDUE DATA GENERATION AND MARKET ACCESS.



On 18th September 2026, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) hosted a delegation from the **Minor Use Foundation (MUF)** for a courtesy meeting on joint pesticide residue data trials and its role in improving crop protection and market access for minor and specialty crops. KEPHIS team was led by Managing Director Prof. Theophilus Mutui and Ag. Director of Laboratory Services Dr. Florence Munguti. The MUF team was led by Africa Regional Manager Mellon Kabole and included Chief Executive Officer Ms. Anna Gore.

The meeting reviewed progress under the existing collaboration, particularly residue trials on afidopyropen in chilli and okra. These steps provide the reliable evidence needed to inform pesticide residue limits for crops that often have limited regulatory data. The teams discussed priorities for the next phase, including expanding trials to other crops and the proposed papaya Adavelt project planned for 2027. They also identified training needs in field trial implementation, laboratory analysis, quality assurance, residue data evaluation and use of the MRL calculator. Stronger coordination between field trial teams, laboratories and regulators was highlighted as essential to generating usable data and translating results into practical guidance.

KEPHIS and MUF reaffirmed their commitment to implementing their memorandum of understanding and explored the proposed Centre of Excellence in Residue Data Science. The Centre is envisioned to provide a platform for training, research and generation of high-quality residue data for minor and specialty crops in Kenya and across Africa. The collaboration







aims to support the establishment of appropriate maximum residue limits, regulatory alignment and access to export markets. It also seeks to widen safe and effective crop protection options for farmers, while strengthening the scientific capacity of KEPHIS laboratories.

## KEPHIS SHOWCASES PLANT HEALTH AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICES AT NAIVASHA HORTICULTURAL FAIR 2026.




*Cabinet Secretary, MoALD, Sen. Mutahi Kagwe and KEPHIS M.D Prof. Theophilus Mutui at the KEPHIS stand.*

Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) participated in the 2026 Naivasha Horticultural Fair, held on 18th–19th September 2026 at the Naivasha Sports Club, bringing together key players in Kenya's horticulture industry to share knowledge, explore opportunities and strengthen partnerships.

The annual fair provides a one-stop platform for producers, growers, exporters, government agencies, service providers, horticultural associations and other industry stakeholders from Kenya and beyond. It offers an important avenue for stakeholders to engage on emerging issues, share experiences and identify solutions that can support the sustainable growth and competitiveness of the horticulture sector.

At the KEPHIS exhibition stand, stakeholders engaged directly with technical experts on a range of services and regulatory requirements that support safe agricultural production and trade. Key areas of focus included seed certification and quality assurance, laboratory services and plant health diagnostics, import and export requirements for flowers and vegetables, Kenya Standing Technical Committee on Imports and Exports (KSTCIE) processes, importation of biological control agents, and plant health and phytosanitary requirements for safe trade.

The engagements provide an opportunity for farmers, growers, exporters and other industry players to better understand the requirements for







complying with national and international plant health standards while facilitating the movement of safe and quality agricultural produce. KEPHIS participation emphasized the importance of collaboration between regulatory agencies and industry stakeholders in addressing challenges affecting horticultural production and trade.

The occasion was graced by the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Sen. Mutahi Kagwe, alongside KEPHIS Managing Director, Prof. Theophilus Mutui; Dr. Isaac Macharia, Director, Phytosanitary and Biosecurity Services; Ms. Pamela Kibwage, Deputy Director, Naivasha Region; Mr. Geoffrey Malemba, Deputy Director, JKIA Office; and KEPHIS staff. Their presence highlighted the importance attached to strengthening plant health systems, quality assurance and regulatory services as part of efforts to support Kenya's horticultural sector and facilitate safe trade.

The conversations provided an opportunity for KEPHIS experts to respond to stakeholder questions, clarify regulatory requirements and share practical information relevant to horticultural production and trade. KEPHIS appreciates all stakeholders who visited the stand for their engagement, questions and continued partnership. Through such engagements, KEPHIS continues to work with industry players to promote quality agricultural inputs and produce, strengthen plant health and phytosanitary compliance, and contribute to safe and sustainable horticultural trade.

## KEPHIS SHINES AT THE NYERI AGRICULTURAL SHOW 2026



The Nyeri Agricultural Show 2026 opened on 11 September 2026 at the Kabiru-ini Showground, bringing together farmers, agricultural stakeholders, innovators, exhibitors and government institutions to showcase solutions and initiatives supporting sustainable agricultural development.

Held under the theme "Promoting Climate Smart Agriculture and Trade Initiatives for Sustainable Economic Growth," the show provided an important platform for sharing knowledge, showcasing agricultural technologies and highlighting initiatives that contribute to food security and sustainable livelihoods.

