

Rwanda is significantly boosting investments in agriculture and livestock to achieve full food self-sufficiency by 2029, Prime Minister Dr. Justin Nsengiyumva told Parliament on Thursday. The initiative aims to enhance economic growth, create jobs, and improve citizens' livelihoods.

Speaking to both chambers, Dr. Nsengiyumva highlighted agriculture's central role in Rwanda's economy, contributing about 25% of GDP and supporting nearly 70% of the population. "Agriculture is the backbone of our country's development. Strengthening it ensures sustainable economic growth and improved living standards," he said.

Per capita agricultural output has increased substantially, from USD 754 in 2017 to USD 1,040 in 2024, while the value of agro-processed products grew from Rwf 369 billion in 2017 to Rwf 1,000 billion in 2024.

To sustain growth, the government plans to expand irrigated farmland from 74,375 hectares to 132,171 hectares by 2029. Smallholder farmers cultivating plots up to 10 hectares will receive 50% subsidies for irrigation equipment, with the remaining 50% covered by farmers.

Efforts are also underway to locally produce high-quality seeds to reduce dependence on imports. Fertilizer usage is projected to rise from 73.1 kg per hectare in 2024 to 94.6 kg per hectare by 2029, boosting yields and productivity.

Government spending on agriculture has increased steadily, from Rwf 129 billion in 2017 to over Rwf 225 billion in the 2025–2026 fiscal period — a 75% increase over eight years — reflecting the sector's importance as a key driver of employment and economic growth. About 40% of Rwandans are employed in agriculture, with rural areas seeing 55% employment.

In addition to infrastructure and input investments, the government has expanded agricultural insurance to protect farmers from crop and livestock losses. Since its launch, 307,593 farmers and 56,761 livestock keepers have benefited, with Rwf 5 billion invested by the state and Rwf 7.1 billion from financial institutions. Crops insured include rice, maize, potatoes, beans, soybeans, cassava, millet, and chili.

Rwanda plans to increase livestock and fisheries output to meet growing domestic demand. Milk production is expected to rise from 1.09 billion liters in 2024 to 1.3 billion liters by 2029. Fish production is projected to grow from 48,000 tons to

77,000 tons, while egg production will reach 21,000 tons by 2029, up from 17,000 tons in 2024. Grain storage capacity will expand from 318,000 tons to 420,000 tons.

Dr. Nsengiyumva emphasized that these investments align with Rwanda's long-term Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2), which aim to provide citizens with better livelihoods, health, and economic opportunities. "Through targeted investments and modern technologies, we are building a resilient agricultural sector that drives national development," he said.

The government expects these measures to increase food production by 50% by 2029, ensuring that Rwanda not only meets domestic demand but also strengthens its economic resilience.