



A veterinary scientist holds a mobile phone as he displays and explains how the app is used by scientists to monitor animal health. Photo Credit: Lominda Afedraru

Digital solution LabCards eases diagnosis for veterinary doctors

By Lominda Afedraru

VETERINARY doctors in Uganda face difficulties getting laboratory services, frustrating their efforts to make timely reports of outbreaks of diseases, respond and prevent massive death of animals.

Under their umbrella body Uganda Veterinary Association (UVA), they are advocating adoption of technologies that can be used to monitor animal health.

One of the digital solutions available so far is LabCards, a mobile app that facilitates veterinary doctors to monitor animal health, report disease outbreaks and respond rapidly.

The app, introduced by American animal health company Zoetis, contains features for identifying an animal showing challenge in their health and outbreak of a disease in a specific area.

He notes that the target of the app for scientists to carry out research which

can lead to manufacture of the right animal pharmaceutical products, study the genetics of animals, carry out diagnostics and administering of the right treatment for sick animals.

All a vet has to do is take a blood, faecal matter or saliva sample and make a description, which is then sent to the nearest laboratory for diagnostics.

The laboratory technician will be able to give feedback acknowledging

receipt of the sample and subsequently give results of the test for the vet to act promptly.

Dr Jeremiah Karuga, the former regional manager of Zoetis, says improving access to laboratory services through technology will help reduce the rampant use of antibiotics which farmers administer to animals without proper diagnosis.

It will also reduce the manual paper work and make the work of the veterinary doctor easy.

Dr Karuga and team have helped in setting up laboratories in various parts of the country to

make the work of the veterinary doctor easy. Instead of sending samples to the government laboratory in Entebbe vet doctors can now do this in the district laboratories.

Dr Brian Nicholas Arinaitwe, a veterinary field officer working with Africa Livestock Productivity Initiative, says it is important to observe biosecurity measures such as applying disinfectants before handling any animal and keeping the housing and animal kraal clean.

This also applies to people who are visiting livestock facilities.

Farmers are advised vaccinate their animals against major diseases such as

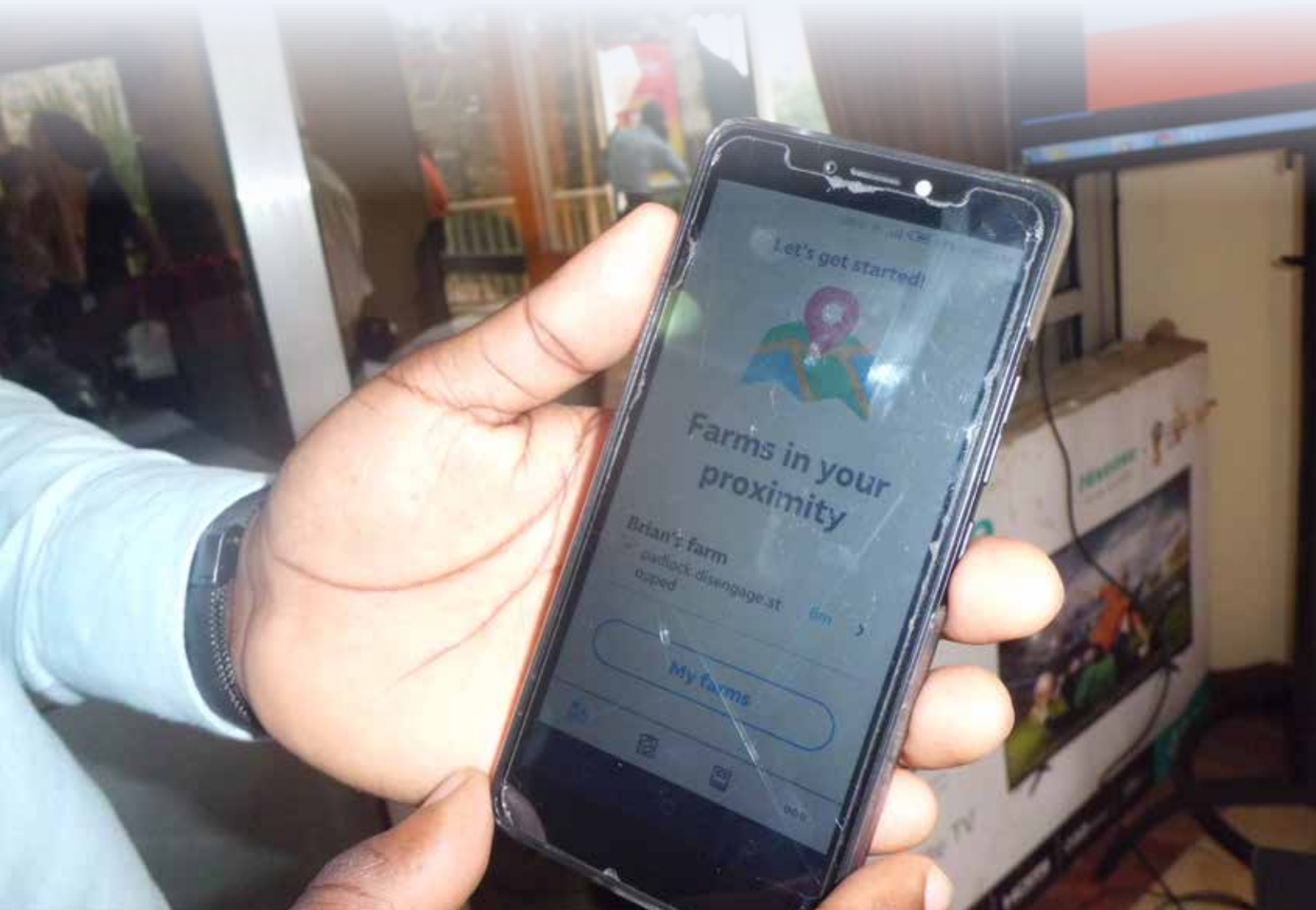
foot and mouth disease, heart water, Avian influenza, Brucellosis and African Swine Fever.

It is also important to dip the animals with recommended acaricides to keep them healthy.

Any signs of sickness must be referred to vet doctor and farmers must avoid self-prescription for animals.

In case of disease infection separate diseased animals from healthy animals to avoid transmission of infection and, where necessary, cull diseased animals.

A farmer should practise breeding and selection such that animals well suited to local conditions are raised and detailed breeding records are kept.



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