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**Kavango West farmer loses cattle to lightning**

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By Nempa



The 13 heads of cattle Challi Daniel Kangombe lost to lightning on Christmas Eve in the Kavango West Region. Photo: Nampa

Lightning struck and killed 13 cattle in southern Angola on Christmas Eve. The cattle, worth about N$100 000, belongs to Challi Daniel Kangombe of the Ruhuga village in the Kapako Constituency of the Kavango West Region.

Kangombe told Nampa on Monday he found his cattle dead after crossing the Okavango River with a canoe the same day to collect the cattle to use them to plough his mahangu field.

He described the loss as a catastrophe for his family, and called on government to assist him in any way possible.

Kangombe works for the ministry of defence in Rundu.

Chairperson of the Kavango East Farmers' Union, Hannes Balzaar told Nampa on Thursday incidences of lightning killing cattle is not something new to the two Kavango regions. He said every year one or two incidences of this nature are recorded.

Relating to what Kangombe must be going through; Balzaar said he too lost 40 goats to a veld fire last year.

“There's really, to my knowledge, nothing you can do to prevent this,” he said.

Balzaar advised farmers to rather keep their cattle fenced in when it is raining heavily, adding that cattle or humans are likely to be hit by lightning in open spaces.

He said the union will next year try to approach institutions like Agribank to look at how they can assist farmers losing livestock in this manner.

Farming with cattle is the only source of income for many in the two regions.