Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Dr. Mark Cyubahiro Bagabe, on Friday called on farmers, livestock keepers, and innovators to harness technology and creativity to boost agricultural productivity and resilience.

Speaking at the opening of the 18th National Agriculture and Livestock Exhibition at Mulindi in Gasabo District, Dr. Bagabe encouraged participants to transform knowledge gained from the exhibition into tangible innovations. More than 500 exhibitors are showcasing farming and livestock practices, agribusiness solutions, and development initiatives aligned with the country's agricultural growth goals.

"This exhibition is a platform for sharing knowledge, strengthening partnerships, and creating solutions to challenges in the agriculture and livestock sectors," Bagabe said. "It promotes innovation and trade, which are critical for long-term sustainability."

The weeklong exhibition is being held under the theme, **"Promoting Innovation and Investment as Pillars of Climate-Resilient Agriculture and Livestock."**

Agriculture and livestock remain key to Rwanda's economic growth, contributing inputs to 70% of the country's industries, according to the minister. He cited the government's economic acceleration strategy, known as NST2, which targets a 50% increase in productivity and more than 6% annual growth in the sector.

Bagabe also highlighted plans to double private sector investment in agriculture from $2.2 billion in 2024 to $4 billion by 2029. Export revenues from agricultural products are projected to rise from $875 million to $1.9 billion, while agriculture-related loans are expected to increase from 6% to 10%.

The government is working with 18 financial institutions to offer low-interest loans. Over the past two years, 17 billion Rwandan francs out of a 31-billion-franc package have been distributed to support farmers.

One major focus is the national agricultural insurance program, *Tekana, Urishingiwe Muhinzi–Mworozi* ("Be at Ease, You Are Insured, Farmer–Livestock Keeper"), which covers 40% of insurance costs. More than 189,000 beneficiaries have enrolled in the 2024/25 fiscal year, covering eight crops and four types of livestock. The government has contributed 5 billion francs to the initiative.

The minister urged more farmers and livestock keepers to enroll in the insurance program, emphasizing its role in protecting livelihoods and reducing risk in the face of climate change and market shocks.

Among the exhibitors was a local innovator demonstrating vertical gardening techniques using recycled materials like wooden planks, plastic bottles, and pipes. “This setup uses limited space and affordable tools,” he said. “Each year, I come here and learn more about irrigation and sustainable methods.”

The annual event continues to serve as a national platform for advancing Rwanda’s agriculture and livestock sectors through knowledge sharing, business networking, and showcasing climate-smart practices.