

Laikipia County

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Our Main Story

A RENAL UNIT at NCRH

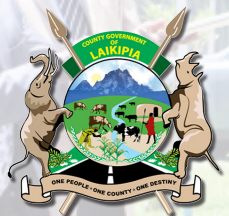
Persons living with chronic kidney disease in Nyahururu and its environs have much to be relieved about as Nyahururu County Referral Hospital NCRH, opened its dialysis unit on Thursday the 5th, January 2023.

The opening ceremony was presided over by H.E Governor Joshua Irungu EGH who was...

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Your Agricultural Extension Officer



Tigithi Ward Agricultural Extension Officer

Kennedy Njuguna

A dedicated civil servant, always ready to serve



9th Edition KICOSCA at Kisumu City



Images: Naphtaly Otieno

Governor Irungu: You are drawn from different departments, when you meet with your colleagues, learn how they work in their counties, come teach us about those good practices.

On 13th January, HE. Governor Joshua Irungu EGH flagged off the Laikipia team that represented Laikipia at KICOSCA 9th edition games and wished them well urging them to represent the very best of Laikipia people.

“Be our ambassadors in Kisumu,” the Governor urged them, “don’t just compete, learn from your brothers and sisters from other counties. You are drawn from different departments, when you meet with your colleagues, learn how they work in their counties, come teach us about those good practices,” Governor Irungu advised the team.

In the games at the Port City of

Kisumu County, County Government of Laikipia was represented by 120 staff members drawn from diverse and gallant laikipians in various disciplines including; tug of war, choir, men football, dart, volleyball men and men pool.

KICOSCA games provide an opportunity for County staff across Kenya to showcase their talents, socialize, share ideas and enrich their experience enhancing their national cohesion and integration as well as promote patriotism.

In line with this year’s theme, ‘Promoting National Cohesion through Sports and Culture,’ KICOSCA is therefore more than just games but

also a convergence of cultural diversity promoting national unity and cohesion.

This 9th Edition KICOSCA games were officially opened by Sports and Youth Affairs CS Ababu Namwamba and Patron of the games, who is also the County Governor H.E Prof. Anyang’ Nyong’o.

Laikipia County team was led by Deputy Governor H.E Reuben Kamuri, who doubles up as the Chief Whip of the Deputy Governors Forum, Education, Sports Gender and Social Services Ag. CECM Stephen Kisorio, Chief Officer Jecinta Koree among other county officials.



Action at KICOSCA, Kisumu City



Tug of War team was Laikipia's Over-all Champions

In Tug of War games, Laikipia presented a massive victory against Narok, Busia and Kiambu and topped their pool during the play offs held at Jaramogi Oginga Sports Grounds.

Laikipia County finished 2nd best in Tug of War in the just concluded 9th edition of the Kenya Inter-County

Sports Association (KICOSCA). They however lost gracefully to the host county of Kisumu City in an action-packed Jomo Kenyatta Stadium in Kisumu County. The team came back home happy, with a stern brotherly warning to Kisumu siblings that they will come back for their trophy.

Laikipia County Choir



Laikipia County Choir Team joined other counties at Rotary Vocational Training Centre where they participated by presenting two songs, a patriotic set piece song dubbed as 'Kenya Nchi Yetu' and own composition dubbed 'Pamoja Tuungane Watu Wote'.

Laikipia County Volleyball team



Volleyball Men tournaments were held at The Kisumu National Polytechnic. Laikipia unfortunately lost the opening game to Kisumu County. Whilst they lost at group stage, the team learnt from their counterparts but they did spread love, at the lake side.

Images: Naphtaly Otieno

9th Edition KICOSCA at Kisumu City



Laikipia Deputy Governor H.E. Reuben Kamuri shaking hand with Sports CS Hon. Ababu Namwaba

“As a government, we are committed to nurturing and developing our people’s talent and that is why we pledge our support to our teams taking part in various disciplines in the sporting arena even in the future,” the DG encouraged.



