

BY JOHN MASABA

President Yoweri Museveni has described Uganda's first locally developed anti-tick vaccine as a lasting solution to tick-borne diseases that have long affected livestock.

Museveni, who was speaking during the commissioning of the anti-tick vaccine at the National Livestock Resources Research Institute (NaLIRRI) in Namulonge, said ticks have been a major setback for cattle corridor farmers.

The President also saluted scientists, noting that they should be exempted from Pay-As-You-Earn in order to ensure that they earn enough salary.

"I am going to propose scrapping Pay As You Earn tax for scientists, similar to the exemptions granted to Police and the army," he said.

The sh170b initiative has been funded by the government of Uganda to address the tick threat to livestock in the country.

Speaking at the launch of the vaccine, he described ticks as a long-standing setback to Uganda's livestock sector and emphasised that the new vaccine provides a safer and more durable alternative to acaricides, which he noted are toxic and become less effective over time.

"The cow now kills the tick," he said, underscoring the innovation behind the vaccine. He further congratulated the scientists behind the innovation and pledged continued government support.

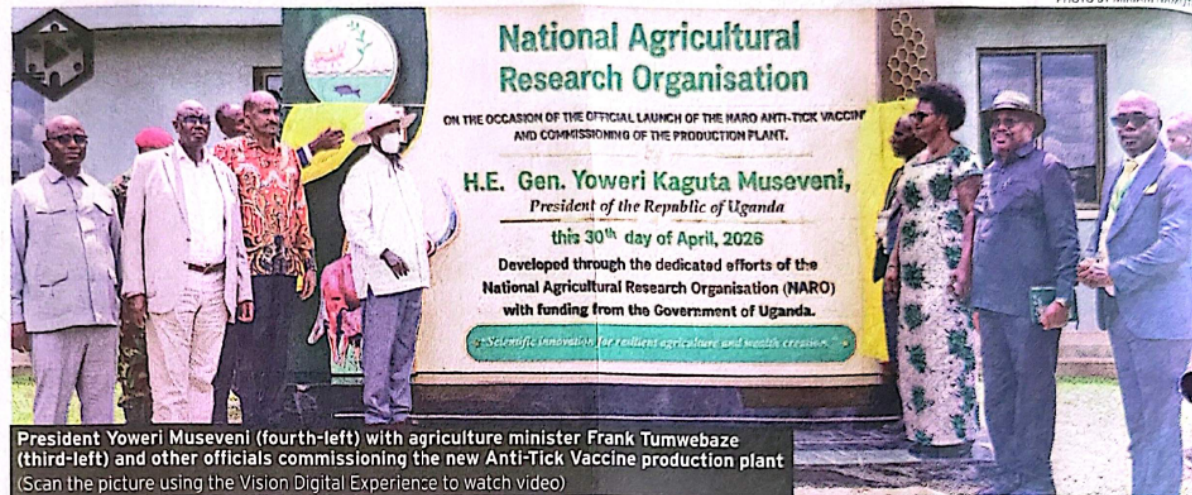
TAX INCENTIVES, FUNDING

Museveni also reiterated his commitment to strengthening Uganda's science sector, proposing tax incentives for scientists similar to those extended to security personnel, in recognition of their role in national development.

Museveni also confirmed

PRESIDENT MUSEVENI LAUNCHES UGANDA'S FIRST ANTI-TICK VACCINE

PHOTO BY MIRIAM NAMUTE



President Yoweri Museveni (fourth-left) with agriculture minister Frank Tumwebaze (third-left) and other officials commissioning the new Anti-Tick Vaccine production plant (Scan the picture using the Vision Digital Experience to watch video)

government's commitment to avail the sh600b requested by the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) to establish the vaccine research hub.

The agriculture minister, Frank Tumwebaze, welcomed the milestone, revealing that the project dates back to 2022 when scientists first presented their proposal.

He commended the President and government for the support that has culminated in the successful development of the vaccine.

The State Minister for Animal Industry, Bright Rwamirama, praised sustained government investment in livestock, noting growth in dairy farming and an increase in livestock numbers.



THE FACILITY HAS THE CAPACITY TO PRODUCE UP TO 36 MILLION DOSES ANNUALLY.

On his part, the director general of National Agricultural Research Organisation, Dr Yonah Baguma, described the launch as both a scientific and economic milestone.

He added that the facility has the capacity to produce up to 36 million doses annually, with current

production at about 3 million doses per month. So far, 1.5 million doses have been produced, with demand already emerging from neighbouring countries.

Baguma noted that the project has created hundreds of jobs and positions Uganda as a potential regional hub for veterinary vaccine production.

The vaccine, branded NAROVAC-ATV1, is a recombinant product developed using antigens (Subolesin) derived from local tick species.

It is administered to cattle from one month old, with three initial doses given at day 0, day 30 and day 180, providing protection for a full year. Booster doses are

administered in subsequent years.

The executive director of the National Drug Authority (NDA), Dr David Nahamya confirmed that the manufacturing plant meets required standards, noting that the authority provided technical oversight throughout the development process.

Farmers involved in early trials have reported positive results, citing reduced tick infestations and lower treatment costs. The vaccine is expected to retail at about sh10,000, making it an affordable option for farmers. The breakthrough is expected to significantly reduce the cost of tick control, cut reliance on acaricides and boost productivity in Uganda's livestock sector.