



*Special edition: Agriculture*

# Improving Livelihoods through Agribusiness



Laikipia County is set to have improved livelihood from better produce from farms as well as improved livestock breed. This is after availing enough water which is a vital enabler. As a result, there will be creation of 50,000 jobs and better quality of life. This issue presents practical cases, thereby proving that what is being promised will come to be.

**PG 2**

Hope as Ru-  
muruti  
Attracts Coun-  
try's Biggest  
Bank



**PG 5**

All-Year-Round  
Production for Ma-  
tangi Village Fol-  
lowing Dam Im-  
provement Works



# Hope as Rumuruti Attracts Country's Biggest Bank



A second commercial bank has pitched tent in Rumuruti Township in Laikipia bringing the dream of making the town the county headquarters closer to reality.

KCB has come to the town hot on the heels of Equity bank which has opened its branch several months ago. The KCB branch is housed at the new county headquarters building.

The financial service providers will complement several deposit-taking sacco's that are already operating in the town.

Some department of the county

government are already operating in the new building. The official Governor's Residence is ready and Governor Ndiritu Muriithi has been operating there.

Rumuruti, has one of the largest livestock markets in the country and a vibrant large and small-holder horticultural farms surrounding it which financial service providers are keen to tap.

The town, which was once described as a remote route, has experienced phenomenal growth in the last four years following the upgrading of the Rumuruti- Mar-

al road which has resulted in increased traffic.

After earmarking it as one of the 22 smart towns to be developed in Laikipia, Governor Ndiritu Muriithi through the Kenya Development Support Programme paved the town streets with cabros and cobble stones, installed solar street lights, put proper drainage system and modernized the bus park.

In January, Infrastructure Principal Secretary Paul Maringa said Shs 3.3 billion has been set aside to upgrade the 70 kilometres Nanyuki-Rumuruti road to bitumen standards.

"We have recognized its value and we are here again to confirm that even as we look for sufficient funds to upgrade this road fully to bitumen standards, we really cannot wait until then. We want to start doing it on stage improvement basis," he said.

Prof. Maringa said the road would be given priority since it links Nanyuki to Rumuruti, which is the county headquarters.

# Scores benefit from transformative Ndathimi Dam Project

Over 200 households in Karaba have benefited from the recently completed Ndathimi Dam water project, with over 212 small scale farmers using water from the reservoir for farming and livestock use. This is an example of how Laikipia will look like in the next say five years after construction of five mega dams, 231 water pans, 130 bore-holes, 15 privately developed dams, and an increase in bulk water supply by urban and rural water supply schemes in a span of utmost five years. It is a promise Governor Ndirtu Muriithi has promised to deliver.

The 16 million shillings Ndathimi Dam water project was started in 2019, and involved desilting of the dam. The walls and spillways were made to ensure that all the run away water flows into the dam. The water is then pumped into raised tanks for supply using solar powered pumps

Over 30 acres of horticultural crops are currently under irrigation in the area. In a demo farm that was set to train the farmers through the help of extension officers, the farmers made over Kshs.100,000 from sale of cabbage, beans ,kales, spinach and other horticultural crops planted on the two acres land under drip irrigation.

“The main objective of this project



is to ensure farmers in this region get maximum productivity results from the dam, build resilience to small scale farmers and at the same time reduce the emission of greenhouse gases,” explained Muriuki Kiboi, the County Project Coordinator.

The farmer groups under this project are practicing beans, fish farming and bee keeping. The project received a boost from KSCAP, who distributed the following to the farmers in the area include; 4000 avocado seedlings, 2000 mango seedlings, 3.8 tonnes of beans were planted on individual farms.

To maximize water conservation, farmers in the area are using drip

irrigation technology to ensure that there is effective water use. This has enabled the small scale farmers produce sufficient food for consumption, with the surplus being sold to local markets. A group of farmers is championing environmental conservation through a tree nursery project. To ensure sustainable generation of livelihoods, farmers have been trained and sensitized on different Climate Smart Agricultural Practices that they can use to realize more produce from the farms as well as effective use of water. Conservation of the environment has been key in implementing the project.

# Kamuna Water Project: Segera Ward's Water Project to Power Profitable Agro-Pastoral Production

*Futuristic project to spur agribusiness, accelerate job creation*



The County Government of Laikipia has continued availing water to facilitate crop and fodder growth in the county that will increase the economic standards of Laikipians. Already, there are practical cases going on which prove that even is being promised will be delivered.

Over 2000 beneficiaries in Laikipia are set to reap the gains of technology-driven farming models to multiply their production capacities in areas around Kamuna Water Project in Segera Ward, Laikipia North.

The flagship project by the Department of Agriculture through the Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Project (KSCAP) targets three areas in Laikipia North-Kariunga, Mutirithia and Naibor

- from which the project derives the name Kamuna.

The government has desilted Kariunga Dam, and constructed Naibor water pan to sustain household use, crop farming and livestock use. This work has extended to the development of a water reticulation network that will avail water from three community boreholes to dozens of farms and homesteads in the area.

The main aim of the project is supporting smallholder farmers to adopt integrated climate-smart Technology, Innovation and Management Practices (TIMPs). The project also supports investments through a community-driven development approach in smallholder agro-pastoral production systems and in extensive pastoral pro-

duction systems.

The project has brought farms under irrigation all-year-round, ensuring consistency in food production. Plans to distribute drip kits to aid in the irrigation of horticultural crops are in the pipeline, with the step set to boost sustainable water use.

Over 300 households are currently benefitting from the almost complete project, for the first time shielding drought-prone Laikipia North from adverse effects of rampant water shortages. This is a relief to small scale farmers who now have water for use at home, for livestock and irrigation.

The ongoing water distribution effort is already raising land value, as farmers from near and far warm up to the prospects of profitable farming.