Images: Naphtaly Otieno



Development of County's CIDP Nears End



Image: Jackline Mariga

Governor Joshua Irungu EGH addressing participants during the last day of Laikipia County 3rd Generation CIDP validation workshop

Laikipia County's 3rd generation CIDP, County Integrated Development Plan 2023-2027 is on its final stretch after Department of Finance and Economic Planning convened a validation workshop that included both the County Executive and County Assembly members to deliberate on its application and finality.

The CIDP under the stewardship of a steering Committee constituted by

H.E Governor Joshua Irungu EGH has been subjected to intense public participation from across the 15 wards of Laikipia County.

For the first time in Laikipia, to cover more participatory grounds, the exercise used technology to accommodate the youth constituency and members in the digital space who could submit their suggestions through County website for incorporation into the CIDP.

By the end of its public participation period, the county's master development framework had received input from over 26,000 people – from all sub-locations in Laikipia County.

The electorate's development priorities in liaison with the Governor's manifesto have been compiled in a draft reflective of the populace's priorities and the governor's development agenda.

The CIDP draws its building blocks

By the end of its public participation period, the county's master development framework had received input from over 26,000 people – from all sub-locations in Laikipia County.



Image: Jackline Mariga

County Secretary Koinange Wahome giving his remarks – CIDP validation workshop

from the Governor's manifesto, Public participation, Technical proposals such as the spatial and sectoral plans, National Government's Medium Term Plans, and the national Government's Vision 2030 and the AU agenda 2063.

agreed on having a cordial working relationship for the development of the citizenry of Laikipia.

Members of County Assembly in the CIDP validation meet-

The validation workshop that ran between 25th to 27th January finalized on the sectoral plans and spatial plans. The sectoral plans took into consideration important highlights of the Governor's manifesto, Citizen's views, and pressing matters ranging from water, agriculture, health, education, and the rampant insecurity that has been affecting parts of Laikipia.

The executive and legislative arms of the County Government of Laikipia

ing were drawn from ten wards of Mukogodo West, Mukogodo East, Segera, Thingithu, Umande, Salama, Olmoran, Marmanet, and Nanyuki Wards and one nominated MCA.

H.E Governor Joshua Irungu EGH, closed the workshop and reiterated his commitment to working with partners to have an inclusive document that gives partners an opportunity to be part of the development agenda of Laikipia County as prioritized by the people of Laikipia.

Department of Finance and Economic Planning shall further table it before Laikipia County Assembly for adoption and approval and finally launched and disseminated to the people of Laikipia.

By Jackline Mariga



Image: Jackyline Mariga

Honourable members following CIDP validation discussion



Finally!

A Dialysis Unit at Nyahururu County Referral Hospital - NCRH



Images: Kipkimei Rutto

Since its inception, NRCH's renal unit has successfully attended to 22 dialysis patients who could not hide their happiness owing it to the reprieve the facility has brought to them.

Persons living with chronic kidney disease in Nyahururu and its environs have much to be relieved about as Nyahururu County Referral Hospital NCRH, opened its dialysis unit on Thursday the 5th, January 2023.

The opening ceremony was presided over by H.E Governor Joshua Irungu EGH who was in company of his deputy H.E Reuben Kamu-

ri, the County Secretary Koinange Wahome, and leadership from the County health department led by Health CEC Albert Taiti.

County Assembly leaders were led by Majority leader Hon. John Gichuki representative of Rumuruti ward, area MCA Hon. Irene Wachuka and County Assembly chair of Health Committee Hon. Nicholus Lempaira.

The newly opened renal dialysis at NCRH unit already has five beds operational, with an additional five beds set to be added soon. Leaders and residents present witnessed first patients undergoing dialysis with a sigh of relief in appreciation of how life-saving the intervention has brought to them and how it has lightened the burden of cost and time.

Since its inception, NRCH's renal



Since its inception, NCRH's renal unit has successfully attended to 22 dialysis patients who could not hide their happiness owing it to the reprieve the facility has brought to them.

unit has successfully attended to 22 dialysis patients who could not hide their happiness owing it to the reprieve the facility has brought to them.

The unit is first of its kind, it features the first 'isolation bed' in the wider Mount Kenya region. Isolation bed is a dialysis bed that is set aside for patients with conditions that are highly infectious eg. Hepatitis B.

