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By Vision Reporter

President Yoweri Museveni has praised investors in agriculture, saying their efforts to modernise the sector will go a long way in supporting wealth creation.

The President made the remarks recently while visiting the Amatheon Agri farm in Nwoya district, northern Uganda.

"The Acholi sub-region has come a long way and I believe it will soon overtake places like Kampala in terms of modernisation because of commercialised farming," he said.

The President added: "In the past, there were only two combined harvesters in the region. Today, I see three on this farm, alone. This is what we have always advocated for; commercial farming and value addition."

Having established its Ugandan operations in 2013, Amatheon Agri Limited, a European agribusiness and



President Museveni meeting with officials of Amatheon Agri Ltd. Photo by PPU

BETWEEN THE LINES:

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farming company, is currently developing rain-fed cropping operations in Nwoya and Kween districts.

In Nwoya, Amatheon Agri is farming in Alero and Purongo sub-counties, growing mainly rice, maize, sunflower and soya beans.

Commenting on their operations, Jon McLea,

the managing director of the organisation, said the company's long-term objective is the vertical integration of arable land into Uganda's value chain, which will add to the country's growing economy.

"We are currently training 900 small-holder farmers from whom we intend to buy products during the next harvest.

"We shall also expand our outgrower catchment area to other parts of the district," he said.

For several years, the agriculture sector formed the backbone of Uganda's economy, employing up to 70% of the population and contributing approximately 37% of the gross domestic product.

However, several challenges still abound, including low production, low value addition, limited market access, weak implementation of agricultural laws and policies, plus weak public agricultural institutions.