

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who started a two-day tour of Võru County today, visited Barrus Estonia. President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who started a two-day tour of Võru County today, visited Barrus Estonia, which produces laminated wood components. The company employs 120 people and 80 percent of its produce is exported.

The owners of the timber processing company, which was started up 15 years ago on the former Vesijärve cattle farm, have invested approximately 150 million EEK in high-tech equipment in only the last four years. Last year, they started up one of the most innovative sawmills in the Baltic countries.

“I can reaffirm – entrepreneurs, if you want to be competitive, invest in high-technology. Even in the timber industry,” stressed President Ilves. “The success of Barrus Estonia confirms that I am right.”

Good quality sells even during a crisis, the Head of State asserted at Barrus Estonia, which, despite the general worsening of the economic situation, continues to operate at full capacity.

The Head of State and Evelin Ilves visited the farm of Sirge Andreson and Ain Raal, in Küllatüvä Village, Setomaa. The owners moved there six years ago from Tartu and are now very active participants in the local life in Setomaa.

“Sometimes, we must overcome our fear of great change and make decisions that significantly change our lives, while also making our lives more pleasant, enjoyable and better for us,” President Ilves said, acknowledging the young people who move to the country and become boosters and leaders of local life.

The presidential couple also visited the Vaskna Tourism Farm in Plaksi Village, Haanja Rural Municipality, where they met with representatives of civil society and local government leaders. The problems encountered by the third sector when applying for European Union financial support were discussed at the meeting.

President Ilves and Evelin Ilves also visited Tiit Niilo’s Nopri Farm in a corner of Tsiitre, Misso Rural Municipality, where the President participated in the opening of a new dairy. Tiit Niilo, who started farming in 1994, as have five generations of his forbears, has by now established a company with an annual turnover of 8.7 million EEK.

“The success story of Nopri Farm is an example of how combining entrepreneurship and a reliance on the local community can be productive,” President Ilves said. “As a result, both benefit, resulting in a successful company and successful region where many people would not expect them.”

In Krabi Village, Varstu Rural Municipality, the presidential couple visited the Krabi Group, which produces washed concrete products. The company, which employs three workers, was introduced by company owner Roomet Allas, who graduated from the Economics Department of the University of Tartu two years ago and moved to Võru County, which is the birthplace of his kinsfolk.

“This is the initiative, courage and inventiveness that Estonia needs more generally,” President Ilves said.

In the evening, the Head of State and Evelin Ilves visited the Krabi schoolhouse, where they listened to a student concert, watched a performance of the village theatre, and met with members of the local village society.

“Dear people of Krabi, your joy, tenacity and belief in yourselves set an example for many other places in Estonia. I thank you,” President Ilves wrote in visitor’s book at the Krabi schoolhouse.

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