This dialysis unit adds even more impetus to NCRH Hospital in its effort of becoming a premier healthcare facility in Kenya. It also becomes a life-saver to residents of Nyandarua and Nakuru counties who neighbor Laikipia and foot huge funds and chunk of time to travel to Nakuru, Nyeri or in Nanyuki seeking dialysis service.

The renal dialysis unit is the second



to come up in Laikipia County after the unit in Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital, which itself, is in the process of expanding to 15 beds.

During the opening ceremony of the NCRH's renal unit, it was also revealed that the third renal unit will also be installed at the Rumuruti Sub County hospital, to equally balance the county in terms of equal access to healthcare service of all regions.

The renal team at NCRH led by Alice Ng'ang'a is a team of well-trained and knowledgeable professionals on areas such as kidney diseases, urinary disorders, hypertension, diabetes electrolytes disorder, glomerular diseases, kidney stones, UTI, nutrition, lifestyle, and fitness, and other renal-related complications.

Meaning, it is all systems go for renal dialysis patients and nurse Alice Ng'ang'a could only promise class act dialysis services at NCRH.

Governor Irungu reassured Laikipians that his commitment of making Laikipia Health Service a first world healthcare service remains at his heart and his health team remains committed, intentional and motivated, into actualizing, this dream.

By Esther Muthoni & Andrew Maina



Images: Kipkimei Rutto



Ndurumo Bean Farmers Rake Profits As They Adopt Climate Smart Farming



Image: Kariuki Sij

Mr. Njeru is happy showing the agriculture team his farm where he has planted 'nyota' beans at Ndurumo.

For the longest time farmers have planted beans the traditional way, and the produce has not been enough for consumption at home, let alone having surplus for extra income.

But for farmers in Ndurumo, this has changed in the last three years after Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture, KSCAP in partnership with County of Government of Laikipia

through department of Agriculture came in. Their story is proof that beans farming, done correctly, can be a lucrative venture in Kenya.

Evanson Karani is the Chairperson of the group, as project documentation team visits his farm where he has invited other members of the group, we are amused at how they have been practicing bean farming as a source of livelihood and are

reaping big from this venture.

Mr. Karani highlighted that he used to practice mixed farming on his one-acre piece of land where he only produced a bag of maize and just a few kilograms of beans. His fortunes would later turn after KSCAP came in, and funded the group's bean farming proposal. This was in addition to training on Climate Smart Agriculture practices in



Last year December, the group was contracted by Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization, KALRO, to do seed multiplication and has set aside 18 acres of land where they have planted the seeds

bean farming.

The project has a component on building resilience and helping the farmers adapt technology improvement management practices.

“When KSCAP came in, we were able to practice smart farming,” disclosed Mr. Karani. “We now plant the certified seeds which are doing well as compared to the local varieties we used to plant,” he added.

Beans farmers in the area have since formed a producer organization named Ndurumo Beans Farmers that will help them aggregate, package and market their produce.

On external services, KSCAP has been able to train the farmers intensively all thanks to the adoption of the lead farmer model as well as the demo farm model approach through Egerton University that was contracted to provide advisories to the farmers. Over nine varieties of beans were planted to do a diversity valuation on the best assortments in the area.

From this research Mr. Karani said that the *Nyota* Bean, *Chelalang* varieties do very well in the area. He explained that he planted the *Nyota*

bean on his one-acre piece of land and harvested eight bags. He also added that this were not the yields he expected as there was low rainfall in the area. By comparison, he noted that he harvested only four bags of maize from an acre.

Mr. Karani said that last season he sold a kilo of beans at Kshs. 150 after producing 22 bags from his farm making a good sum of money. From the sale Mr Karani has been able to feed his family, pay school fees for his children as well as bought a piece of land in the area.

Last year December, the group was

contracted by Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization, KALRO, to do seed multiplication and has set aside 18 acres of land where they have planted the seeds. They target to produce at least 10 bags per acre come March 2023 as explained by the chairman.

Mr. Lincoln Njiru, KSCAP lead extension officer, advised the farmers to have their own community seed bank to help curb the challenge of in availability of certified bean seeds in Ndurumo. The project will therefore be sustainable and farmers will continue reaping big from this venture.

