

Ambassador's welcoming remarks at the seminar on Danish pig farming technologies, 5th of October, Kyiv

I wish to extend a warm welcome to all of you to this opening session that kicks off the visit of the Danish agricultural delegation to Ukraine.

This is the first major delegation that we receive after more than one and a half year.

We have had countless online meetings and events during the pandemic. However, meeting online is not quite the same. If you want to cooperate, you need to meet in person to build trust and confidence.

I therefore particularly happy to see the Danish delegation and our Ukrainian guests in real life and not just on a screen.

I find it very appropriate that a Danish agricultural delegation is the first real life delegation that we have.

Agriculture is a key component in Danish-Ukrainian relations. It is also an area with a huge untapped potential for more cooperation because we are natural partners.

Ukraine is known as the breadbasket of Europe, accounting for about a quarter of the world's most fertile black soil with ideal conditions for many crops.

Danish agriculture is among the most efficient and knowledge based agricultural clusters in the world and with a strong focus on the environment and climate.

There is a hardworking Ukrainian community working in Danish agriculture. About two thousand young Ukrainians work as interns and many stay on as farm managers after their internship.

Many Danish farmers have come to Ukraine in the last decades. They have invested heavily in modern agricultural production and food processing. They are proud to be part of the dynamic development of Ukrainian agriculture and they are ready to be part of the bright future for Ukrainian agriculture.

Thus, there are many points of contacts and shared interests between Denmark and Ukraine when it comes to agriculture.

It is therefore very appropriate that an agricultural delegation is the trailblazer, paving the way for the resumption of real delegation visits from Denmark.

The timing of your visit is perfect. Because big things are happening right now in Ukraine's agricultural sector.

The game changer is the ambitious land reform that was adopted last year after more than 20 years of discussions.

The land reform is a real opportunity for the Ukrainian agricultural sector to secure the access of 1 to 2 million small unregistered farms to land, investments and the financial system. It will also establish a market for land. In addition, most importantly: it will make it possible to take out loans based on land-ownership with land as collateral.

This will create a new dynamic in Ukraine's agriculture, and it will lead to new investments in the entire agricultural based value chain.

This is where the Danish delegation comes into the picture: you represent exactly what Ukrainian agriculture will need to unlock its true potential:

- world class breeding stock;
- advanced pen equipment;
- state-of-the-art systems for nutrition and animal feeding;
- advanced electronics systems for agriculture and grain handling equipment;
- world leading equipment for meat processing and for abattoirs.

Therefore, you are coming to Ukraine at the right moment. The land reform will stimulate new investments, including new equipment and technology.

The land reform will also be an opportunity for Ukrainians working in Danish agriculture to return to their country with new competences and invest in Ukrainian agriculture. They will surely wish to bring with them Danish technology and equipment.

The timing of your visit is also good in another sense. You come here at a time when the timetable for the adaptation of Danish agriculture to the ambitious Danish climate goals has just been adopted by all major political parties. It happened just last night.

Danish agriculture is already among the global leaders when it comes to reducing the CO2 footprint of agricultural production. Now ambitious new goals have been set that ensures that the agriculture will do its share to reduce emissions.

Thus, Danish agriculture brings to Ukraine state-of-art production methods and technologies that helps reducing the climate impact. This is also highly relevant for Ukraine at a time when Ukraine's participation in the European Green Deal is high on the political agenda.

The timing of your visit is also good because the overall economic situation is positive for new investments in Ukrainian agriculture.

Economically Ukraine has weathered the corona-crisis well and the economy is back on track.

This is also illustrated by the fact that Danish exports to Ukraine is already back at the pre-corona level, much quicker than after the financial crisis, where it took several years before trade was at the pre-crisis level.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank your Ukrainian friends and partners for making this visit possible. I wish in particular to thank the ministry of agriculture and the Association of Pig Breeders of Ukraine.

Finally, I wish to thank the Danish Agriculture and Food Council, who are our co-organizers of this visit. It has been a pleasure working with you on this project and I am looking forward to the next steps. Because this is only the beginning of a new era in Danish-Ukrainian relations in the field of agriculture. Let us work together to take our partnership to the next level.

I wish you a productive visit and I hope to see you back soon.