

neglect their responsibilities.

active. "You would not last here

waste before they reach water bodies.

Shs14b project to boost milk production in cattle corridor

BY MICHAEL AGABA

KAMPALA. The government has described as a milestone a \$4 million (about Shs14 billion) programme that aims at boosting Uganda's dairy industry by increasing milk output through climate-smart practices.

Mr Samson Akankiza Mpiira, the commissioner of Dairy Development and Production at the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), said the Green Dairy Investment Programme, which will be implemented by aBi Development Ltd, aligns with the government's plan to enhance farmer productivity and competitiveness in the dairy industry.

The programme, to be implemented over three years, targets more than 20,000 dairy farmers in 15 districts in central and southwestern Uganda, fo-

cusing on improving breeds, nutrition and animal disease management.

"The Green Dairy Investment Project comes in timely to complement and augment the government efforts, and is in line with the national development plans (NDPIV). If you look at the tenfold agro-industrialisation programme, we are all looking at how we can have value, competitiveness and sustainability of this important subsector of the country," Mr Akankiza said at the launch of the programme in Kampala on Thursday.

He explained that while the dairy industry contributes almost 11 percent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with production now estimated at 5.4 billion litres annually, the country still needs to invest more in production and infrastructure to sustain growth in the sub-sector.

"We need to improve production and productivity and ensure that we are

competitive in terms of production, especially because there is substantial investment in value addition," he said.

Mr Moses Nyabila, the chief executive officer of aBi Development Ltd, said the programme will support farmers to adopt solar energy to power milk collection centres, grow improved pastures and pump water, among other interventions.

"We should be able to triple our productivity per cow. We should be able to

triple the income that comes to the farmer," he said.

"The future of sustainability depends on increasing productivity and nurturing the environment. This is an opportunity for Uganda to grow even more," Mr Nyabila added.

Mr William Matovu, the country director for Heifer International, said the focus of the programme is to catalyse investments within the dairy value chain by enhancing production, productivity and market access.

"The focus will be largely on greening the value chain. As we see the changing dynamics within the agricultural value chain, it is very important to focus on sustainability," he said.

"We will introduce solar-powered milk cooling systems and use of biogas to ensure that farmers at farm level can effectively grow and conserve fodder, while also managing waste," he added.

BACKGROUND

Some of the beneficiary districts fall within the cattle corridor, which is highly vulnerable to environmental shocks such as prolonged dry spells, drying water sources, erratic rainfall, livestock diseases and pests.