By Mollin Wanjiru



Image: Kariuki Sj

From left: Agriculture extension officer Madam Ann, agriculture communication officer, Wanjiru, KCSAP's Mr. Njiru and Mr. Njeru the Chair



Weight and Measures Directorate Effecting Protection of Consumer Rights

The County Government of Laikipia has a mandated directorate - Weight and Measures, to ensure honesty and fairness in business transactions.

One of the law guiding the directorate's duties is the Weight and Measures Act. The intention is to prevent businesses from having unfair advantage over their competitors or customers through fraudulent and unjust practices.

The directorate works to enforce weight and measures act Cap 513 that deals with the use, manufacture and sale of weight and measures equipment.

It ensures that during sale of any commodity, the quantity that you purchase is not less than the quantity that you pay.

What are the activities of this directorate?

One of the initial activities performed by the directorate involves mapping of business premises in the county to identify those using weight and measures equipment.

According to weight and measure officer John Hunja, the mapping helps to issue notices that the business premise will be visited for the testing, verification and stamping of the equipment.



What next step will commence thereafter?

Hunja notes that the county inspectors subject the scale to all the necessary tests to ascertain the status of the weight and measures equipment, "The findings of this exercise can either be: the machine is okay or faulty".

If the machine is okay, the inspector will charge the owner a fee prescribed by the Weight and Measure Act Cap 513, stamp the equipment and issue a certificate of verification.

If the machine is faulty, the owner pays a rejection fee as prescribed by the act and thereafter undergoes another charge to repair the scale. After the inspector ascertains it is working as it should, the equipment is stamped and the owner issued with a certificate of verification.

The verification ensures that equipment is weighing and measuring to within accuracy limits laid down in

the act.

These activities carried out by the directorate are to ensure that whenever you go to buy say tomatoes, onions and potatoes at the market or get that matumbo quarter from a butchery, you get quantity worth your money.

For the prepackaged goods in your nearest *duka*, it makes sure that the packages intended for retail sale are marked with the correct statement of quantity.

Weight and measure equipment becomes the impartial referee and they must therefore be inspected to ensure they are in perfect working condition to protect you-the consumer.

By Nahashon Maina



COPAD leaders Meet EU Delegation

The COPAD program is a peace-regional bloc webbed by a joint economic intervention agreement between the counties of Laikipia, Isiolo, Samburu and Baringo whose previously brand name was Amaya Triangle Initiative



Leaders from COPAD bloc meet EU & NRT leads at Lewa Conservancy

Four county bloc under the umbrella of Cooperation on Peace and Development COPAD have been implementing the Kenya Ranger Program in partnership with Northern Rangelands Trust, ICRAF, CSI, E4IMPACT and JKUAT from 2020.

The COPAD program is a peace-regional bloc webbed by a joint economic intervention agreement between the counties of Laikipia, Isiolo, Samburu and Baringo whose previously brand name was Amaya Triangle Initiative.

The ranger program in the COPAD bloc is a European Union funded

program that is scheduled to run for three years seeks to adopt an integrated landscape approach, enhance productivity of ecosystem services provided by Rangelands within the COPAD through investments in evidence based climate smart feed resources, an array of climate smart tree-wildlife and natural resource.

On the 23rd of January 2023 H.E Reuben Kamuri, the Deputy Governor of Laikipia county attended a meeting together with his colleagues from the association of Deputy Governors, H.E James Lowasa (Baringo), H. E Gabriel Lenengwesi (samburu) and the Governor of Baringo County H.E Benjamin

Cheboi at Lewa conservancy to discuss on the areas of collaboration between COPAD, NRT and the European Union.

Their discussions centered on the various ways to increase productivity of rangelands ecosystem services in the four counties, as well as to reduce poverty and improve the socio-economic well-being of communities in the four counties.

The robust discussions endorsed concepts that would be at the heart of interaction. Among the concepts that were discussed were; Peace initiatives and reducing resource based conflict that is majorly contributed by climate change and low education systems that caused a cycle of poverty.

