



President Museveni addressing journalists at Baralegi State Lodge in Okwang sub-county, Otuke district. Second-right is the Otuke district vice-chairperson Cecilia Ogwang. The President tasked RDCs and the media with sensitising the public about modern farming methods. PPU photos



The President watering his plants

Museveni opens Otuke farm

COMMERCIAL FARMING

The President advised farmers to grow crops like coffee that have a high demand on the international market

By Vision Reporters

President Yoweri Museveni yesterday opened his third private demonstration farm in Otuke district with a call to the public to use the Internet and other media platforms for development purposes, so they can get out of poverty.

The farm is found in Baralegi, Okwang sub-county in Otuke district in Lango sub-region. It is the third of its kind in the country, after Kawumu farm in Luwero district and Kityerera in Busoga sub-region.

Museveni, who was accompanied by some MPs and the Otuke district vice-chairperson, Cecilia Ogwang, participated in the planting of several crops that included coffee, mangoes, pineapples, bananas, oranges, sunflower, cassava and elephant grass for zero grazing cows on the 10-acre demonstration farm at Baralegi State Lodge.

The state lodge is located about 5km from Otuke town council and about 10 kilometers from Lira town.

This is where Museveni pitched camp about 15 years ago to fight the elusive Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leader, Joseph Kony. Residents suffered brutality at the hands of the LRA and Karimojong cattle rustlers.

Addressing a press conference at the state lodge after planting the crops, President Museveni said it was unacceptable for the majority of citizens to live in poverty in a country like Uganda with good soil, enough rain and excellent climate.

He reiterated that he is totally opposed to the thinking that society has to have the rich and the poor, adding that it is possible to eliminate poverty from all households in Uganda.

Museveni appealed to media houses to



The President planting oranges



President Museveni planting pineapples at his new 10-acre farm in Otuke district

commissioners (RDC) to put to task the different media houses to allocate time for the sensitisation of farmers on how to fight poverty through modern agriculture methods.

"The problem is also because of RDCs. The radios are part of the diversion, wasting time on football instead of educating people how to fight poverty. If they did (spoke about farming), many people would listen. The RDC who is listening should bring reports (to me)," he said.

The President also faulted agricultural extension workers for not doing enough to train farmers before giving them farm inputs, saying it was a simple job to do. He asked them to use radios in their respective areas to sensitise farmers on good farm practices that give good yields.

He said this could be done through churches and on radio, among other avenues.

He told RDCs: "Go to radios, tell them you want access to radio (to educate farmers). If a station refuses, we shall close that one. I trained peasants on how to use a gun and we defeated an organised government army. How

"Myself, I have started demonstration farms where there is government land in Luwero and Busoga. I have now come here to do what I have been telling people to do. In Luwero, when I inaugurated the farm, it was during the dry season and the crops germinated because I irrigated using bottles. In Kawumu, part of the land (half an acre) has fish ponds (four) on it, generating sh64m per year," the President said.

In October 2016, Museveni started the demonstration farm in Kawumu village, Luwero district to showcase his widely publicised four-acre farming model.

The President informed the people of Lango sub-region that he had experimented with the approach in Kiruhura district, right from 1966 by educating the people there to shift from rearing traditional Ankole cows to exotic dairy cows, which successfully transformed the area.

He said similar modern farming methods that are commercial and profit-oriented, if adopted, can help boost production and get Ugandans out of household poverty.

The President appealed to the population to

fourth acre dedicated to grass (pasture) for zero grazing dairy cattle.

Responding to concerns about inadequate markets for agricultural products, the President advised farmers to grow crops like coffee that have a high demand on the international market and also endeavour to produce and maintain high-quality produce during production and post-harvest handling processes.

On the issue of middlemen cheating small farmers, the President said the problem can be solved by farmers searching for better markets themselves. "Why should you depend on traders to tell you what the price is? Use the Internet to find out market information," he advised.

Ogwang commended the President for the support he has given towards the development of Otuke district over the years.

"You have stated correctly that we live in poverty because of ignorance. I think our people will greatly learn from this demonstration farm," she said.

"I think the problem is with the mindset