**Background on Livestock in Uganda for Farmer to Farmer assignments**

Broadly, there are two livestock production systems, namely the traditional system and the improved systems. The traditional system, characterized by minimal inputs and correspondingly small outputs, depends on natural grazing and local breeds. Improved systems, on the other hand, involve some investment such as fencing, pasture and grassland improvement, provision of water and breed upgrading. Livestock production systems and management practices are dictated by the degree of dependence of the household on livestock products for income, cultural values, food supply, and crop agriculture practiced in association with livestock under traditional and non-traditional practices.

Forage resources in Uganda range from the traditional system, where extensive natural grasslands support semi-nomadic pastoralist and unfenced communal grazing, to the improved system, where the farm perimeter is fenced with paddocks of natural or planted grasses. This fencing helps to control tick-borne diseases while also enabling better pasture management. Commercial ranching is based on extensive grazing and is so far the cheapest system of beef production. There is also a growing interest in intensive and semi-intensive beef and dairy cattle production, in which improved breeds (i.e. exotic and cross breeds)are mostly kept under intensive management on small and medium sized farms under zero grazing. Additionally, it is now common to combine crop and livestock production whereby the two enterprises complement each other. In fact, mixed farming is the most common smallholder dairy system in the southwest, central and southeastern regions.

Despite the noticeable progress in the development of the livestock sector and dairy sub sector, they are still faced with several limitations. These setbacks include, among others: increasing degradation of grazing areas due to poor grazing practices (like over-grazing); inadequate production of improved pastures and short supply of good livestock feeds; inadequate knowledge on improved livestock/dairy herd management practices to prevent high morbidity and mortality levels within the individual herd; inadequate feeding due to shortage of quality and quantity of forage and fodder particularly during the dry season; lack of access to high quality seed and vegetative planting material and the high cost of production in the intensive systems resulting in low returns. These limitations are exacerbated by the widespread low literacy levels among most livestock farmers which hinder the adoption of improved technology. The sector is furtherconstrained by the poor market outlets for milk (due to a poor rural road network and near absence of rural electrification). The increasing population against fixed land area is affecting the land available for free range grazing system. There is also a feeling among the dairy farmers that one can have a few animals on small area that produce more or less than someone with a large herd size on a big area.