Stakeholders at the forum agreed on capacity building in conservation, land rehabilitation, and improving the education systems to reduce poverty levels. The NRT reported on the success of Ujuzi Manyattani Vocation training Program where 850 graduates were capacitated with tools, certification and linkage with Saccos to access credit to build on business and end poverty.

Out of the robust discussion the leaders of COPAD agreed to work with stakeholders on drought mitigation from a long term perspective, value addition, and creating alternative sources of livelihoods to create employment.

By Jackline Mariga

Laikipia & KenInvest to Partner in Promoting Investment in the County



By Jackline Mariga

Deputy Governor, KenInvest visiting officials, CEC Trade, CEO LCDA and officials from trade and LCDA

Laikipia hosted officers from the Kenya Investment Authority (KenInvest) at the county offices in Nanyuki, 24th January, the year.

KenInvest is a government agency established in 2004 mandated to promote and facilitate both domestic and direct investments as well as undertaking policy advocacy in Kenya.

The Authority, through its partnership with United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) seeks to partner with counties across Kenya to create bankable investment opportunities profiles that target investors across Europe as well as those associated with UNIDO investment and Technology Promotion Offices (ITOPS) across the globe.

Through its partnership with the County Government of Laikipia, KenInvest will train selected county staff on profiling both greenfield and brownfield projects within the county. It will also train staff on profiling businesses, looking at market expansion opportunities, and linkages with investors through

UNIDO.

Officers from KenInvest introduced the Digital Investment profiling system, an e-market portal where the profiled investment projects will be uploaded and marketed.

The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Governor H.E Rueben Kamuri who expressed his interest in the program and emphasized the need for better exposure of the tourism and hospitality industry which was hard hit by the effects from

COVID-19 pandemic.

The CECM Trade and Tourism Mr Biwott Kisorio and the CEO LCDA Mr James Mugambi led an open discussion exploring the various tourism opportunities in Laikipia. Some of the sectors highlighted include green energy, manufacturing, agriculture and value addition, tourism, Special Economic Zone, Export Processing Zones, SME development and Film.

According to the 2020 Laikipia County Statistical Abstract, Laikipia is among the top fastest growing counties in Kenya with a GDP growth rate of 8.9% against the national average of 5.6%. The county has boundless investment opportunities and the capacity to provide a business-friendly environment for industries to thrive

By Pauline Mwiyeria



President Ruto Promise to Laikipia County



Images: Kipkimei Rutto

President Ruto: Under my leadership, I will ensure that the Nanyuki–Rumuruti road is tarmacked. The road from Nanyuki to Doldol will also be paved.

On January 8, 2023, Laikipia County had the honour of hosting HE President William Ruto in Nanyuki stadium during an extra-ordinary Interdenominational Prayer Service.

President Ruto was hosted by Governor Joshua Irungu EGH. President was accompanied by his Deputy H.E. Rigathi Gachagua, Prime Cabinet Secretary Hon. Musalia Mudavadi among other top government officials. Over 5000 Laikipia residents attended.

Prior to attending the interdenominational prayers, President Ruto met with the county's top officials for a consultative meeting where they provided a status update on the county's current top development priorities.

The president listed some of the projects he intended to initiate in

the coming months, beginning with the construction and modernization of Nanyuki Stadium which he stated was in its first phase.

“Under my leadership, I will ensure that the Nanyuki-Rumuruti road is tarmacked. The road from Nanyuki to Doldol will also be paved,” Dr Ruto said.

The 70-kilometre Nanyuki-Rumuruti road connects the sub-counties of Laikipia East and Laikipia West, while the 60-kilometre Nanyuki-Doldol road connects the sub-counties of Laikipia East and Laikipia North.

In a bid to curb the human-wildlife conflict prevalent in Laikipia, the president stated that his government will map out areas in the county where fences will be erected through the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS).

He also confirmed the deployment of 360 additional Kenya Police Reservists in high-risk areas of the county ravaged by banditry attacks in order to strengthen the police service's operational capacity.

