Farmers have been urged to adopt innovative agricultural methods and improve production practices as changing weather patterns continue to threaten food production and livestock farming.

Agriculture and Animal Resources Minister Dr Telesphore Ndabamenye made the call on Friday, October 30, during celebrations marking World Food Day in Kiziguro Sector, Gatsibo District. He said farmers needed to work together, increase productivity and produce enough food for household consumption and the market.

“On this World Food Day, we should assess where we stand in terms of food security, identify our weaknesses and address them so that we can have sufficient food. Let us join forces to achieve food self-sufficiency and produce surplus for the markets,” Ndabamenye said.

He identified climate change as one of the major challenges facing agriculture and livestock farming, urging farmers to adopt methods that reduce dependence on rainfall.

“We are required to innovate in this sector and work beyond dependence on weather conditions, using other methods that allow us to farm and raise livestock whether there is rain or not, while also preparing to deal with disasters,” he said.

The minister also urged farmers to follow recommended practices, including planting and weeding on time, applying fertilisers correctly and following agricultural advice. He said farmers should plan for harvesting and storage to reduce post-harvest losses.

Livestock farmers were encouraged to grow sufficient animal feed and take up insurance for both crops and livestock.

Mohamed Aw Dahir, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) representative in Rwanda, commended the government for its investment in agriculture and policies aimed at improving food production. He pledged continued cooperation with the country in efforts to achieve food security.

Farmers attending the event showcased their produce, with some saying improved farming practices had helped them increase their incomes and supply local markets.

Rutembesa Protasi, a banana farmer in Murambi Sector, said his plantation

produces bunches weighing at least 60 kilogrammes, providing income for his family while supplying buyers.

Joseph Munyaburanga, head of COPRORIZ Ntende cooperative, said farming had grown from subsistence production into a major investment for its members, who have also expanded into other income-generating activities.

The celebrations included applying fertiliser in farmers’ fields, planting fruit trees and establishing livestock fodder.