The official opening was presided over by the Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture and Livestock Development, Sen. Hon. Mutahi Kagwe, accompanied by Senator Nyeri County, Hon. Wahome Wamatinga, and other distinguished guests.

KEPHIS was among the institutions actively participating in the show, using its exhibition stand to create awareness on its mandate in safeguarding plant health, ensuring quality agricultural inputs, supporting seed certification, strengthening phytosanitary services and facilitating safe agricultural trade.

KEPHIS Managing Director, Prof. Theophilus Mutui, visited the KEPHIS stand and interacted with staff as they showcased the Service's programmes, innovations and contribution to Kenya's agricultural sector.

KEPHIS' participation received significant recognition, earning six awards across various categories:

- **1st Position** – Best Agricultural-Based Statutory Commission Stand
- **2nd Position** – Best Stand Embracing ICT Systems
- **2nd Position** – Best Agriculture-Based Organization Disseminating Safety Information on Agricultural Products
- **3rd Position** – Best Stand Interpreting the Current Agricultural Show Theme
- **3rd Position** – Best Local Stand in Strategies of International Trade and Exports
- **3rd Position** – Best Regulatory Authority and Corporation Stand

The awards are a reflection of the commitment, professionalism and teamwork demonstrated by KEPHIS staff in communicating the Service's mandate and engaging farmers, traders, industry players and the public.

Through its participation in agricultural shows such as the Nyeri Agricultural Show, KEPHIS continues to strengthen public awareness on plant health, seed certification, phytosanitary inspection and certification, pest surveillance, diagnostics, quality assurance and safe trade.

The recognition at the Nyeri Agricultural Show further underscores KEPHIS' role in supporting climate-smart agriculture, food security and sustainable economic growth through effective plant health regulation and quality assurance.









## KEPHIS 2nd ANNUAL PRAYER DAY: PAUSING TO REFLECT, REFRESH AND RENEW



Away from the demands of the daily work schedule, the KEPHIS family came together on 29th September 2026 for the 2nd Annual Prayer Day; a special occasion to pause, give thanks, reflect and seek God's guidance for the journey ahead.

The occasion brought together the KEPHIS Board of Directors, led by Board Chairman Hon. Joseph M'Eruaki, and the Managing Director, Prof. Theophilus Mutui, who commended staff for their hard work, professionalism, integrity and dedication in delivering on the KEPHIS mandate.

Providing spiritual nourishment during the occasion was Rev. Stephen Munyambu of AIC Milimani who led the congregation in prayer, reflection and fellowship. The session offered staff an opportunity to reflect on faith, gratitude, purpose and the importance of remaining grounded as they carry out their responsibilities.

Held across all KEPHIS offices, the hybrid prayer day brought together staff from different regions, creating an opportunity to step away from routine responsibilities, recharge, strengthen relationships and nurture spiritual and emotional wellbeing.

The 2nd Annual Prayer Day was an opportunity for the KEPHIS family to come together as one, appreciate the collective contribution of staff and draw renewed strength for the responsibilities ahead.

A supported, motivated and united workforce remains an important part of the journey. The renewed sense of purpose and togetherness will continue to inspire staff to serve citizens with commitment, professionalism and dedication while protecting plant health, assuring the quality of seed and agricultural inputs, and facilitating safe trade.



The day concluded on a lively note, with staff unwinding through various sporting activities.



## KEPHIS AT THE 19th AGRIBUSINESS TRADE FAIR 2026 IN ELDORET



Every successful harvest begins with the right choices; from quality planting materials to healthy crops and safe agricultural practices. For farmers, having access to reliable information and quality inputs can make the difference between simply farming and building a productive, sustainable enterprise.

This is the space where KEPHIS continues to play an important role, and from 24–26 September 2026, the Service joined farmers and other agricultural stakeholders at the 19th Agribusiness Trade Fair 2026, held at the University of Eldoret.

> Held under the theme, ***"Promoting innovative climate-smart farmer-centered agribusiness for sustainable inclusive development,"***

the three-day event provided a platform for stakeholders across the agricultural value chain to share knowledge, explore innovations and engage on opportunities for sustainable agribusiness.

The trade fair brought together farmers, researchers, government and county representatives, agribusinesses, cooperatives, processors, input suppliers, students and other players in the agricultural sector. For KEPHIS, it was an opportunity to take its services closer to the people who depend on agriculture and to create awareness about the importance of quality and plant health in farming.

At the KEPHIS stand, visitors engaged with officers and received information on seed quality assurance, phytosanitary services, and plant variety protection. These services play an important role in helping farmers access quality planting materials, protect crops from pests and diseases, and support the safe movement and trade of plants and plant products.



The interactions also provided an opportunity for farmers and other stakeholders to better understand the regulatory requirements necessary for quality agriculture and safe trade. Through direct engagement, KEPHIS was able to respond to questions, share technical information and create greater awareness of how its services contribute to the agricultural value chain.