Other projects earmarked during the President's visit included: accelerating the construction of stalled dams across Laikipia County to boost agricultural production, reviving industries and factories in Nanyuki, such as the Mount Kenya Textile industry, modernizing and upgrading both the Nyahururu and Nanyuki markets, and establishing a higher learning institution in Nanyuki.

“We have planned the government so that everything runs smoothly, and I can assure Kenyans that we will work hard to transform this nation,” the President ended.

By June Yutor



Laikipia and USAID intensify partnership



Governor Irungu tests a bike donated by USAID

Laikipia County has intensified partnerships in its efforts to end new infections of HIV and reverse the impact of the epidemic in the county.

The latest breakthrough on this collaboration is the addition of more motorcycles from the USAID Tujenge Jamii, UTJ, as LHS pursues synergized collaborations for impactful health outcomes.

On January 13, 2023, Governor Joshua Irungu, received five motorcycles for sample referral and contact tracing from the UTJ Chief of Party Dr. Moses Kitheka. This brings the number of motorbikes donated under this project to ten.

A hard-top land cruiser was also donated to ensure that there is effective and efficient support supervision of

HIV programs in the County. Under this program, a total of 89 health workers support service delivery, with UTJ committing to on-board more staff.

The Governor expressed his firm commitment to transition the UTJ supported staff to the county government through the County

Public Service Board.

USAID Tujenge Jamii, one of the key stakeholders, has had a long-term partnership with Laikipia Health Service to scale up treatment and care for patients with HIV. The partnership has effectively ramped up the gains in HIV prevention, general quality improvement in healthcare, health information, and human resources for health.

The core vision of UTJ program

is to create a county-owned, county-led and county-managed integrated platform for the delivery of HIV, Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH), Water Sanitation and Hygiene

(WASH) and nutrition services, with close collaboration between health facilities and communities.

Such collaborative efforts have greatly contributed to the recent county's success in reducing the number of new HIV infections. One such milestone is the availing of early infant diagnosis test capacities at NTRH that have been key in suppressing mother-to-child HIV transmission.

According to 2022, World Aids Day report, Laikipia County led with a 25% reduction in new HIV infections in the country between 2020 and 2021. This impressive result is due to, among other factors, perfect synergy between Laikipia and partners such as USAID Tujenge Jamii, whose immense support has greatly aided in HIV response program.

Laikipia Health Service will continue to partner with UTJ and other stakeholders to guarantee healthier lives for the people

By Ann Ngunjiri



Laikipia, EAML to Partner in Promoting Farming of Malt, Barley and Sorghum

H.E Governor Joshua Irungu EGH, held a consultative meeting with officers from the East African Maltings Limited, EAML on 12th January, 2023 at his office.

EAML is a subsidiary of East African Breweries Limited that plays a key role of supplying quality brewing raw materials in forms of malt, barley and sorghum to the brewing unit of the EABL Group in Kenya.

It is this role that created platform of possible partnership with County Government of Laikipia. The meeting explored possibilities of making barley, sorghum and cassava as alternative cash crops in the county.

Sorghum and cassava are drought resistance crops and hence ideal for the semi-arid Laikipia County. In the wake of prolonged drought in the country that affected Laikipia greatly due to climate change, birthing dwindling crop productivity, this partnership is a much welcome development intervention.

Mr Jacob Githigi from EAML highlighted the growing local and international demand of malt, barley and sorghum assuring that EAML committed to offtake barley and sorghum produced by Laikipia farmers.

The governor tasked the team to expound on the following key areas of the project. These include:

- ▶ To identify profit margins, constraints, and challenges and provide recommendations/ strategies to enhance and upscale the program
- ▶ To review the current state of the value chain for the three crops. Availability of suitable seed varieties and planting materials and give farmers



Governor Irungu (left) and EAML lead Mr. Jacob Githigi at Governor's office, Nanyuki

accurate information to guide farmers in farm husbandry processes.

