PAKASA

DAIRY FACILITY SPURS OVER 1,000 JOBS

Katebe Farm in Lyantonde district has undergone a major dairy processing transformation led by the Engineering Development and Innovation Centre (EDIC), significantly boosting efficiency, value addition, and job creation. Through locally designed engineering solutions, the project has increased production capacity, reduced costs, and created over 1,000 jobs, writes Aloysius Kasoma.

PHOTOS BY ALOYSIUS KASOMA



The owner of Katebe Farm, retired Gen. Kayihura (second-right), Musenero (second-left) at the farm

A major dairy processing upgrade at Katebe Farm in Lyantonde district is driving job creation and boosting value addition across Uganda's cattle corridor, with more than 1,000 jobs already generated.

Project outputs at the farm, which include vanilla, strawberry, and flour products, have supported value addition, agro-processing, market expansion, and increased income opportunities for farmers.

The intervention, implemented by the EDIC, has transformed processing capacity at the farm while opening up new economic opportunities for surrounding communities near Katebe Farm in Lyantonde, Kiruhura, and Sembabule districts.

The initiative marks a significant step in linking science and industry, with the Government resorting to localised engineering solutions to drive value addition, boost competitiveness, and create employment at scale.

Jimmy Kandore, the chief mechanical engineer at EDIC, said the intervention demonstrates how home-grown engineering can revive industries, reduce costs, and accelerate value addition.

Kandore explained that when the EDIC team arrived at the factory, they found it operational but performing far below its potential due to poor engineering systems.

"When we came here, the factory had a lot of problems. It was functioning, but its efficiency was very poor. As EDIC, we don't just start working — we first study and design solutions," he said.

According to Kandore, the team conducted a detailed assessment before developing and testing a new system tailored to the plant's needs. This process resulted in a significantly cheaper and more efficient alternative to imported machinery.

"We came up with a complete design, reviewed it with our engineers, and developed a technology that is much cheaper than imported options," he noted.

At the centre of the problem was an expensive diesel-powered boiler that had crippled productivity and profitability.

"They were taking between 11 and 15 hours to pasteurise just 500 litres of milk. Imagine burning diesel for all those hours — the investor could not make profits," Kandore explained.

EDIC responded by designing and fabricating a high-capacity steam boiler and an upgraded pasteurisation system using locally sourced materials. The results have been dramatic.

"Today, our steam boiler pasteurises milk in less than one hour. This has never happened in this country," he said.

The new vertical-fired boiler produces 300kg of steam per hour, significantly boosting efficiency and enabling higher production volumes.

"We have increased production from one batch of 500 litres in 24 hours to about 3,000 litres in just 12 hours," Kandore added.

Beyond efficiency gains, Kandore emphasised that such engineering innovations are critical for job creation and industrial growth.

"When you improve efficiency and reduce costs, you expand production — and that means more jobs across the value chain, from processing to supply and distribution," he said.

He noted that the success of the project is already attracting attention from both local and foreign investors, many of whom previously relied on imported solutions that often failed to meet local conditions.

"This has shown investors that these technologies can be developed here in Uganda, and at a much lower cost. We did not import anything — all materials were sourced locally," he said.

Kandore added that EDIC is currently supporting multiple facilities across the country, with a growing pipeline of industries seeking similar interventions.

"Right now, we have over seven factories in different districts. This project has become a demonstration that local engineering works, and we are ready to support more industries that are facing challenges," he said.

He called on struggling

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