

# HEIFER INTERNATIONAL TO TRAIN GOAT FARMERS AT EXPO

By Herbert Musoke

Livestock is a vital part of Uganda's agriculture, providing food, income and employment for thousands of families. Its importance will be highlighted at the Harvest Money Expo 2026, where Heifer International. The global non-profit that has worked with Ugandan farmers since 1982 will showcase how livestock and other ventures can be transformed into profitable businesses.

The expo, organised by Vision Group in partnership with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, is running under the theme, *Farming as a Business: Growth, Sustainability and Co-operation*. Entry is sh10,000, with an additional sh10,000 for training. The charges apply daily. Other sponsors include



Engineering Solutions, Tunga Nutrition, Pearl Bank, Uganda Development Corporation and aBi Development.

### WHY PARTICIPATE

The expo feeds into agriculture's central role in Uganda's economy.

"The expo gives farmer groups a platform to showcase and market products, interact with peers, especially youths, get exposure to technologies and interface with financial institutions, technology suppliers and input dealers," Ronald Wabwire, the signature programme technical leader at Heifer International, says.



Ronald Wabwire

At the expo, participants will learn about collateral-free tractors, renewable energy solutions such as biogas for cooking, solar equipment for irrigation and lighting, forage choppers and waste management technologies.

"We will also exhibit climate-smart practices aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions," Wabwire says.

"If you are in a farmer group, co-operative or wish to start one, come and interact with us, hear how we have managed to be here since 1982 and have a lasting impact on communities."

Goat breeds imported and cross-bred with Heifer International's support will also be showcased, Hamisi Semanda, the director of Ham Animal Breeding Farm in Kasokwe, Kayunga district, says. Breeds include Boers, Kalahari Red and Savannas.

At the expo, Semanda will train visitors in pasture production, hay and pellet preparation to help farmers achieve marketable weights quickly.

Heifer's broader work covers livestock development in beef, dairy, poultry and piggyery, alongside interventions in oilseed and horticulture.

## EMPOWERING FARMERS

Heifer International's impact stretches decades. One beneficiary is the Uganda Catholic Secretariat, which, in 1993, sought support for a cow project to improve nutrition and household incomes in Greater Masaka.

Fr Peter Ssenkaayi, the manager of Maddo Milk Processing Factory and co-ordinator of the Cow Project, recalls: "We received the first three heifers in 1993 and 24 more in 1996. Alongside distribution, we trained farmers in hygiene, feeding, biogas use and financial management."

By 2003, rising milk production created market challenges. Heifer responded with support for a milk processing factory, named Maddo Dairies, launched by then-finance minister Gerald Ssendawula. Members were trained in value addition and received loans for machines to produce yoghurt and pasteurised milk.

Farmers also accessed forage choppers, water tanks and solar equipment on credit, repaid after milk sales. Today, the project has 2,443 farmers across seven districts of Greater Masaka. The districts include Masaka, Kyotera, Rakai, Bukomansimbi, Kalungu, Lwengo and Sembabule. The factory processes up to 4,000lts of milk per hour and produces 4,000lts of yoghurt daily.

The members of Maddo Dairies are also encouraged to plant trees and install biogas units for waste management, financed through milk sales.

"The project has improved household incomes and living conditions as members earn from milk sold to the factory. Credit extended to members covers school fees and medical bills, saving them from moneylenders who would seize property," Fr Ssenkaayi notes.

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