



The dried up Luti valley dam in Kiboga district

Panic as dams dry up

KIBOGA

By Nelson Kiva

Dams in Kiboga reportedly started drying up in December and to date, they have never filled up. The problem has been witnessed in the sub-counties of Kapeke, Ddwaniro, Bukomero and Lwamata, which make up the Kiboga cattle corridor.

The population in the area depends on water from the valley dams for domestic consumption and their animals.

Reports indicate that farmers in the area lose animals due to lack of water and pasture.

Search for water

In Bukomero and Ddwaniro sub-counties, some cattle-keepers trek more than 20km to get water for their animals.

Tadeo Kahindi, who owns 150 head of cattle, has to move over 15km from Katalama in Ddwaniro sub-county to Wabikunyu in Bukomero, sub-county, to get water for his animals.

Kahindi says he had excavated three dams on his farm, but these have been dry since December last year.

Frank Tumusiime, who owns 10 head of cattle, also said his dam dried up last December. Since then the area has not witnessed enough rain.

Community affected

The chairperson of Wabikunyu valley tank management committee, Christopher Lusasi, says the dam is left with only muddy water. He adds that the valley tank which was excavated in 1998 by the agriculture minister, had a width of 50 metres and length of 100 metres. It was 15 feet deep and has since silted to less than six feet.

Lusasi said since this is the only dam that has remained, it serves 3,700 head of cattle daily.

At Luti, the community dam



Pastoralists giving water to cattle in Wabikunyu, Kiboga



An abandoned borehole in the district

has completely dried up. This has not only affected pastoralists and the general community, but also schools that depend on the dam for water.

The deputy headteacher of Mutesa II Memorial Primary School, Bakiika Serukera, says they have to pay sh8,000 to a bodaboda cyclist to fetch water for the school daily.

The Ddwaniro sub-county LC3 chairperson, Aaron Mugenyi, says due to lack of water, some cattle-related diseases break out, causing further losses to farmers in terms of treatment of animals.

What leaders say

Kiboga East MP Dr Keefa

Kiwanuka, says over five government valley dams have dried up in the area.

He adds that the situation is made worse by the breakdown of the other water sources such as boreholes.

Kiwanuka says over 40 boreholes provided by the district and other government programmes in the area have broken down.

He appealed for immediate support to the district by the Ministry of Water and Environment to repair the boreholes, construct solar-powered boreholes and establish modern valley dams in the area.

"For instance, at Muyenje,

the dam, which also served a primary school, has dried up and both the school and the community face a water crisis," he says.

The Kiboga district chairperson, Israel Yiga, said the Government had embarked on constructing modern dams with the aim of minimising cases of dams drying or silting.

He added that recently, three solar-powered dams were commissioned in Kapeke, Bukomero and Ddwaniro to provide water for production.

Last week, officials from the water ministry rushed to Kiboga to study the situation.

The commissioner in charge of rural water supply and sanitation department, Joseph Oryono, attributed the problem to climate change.

He appealed to the population to prioritise tree planting to conserve the environment.

Residents' woes

Catherine Babirye, a teacher at Mutesa II Memorial Primary School, says pupils have been dropping out of school in search of water for their parents' cattle.

Michael Oluka demands that the community borehole is repaired to provide an alternative water source for the community.