

## **Don't Abandon The Abattoir**

**(31-01-2002)** - Daily Graphic

EARLY this week, the GRAPHIC carried on its front page a report of a pile of serious financial difficulties encountered by the national carrier, Ghana Airways, that has driven it to the brink of bankruptcy.

Again yesterday, the paper carried another front page report, this time on the ₵14.5 billion Accra Abattoir which, because of financial problems, is reported to be facing the threat of liquidation.

These unpleasant developments are of serious concern to the GRAPHIC and indeed, must be so to all well-meaning Ghanaians since the enterprises involved are strategic investments and in most cases the state is majority shareholder

The onus, therefore, lies on the state to take every step to ensure that such resources are not lost.

This is because the bid to create and sustain jobs to provide better incomes for the people and other welfare programmes cannot materialise, if enterprises that make such opportunities available crumble one after the other.

Indeed, if the undesirable state of affairs persists, it will only result in throwing more people onto the streets, and thus compound the already precarious unemployment situation. That way, it might grossly undermine the government's job-creation intent.

It is not difficult to say that the core of the problem has to do with the lack of capitalisation of the abattoir and the ridiculously low patronage of its services by butchers who were supposed to be its main clientele and the public in general.

We appreciate the fact that issues such as distance has been cited by butchers as the reason for lack of patronage of the services of the abattoir. But whilst this may be acceptable in some cases, it is not entirely justifiable in all cases.

No one can deny the fact that there is a vibrant cattle market at Ashaiman which serves the Accra area, and to us that market is closer to the abattoir than any of the slaughter houses used by the local butchers.

There is also an efficient transport system to convey cattle and other animals from any point of Accra to the abattoir and, therefore, does not make the distance an unsurmountable obstacle.

In any case, the butchers association must have an overriding interest as shareholders of the facility to ensure that it succeeds.

Is their staying away not crippling the operations of the abattoir and for that matter, its ability to function efficiently, make profit and pay them dividends?

We, therefore, appeal to the butchers association, through their leadership, to endeavour to substantially increase their patronage of the services of the abattoir for their own sake and that of the public in general.

We mentioned the public here because conditions under which some animals are slaughtered and prepared at unapproved slaughter houses are, to say the least, insanitary. This undoubtedly poses serious health hazards for consumers and the association has a duty to take urgent steps to address.

It is also worthy of note that the earlier concerns expressed by the association in respect of slaughtering animals in the Islamic tradition have been addressed with the stationing of some Muslims to supervise the slaughtering of the animals.

The ₵1,600 charged per cow slaughtered is also very moderate, considering that the abattoir in Kumasi charges ₵25,000.

The Accra Metropolitan Authority, in particular, has a duty to enforce its bye-laws on the slaughtering of animals, to ensure that members of the public and butchers would be obliged to use the facilities of the abattoir.