- ▶ To pilot sorghum and barley farming to determine the viability of the two crops in the county. Officers from the department of agriculture recommended five wards: Rumuruti, Ol Moran, Salama, Tigithi and Sorian as ideal areas for piloting.
- ▶ To conduct trials on various seed varieties of cassava to identify the most suitable for different climatic conditions in the county.
- ▶ To look for possible ways for domestic commercialization of the three cash crops outside the contract farming scope (e.g., farmers can sell their produce to schools for the feeding programmes, millers, animal feeds)
- ▶ Develop strategies to produce required volumes to ensure economies of scale and safeguard the interest of the all stakeholders involved in the program.
- ▶ To explore ways in which farmers can access affordable credit and agricultural insurance to enable them up scale.

By Pauline Mwiyeria





For Dry Areas, is it Sorghum, or Maize?



Image: Kariuki Sji

Mrs. Martha Thiini in her one acre sorghum farm whose proceeds buy her other types of cereals - Sipili

Sipili division, in Ol Moran Ward of Laikipia County is an area of mixed farming fortunes. While on one side the area receives enough rainfall for farming, the other side mimics semi-arid areas. That is not all.

The worst nightmare for this area is banditry attacks. The area is also neighbour to a conservancy whose wildlife, especially elephants are constant farming nuisance.

This sad reality weighs more on household economies, and women

and children are the most vulnerable. In effort to step out of livestock keeping to tame bandits' stealing spree, and also to counter the minimal rainfall that has significantly threatened food security in Sipili, in 2016, 30 women organized themselves into a group, Mahiga Dimcom Group - basically to practice table banking, farming and other micro economic ventures.

In 2018, County Government of Laikipia through KSCAP came at an opportune time when they needed a

development partner to hold their hand. Through Egerton University, an extension service provider contracted by KCSAP, the group was trained on Technology Innovation Management System, TIMS.

After careful diagnostic of the area's climate, KCSAP prescribed Sorghum to the group as ideal crop for their area.

"In 2022, after being taught on sorghum planting technologies, nutrition benefits and economic viability, I decided to finally commit half



KARLO: Sorghum is a drought-tolerant crop hence it's grown in drier areas. It's rich in vitamins and minerals like B vitamins, magnesium, potassium, phosphorus, iron, and zinc. It's also an excellent source of fiber, antioxidants, and protein.

an acre to its farming. I planted my seeds BM-30 spacing as I had been taught. Step by step I applied fertilizer, again, as I have been taught," Chair lady Mrs. Mary Njoki of Mahiga Dincom Group says.

Madam Njoki revealed that her first harvest yielded a whopping 265kgs which she sold at Ksh. 200 per kilogram, translating Ksh. 53, 000, all this from half an acre.

Another success story is that of Mrs. Martha Thiini. Martha decided to better explain her breakthrough with sorghum by inviting the County agricultural officers to her home. She took the team to her shamba and happily flaunted her just harvested green sorghum plantation while also showing the group sacks of sorghum in her stores that now awaits sale.

"The last season I cultivated 1.5 acres of land. I harvested 800kgs and luckily, I sold at Ksh. 200 per kilogram. I paid for my son's school fees at Southern Eastern Kenya University, SEKU, and also cleared balance for those in secondary schools," Mrs. Thiini happily expounded.

Further, the Chairlady explains since

her discovery of how good sorghum crop performed in her area, she has been a Sorghum champion in Sipiili. During the KCSAP team's visit, she came with her 'recruits;' Eunice Mwangi, James Karugu, Margaret Wanjiru and Jenifer Wanjiku; all these were inducted into the group on this same day.

Hosea Mathenge, one among the only two men in the group of 30 members told his story too.

"Not that I was not farming sorghum before, I did, *ile kienyeji*. I gave it a shot and planted *Ikinyaruka* sorghum variety as I had been advised by the Chairlady. I got 12

bags of 90kgs each from my one-acre land. I can say, am currently a sorghum farmer, other cereals I buy using proceeds of sorghum," Mr. Mathenge jovially explains.

County Government of Laikipia continues to train farmers on best farming methods. More so now, the county is targeting specific crops per region, scientifically proven to perform best at a particular climatic zone to ensure farmers gets maximum yields while also creating resilience especially with the ever-changing rain seasons.

By Kariuki Sj



Image: Mollin Wanjiru

Mrs. Thiini right and Ol Moran Agricultural officer Ms. Elcy Kigano poses for a photo at her home, inside her sorghum store.





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