As agriculture continues to respond to changing climatic conditions, emerging pests and diseases and evolving market demands, the need for science-based regulation, innovation and quality assurance remains critical. The 19th Agribusiness Trade Fair therefore was an opportunity to connect with farmers, listen, share knowledge and reinforce a shared commitment to climate-smart, sustainable and farmer-centered agriculture.

# KEPHIS SHOWCASES PLANT HEALTH AND QUALITY ASSURANCE AT FOODTECH AFRICA EXPO 2026




A safe and sustainable food system begins long before food reaches the plate. It starts with healthy plants, quality agricultural inputs and systems that give farmers and consumers' confidence in the food value chain.

This was at the heart of KEPHIS' participation in the FoodTech Africa Expo 2026, held from 9th–11th September 2026 at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC), Nairobi.

The expo brought together players from across the food and agricultural value chain, creating a platform for businesses, innovators, institutions and other stakeholders to exchange ideas, showcase solutions and explore opportunities shaping the future of food systems.

For KEPHIS, the event provided an opportunity to showcase its role in safeguarding Kenya's plant health, assuring the quality of agricultural inputs and produce, and facilitating safe agricultural trade.

At the KEPHIS stand, visitors engaged with technical experts and learnt more about the range of services that contribute to the quality and safety of agricultural production. Discussions highlighted the importance of plant health and quality assurance in building resilient agricultural systems and supporting the movement of safe and quality plant products.







The interactions also provided an opportunity for KEPHIS to engage with stakeholders on emerging issues affecting agriculture and food systems, while creating awareness of the regulatory and technical services available to support the sector.

As food systems continue to evolve, the connection between plant health, quality assurance, food safety and sustainable trade becomes increasingly important. Healthy plants provide the foundation for productive agriculture, while quality inputs and effective regulatory systems help strengthen confidence throughout the value chain.

Through its participation in platforms such as FoodTech Africa Expo, KEPHIS continues to connect with stakeholders, share knowledge and demonstrate how science-based regulation and innovation can contribute to a healthier, more resilient and competitive agricultural and food system.

## KEPHIS STRENGTHENS DIGITAL INTEGRATION TO ENHANCE PHYTOSANITARY SERVICE DELIVERY



The Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) has reaffirmed its commitment to leveraging technology to enhance efficiency, transparency and accessibility in the delivery of phytosanitary and biosecurity services.

On 21 September 2026, KEPHIS hosted a stakeholder meeting at its Headquarters in Karen to discuss progress in strengthening digital integration between KEPHIS systems and the national trade facilitation infrastructure. The meeting brought together key stakeholders and KEPHIS staff and was officially opened by the KEPHIS Managing Director, Prof. Theophilus Mutui.

A key focus of the meeting was the integration of the Integrated Export Import Certification System (IEICS) with the Trade Facilitation Platform (TFP) operated by the Kenya Trade Network Agency (KenTrade). The integration facilitates seamless transfer of data and information between KEPHIS and KenTrade, supporting more efficient processing of consignments requiring phytosanitary clearance.

Through the integrated system, importers are able to apply for Plant Import Permits (PIPs) and access Phytosanitary Certificates (Phytos) through IEICS. This has significantly streamlined processes by reducing manual data entry, improving information sharing and supporting faster cargo release.

The digital integration also strengthens the ability to track and trace import consignments, particularly those subject to phytosanitary requirements. By improving visibility across the certification and clearance process, the system contributes to better coordination among stakeholders and helps minimize unnecessary delays at points of entry.







The initiative forms part of KEPHIS' broader digital transformation agenda aimed at modernising phytosanitary services and ensuring that regulatory processes keep pace with the evolving needs of international agricultural trade.

Beyond improving operational efficiency, the integration supports safe agricultural trade, revenue protection and the safeguarding of Kenya's plant health. It also enhances the accessibility and transparency of phytosanitary services for importers, exporters and other stakeholders within the agricultural value chain.

As Kenya continues to embrace digital solutions across the trade and agriculture sectors, KEPHIS remains committed to using technology and innovation to strengthen plant health protection, facilitate legitimate trade and deliver responsive, efficient and customer-centered regulatory services.

