

# Kenya to partner with private sector to boost dairy, livestock sector



Deputy President William Ruto admires a Boran hybrid bull when he officially opened the ninth edition of the Brookside Breeder Show at Jamhuri Park in Nairobi June 27, 2013.

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By Xinhua

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The government is seeking partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders to improve dairy and livestock production.

Deputy President William Ruto said Thursday that such partnerships will ensure the sector contributes adequately to both the farmers' income and country's economy.

"This industry contributes about Sh150 billion annually to the economy; the government will partner with the private sector to improve it," said Mr Ruto.

Speaking during the official opening of the ninth edition of the Annual Brookside Livestock Breeders Show and Sales in Nairobi, the deputy president noted that the livestock sector is a good source of raw materials for industrial growth, employment, food security as well as foreign exchange.

He emphasised that livestock production and the dairy sector was a major economic and social activity which constitutes a significant part of the rural economy accounting for 14 per cent of the agricultural GDP.

Mr Ruto underscored that the dairy subsector has immense potential to create substantial wealth and improve the livelihoods of majority smallholder farmers and pastoral communities in the country.

Kenya aims to export 400 million litres of milk annually by 2020, up from the current 200 million litres it sells in the foreign market.

Mr Ruto challenged farmers to practice value addition so that they can fetch higher prices besides being competitive in both local and international markets.

The three-day event is organised by Brookside Dairy Limited in collaboration with Livestock Breeders Show Trust and other stakeholders in the livestock industry with an aim of sensitising farmers on proper livestock husbandry. It attracted eight livestock breeders and several farm machinery exhibitors.

The deputy president noted that despite the many challenges it faces, the livestock sector continues to grow and that the government is targeting it as part of efforts to redouble agricultural productivity.

Mr Ruto gave a stern warning to cattle rustlers, stressing that those found engaging in the vice will be dealt with full force of the law.

"Just like drug traffickers, your days are numbered and we will put you where you belong," he warned.

The deputy president urged farmers to embrace modern methods of farming in order to increase productivity and improve the quality of their produce.

"We want a livestock sector that is characterised by mechanisation and innovations that will enable the industry to grow," he added.

Mr Ruto pointed out that the government will expand the country's genetic resource centre to produce adequate semen for local use and for export, noting that the current 600,000 doses of semen production is low.

Brookside Dairy chairman, Muhoho Kenyatta, said that dairy farming is a lucrative undertaking that has high potential of improving living standards of Kenyans.

He assured that Brookside Dairy will continue to work closely with small farmers particularly in the rural areas so as to enable them change their breeding approach and improve quality of their production.

Mr Kenyatta announced that the company will commission a \$58.5 million plant investment that will redouble milk intake and provide market for farmers.

