

CONSUMERS in Mwanza city and the entire Lake Zone are put on maximum alert as unscrupulous traders now extend shelf life of food and drug items by forging their expiry dates.

Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority (TFDA) Manager for Lake Zone, Mr Moses Mbambe told the Daily News over the weekend that the new development could be more dangerous and therefore needs immediate intervention.

He said surveys in the market have shown that unlike in the past where some of the traders used to sell expired items, the new trend now shows that unethical traders temper with the official stamped expiry dates to extend shelf lives of the items on display.

“Mwanza and the whole of the Lake Zone is still facing rampant sales of the unauthorised products especially food items. We are encountering tricky businessmen cheating the buyers by tempering with the expiry dates of the fast moving items,” he said.

He mentioned the items as infant milk (baby formula), chocolates, Cerelac whose expiry drugs were carefully changed using special inks or instruments that cannot be easily erased.

On the drugs, he mentioned two types of the drugs as INDOMETHACIN (Capsules) and Asotin whose original label was changed and replaced with the forged one and both drugs were imported from China.

Apart from food and drugs, Mr Mbambe said another tough job was on the livestock drugs and spirits increasingly forged and or counterfeited.

counterfeit.

He said while the Authority is set to launch special education on the new style of business misconducts, it is important for the consumers to be on alert and always consult his office while in doubt before buying doubtful items.

“But the challenge we are likely to face here is that it is extremely difficult for the uninformed consumer or just a normal eye to detect this kind of cheating on some of the sold items,” he said.

Already some of the traders are helping the state security organs over their dangerous business tricks while about 79 boxes of the chocolates are apprehended as well as its owner.

Apart from public education, there is a serious lack of ‘standards policing’ across the Lake Zone, TFDA having inadequate workforce to effectively curb the vice while the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) has no office at all.

Consumers who spoke to the ‘Daily News’ cautioned on the trend of the two bodies concentrating their existence in Dar es Salaam alone forgetting Mwanza apart from being the second largest City, it is equally growing so rapidly.

“I suggest that the government deploys staff of these two institutions depending on the growth of the regions both populationwise and economically. Why are they concentrating with Dar es Salaam alone?” queried one government official who preferred anonymity.

However, TBS through its Public Relations Officer, Mrs Roida Andusamile, told this paper recently that the government had okayed for the employment of the new staff at the Bureau and one of the tasks will be opening offices in the Lake Zone before end of this year.