## CONFERENCE SPOTLIGHT: INTERNATIONAL PHYTOSANITARY AND SEED QUALITY CONFERENCE 2026









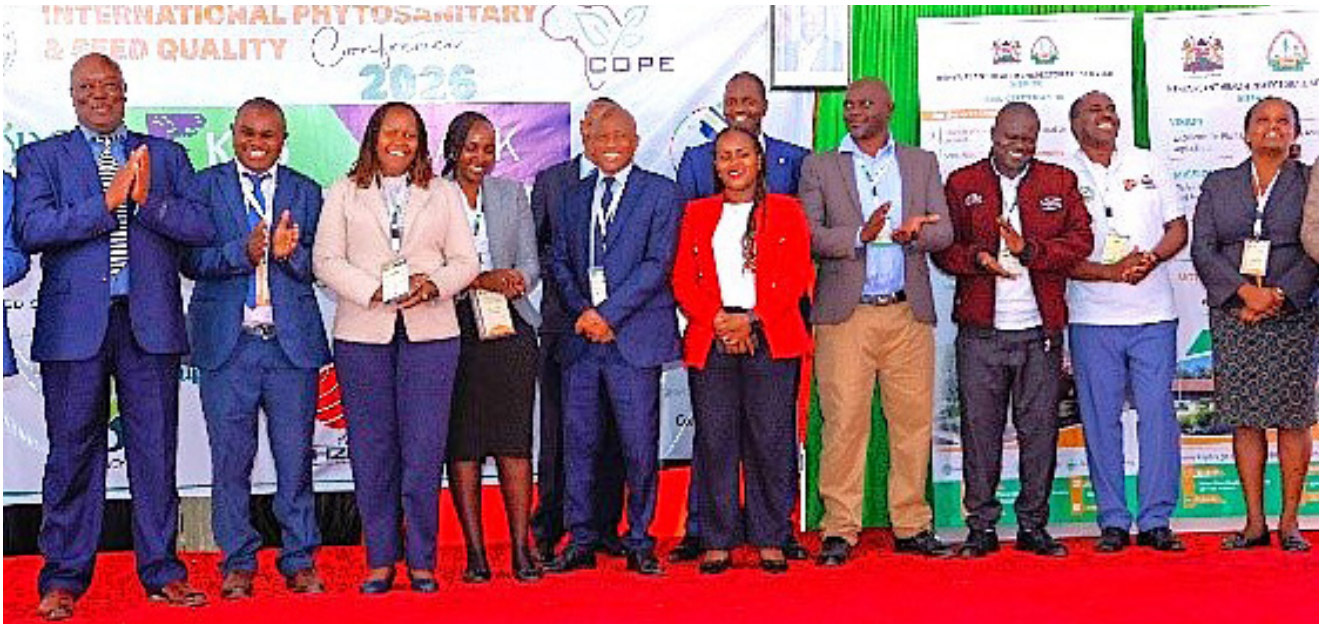


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2026
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KENYA PLANT HEALTH INSPECTORATE SERVICE
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INTERNATIONAL PHYTOSANITARY
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2026
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2026
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# PICTORIAL

**Highlights from the pre-conference training on the rapid identification of emerging plant pathogens**










## Highlights from the 2nd Annual Prayer Day 2026






















## Highlights from the 19th Agribusiness Trade Fair 2026 in Eldoret







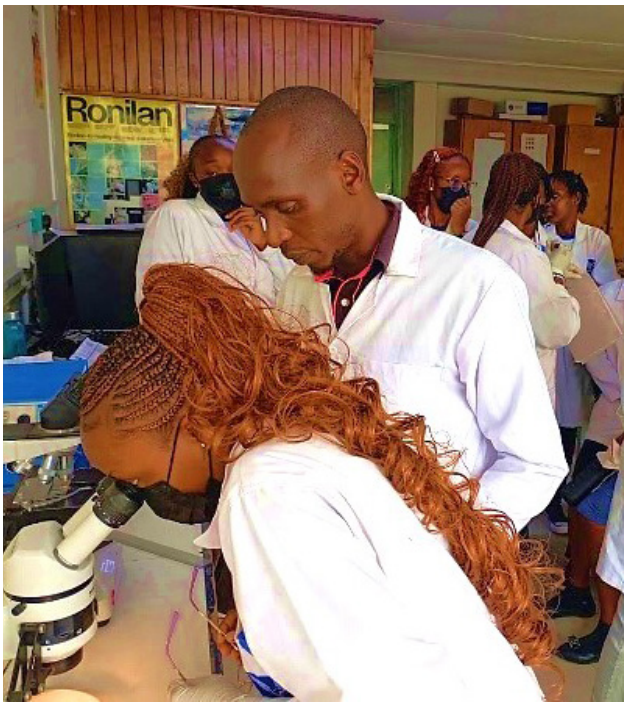


## Highlights from the KEPHIS Board Tours: Kephis Muguga, JKIA, Loitoktok, Namanga and Taveta






## KEPHIS Nakuru Hosts Rift Valley Institute of Business Studies Students









*Plant Health Laboratory analysts engage students during sessions at the Pathology and Molecular Laboratories.*

KENYA PLANT HEALTH INSPECTORATE SERVICE (KEPHIS)

# NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2026


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