



Sylvia Nalubwaama  
**2015 AWARD Fellow**

Position	Assistant Lecturer
Institution	Makerere University, School of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Resources
Country	Uganda
MSc	Tropical Animal Production, Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands, 2004
Mentor	Dr. Sarah Mubiru, Senior Agriculture Advisor, SNV Netherlands Development Organization
Research Area	Development of strategies to integrate dairy cattle into smallholder organic pineapple production for improved farm productivity in Kayunga and Luwero districts in central Uganda.



“Not many women were taking up veterinary medicine at that time because it was labeled ‘hard’ and seen as a course for men.”

Sylvia Nalubwaama grew up in Kampala, but spent some school holidays in the village helping with farming. She was only five years old when her father died, leaving her mother to raise seven children.

Nalubwaama studied veterinary medicine as an undergraduate, and was one of only two women who registered for the course that year. “Not many women were taking up veterinary medicine at that time because it was labeled ‘hard’ and seen as a course for men,” she says. The other woman dropped out in second year, leaving her as the lone female among 43 boys.

As an undergraduate, Nalubwaama felt drawn to teaching and started working on her grades so the university would retain her. Unfortunately, that year there was a recruitment ban, so instead she decided to take up a position in the district local government as a veterinary officer.

A short course in Egypt provided the opening Nalubwaama needed to start focusing on achieving her dream—to be a university lecturer. The course exposed her to how farmers control diseases at the farm level, what the diseases are, different feeds, and how farmers can best manage their environment to reduce incidences of disease as well as improve farm productivity. “The experience made me a better advisor who was more interested in the welfare of the farmers,” she states. “It drew my attention away from animals only toward seeing the farm as a system, so I began to look at the farm as a whole.” The course also challenged her to enroll for postgraduate training in tropical animal production on a scholarship from the Netherlands government channeled through the Ugandan Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries.

“Some of the skills I gain as an AWARD Fellow will help me to not be shy in applying for positions so that I can progress in my career. I want to grow as a leader.”



**AWARD is a career-development program that equips top women agricultural scientists across sub-Saharan Africa to accelerate agricultural gains by strengthening their research and leadership skills through tailored fellowships. AWARD is a catalyst for innovations with high potential to contribute to the prosperity and well-being of African smallholder farmers, most of whom are women.**

**AWARD is generously supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa. For more information, visit [www.awardfellowships.org](http://www.awardfellowships.org)**

Eventually her work in extension no longer challenged her, so she decided to look for another job, landing a position as an assistant lecturer in livestock production and production systems, her current position.

Nalubwaama is currently pursuing a PhD in Animal Science at Makerere. She is conducting an on-farm study on developing technologies to address some of the challenges faced by integrated—crops and livestock—smallholder farmers. As part of her research, she is working with organic farmers whose biggest challenge is dry season feeding because their livestock depend on natural pastures. The animals also have problems with disease, especially ticks and worms.

The organic farming system is unique because regulations require farmers to minimize the use of chemicals and synthetic drugs in crop and livestock production. “Farmers need alternatives to chemicals when dealing with feed additives and diseases,” Nalubwaama explains. Her research is exploring locally available resources that can be turned into feed, working specifically on using organic pineapples by processing the waste to make silage feed. She is also trying to determine the effect of feed on milk production and on reducing worms in cattle.

Nalubwaama is looking forward to sharing the skills she gains from AWARD courses with her colleagues. “Once you know how to do something in a better way, your colleagues can emulate you,” she says. “Some of the skills I gain as an AWARD Fellow will help me to not be shy in applying for positions so that I can progress in my career. I want to grow as a leader.”