

King Oyo advises pastoralists in Ntoroko to grow crops, irrigate

NTOROKO

By Rogers Sunday

The king of Toro, Oyo Kabamba Iguru Rukiidi IV, has encouraged his subjects of Rwebisengo in Ntoroko district to embrace diversification and better farming methods.

King Oyo yesterday visited Wilson Tumusiime, a model farmer dealing in fruits and vegetables in Rwebisengo town council. Despite Ntoroko being a semi-dry area, Tumusiime is using simple irrigation methods to produce vegetables all year round.

Oyo said since the area is a cattle corridor, herdsmen need to be encouraged through model demonstration farms.

"Residents have a negative perception towards cultivation here. They think this area is for cattle-keeping only and that no crops can grow here," he said.

"Our people do not have to depend only on cattle." Oyo

Ntoroko residents depend on food produce from Kabarole and other neighbouring districts. They sell their cattle mostly to the DR of Congo to get money to buy food for their families.

"We eat everyday, but we do not sell cattle every day. That is enough to tell that some people are starving," Oyo said. With irrigation and other better farming practices, the king said Rwebisengo has the capacity of being a food



Oyo jumping over an irrigation gully during a farm tour. Photo by Rogers Sunday

WHAT RESIDENTS SAY

Joshua Nyakojo: Everything seems impossible until it has been achieved. There have been a lot of myths against cultivation here, but this model farmer has proved everyone wrong.



Evelyn Martha: Farming is the way to go, but people need to be encouraged and guided on how to do it as a business. Ntoroko has a lot of capacity for agriculture.



Jonathan Bbala: As young people, we are determined to learn from this and be able to change Rwebisengo within a short period of time.



basket. "I have never seen vegetables being grown in Rwebisengo. If more people can embrace the same, this area can be transformed economically within a short time. Our people do not have to depend on only

cattle," he said. Tumusiime owns 22 acres of land in Rwebisengo, where he is growing onions, watermelons, cabbages, cassava, sweet potatoes and rice. "When the floods hit this

area in 2014, I came here for a visit. I did my survey and took soil samples. My main intention was to see how best I can take advantage of the floods," Tumusiime said. According to Tumusiime, lab results indicated that the soils

in Rwebisengo were good for agriculture. "I am glad that for the few seasons that I have spent here, many people have visited my farm to learn. Others have opened up their land for cultivation" Tumusiime said.



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