The smart farming project also targets to revamp pasture and fodder production to revolutionize the dairy farming enabling the increase of milk production from the current five litres per cow per day to 15 litres. Increasing food and fodder is among the promises Governor Ndiritu Muriithi has promised to deliver.

Other ways that will increase water for production include constructing 231 water pans/dams, 130 boreholes, and five mega dams.

## Matuiku Earth Dam Only a Season Away From Full Service Community

Residents of Nginyii village in Umande Ward, Laikipia East are an optimistic lot after the Department of Agriculture completed the dredging and expansion of Matuiku Dam, and is now just a rainy season away from filling up the expansive reservoir for domestic and agricultural use.

The Sh. 8.6 million project was completed in July 2020, and has a capacity of 50,000 cubic meters, but is currently 40 percent full due to poor rains- enough for livestock consumption and small scale crop irrigation.

A water trough constructed downstream serves as the drinking point for an estimated 160 cows and over 800 goats trooping to the watering point daily.

Even as they await the reservoir to fill up, farmers are using water sparingly to irrigate their horticultural crops like cabbages, kales, Irish potatoes and spinach. This will help the communities around become sustainable by conserving agricultural land also being water efficient.



*Matuiku Earth Dam*

### **Farmers Field and Business School (FFBS)**

The FFBS was started last year in September on a rented piece of land around Matuiku Dam.

The dam proved to be viable water source after its water came to the rescue of Irish potato crop that would otherwise have been lost due to poor rains in November last year.

The harvest was fair (ten 100 kg bags) but would have failed totally had the crop not been irrigated.

Two acres of drip irrigation kits have been installed for the FFBS

for promotion and drip irrigation farming and efficient use of water for increased productivity.

### **Sustainability**

The area project management committee was advised to review the by-laws governing the group so that their contributions can be used for maintenance of the dam like repairing of the fence to ensure sustainability.

A retraining on group dynamics, leadership, and governance is expected to boost outcomes of the project.

## Water Pan Comes To the Aid of Leleshwa Self-Help Group



*Farmers grow  
crops using  
Leleshwa water  
pan*

In June 2020, the Department of Agriculture completed the excavation of Leleshwa water pan, finally availing water to over 160 beneficiaries who now farm and raise livestock around the water source.

The 10,000 cubic meters water project in Olmoran, Laikipia West is a fortune-turner for over 160 beneficiaries who started out as a registered self-help group, enabling them to farm horticultural crops like tomatoes, capsicum, kales and french beans.

Also benefiting from the projects are livestock owners whose animals draw water from the water pan. These are an estimated 150

cattle and 300 sheep and goats.

The project has received an exceptional community embrace. A 13-member project management committee overseas the running of the water source. For Gender balance, the committee has seven women and six men, who have been trained on project management, group leadership and dynamics.

Leleshwa water pan is relatively small to meet the community demand for water, and plans are underway to explore further alternatives to plug the shortage not only in the said area, but across the county. These include sinking of more boreholes and excavation of

more water pans to meet the demand for domestic and commercial use.

The group has established a tree nursery at the pan site for improving the tree cover and environment conservation and as the income generating activity.

The project has really contributed to improvement of people's livelihoods especially those carrying out irrigation activities on horticultural crops. The project management committee has been advised to keep records on the activities and also establish kikuyu grass on the embankment to make it more stable and to minimize erosion.

## All-Year-Round Production for Matangi Village Following Dam Improvement Works

Crop production is set to greatly improve in Laikipia County after Governor Ndiritu Muriithi assured construction of five mega dams, 231 water pans, 130 boreholes, 15 privately developed dams, and an increase in bulk water supply by urban and rural water supply schemes in a span of utmost five years.

The County Government of Laikipia has so far demonstrated capability to deliver what has been promised. For instance, it has stepped up efforts to provide safe and adequate water for livestock and agriculture use for the residents of Matangi Village, Mukogodo East Ward in Laikipia North through Department of Agriculture.

The latest development is the 50,000 cubic meters Matangi dam, which has for the longest time lay degraded and clogged with silt, holding very limited amount of water for use in times of need.

The rehabilitated dam will be managed by the Project Management committee of 13 members comprising of subsistence farmers and pastoralists representatives.

After engagements and training of the farmers, the two groups, Kapron and Jikaze Self Help Groups have established one acre each of horticultural crops under drip irrigation for efficient use of water installed through the help of the department. Two



Potato plantation in Matangi village, Mukogondo East ward

water tanks were also delivered and installed on the demo farms.

“We engaged members of the community to come up with a project they think can help them get a better income by using Matangi dam water. The projects they chose were on onions and tomato,” said the Agriculture CEC Wangari Wachira.

With the availability of water, farmers have made a breakthrough in their farming business now that, a step that they were unable to make to make before.

Gone are the days when farmers made losses due to erratic rainfall patterns. Instead, farmers are able to do year-round production, boosting food security and creating additional incomes. Keen focus on market trends are

made to ensure the right crops are grown at the right time to fetch the best prices.

The dam was extremely sullied as a result of poor land management on the upstream. The dam was silted and the water levels were very low.

The project also entailed construction of elevated two water tanks with a capacity of 20,000 cubic meters and pump house, installation of solar panels and solar water pumps, and rehabilitation of water troughs.

The completed water project is currently serving over 150 households within Matangi village.

# Sustainable Projects for Sustainable Agriculture: **Electric Fence Saves Farmers from Losses through Wild Animal Conflicts**

Small scale farming is the backbone of agriculture, and it is one of the main solutions towards achieving food security in the country. It is also a major source of income for most low income earners in the country.

Constant wildlife attacks, however, pose a big challenge in most areas in Laikipia West, especially in Lorien, in Rumuruti Ward-an area covering four villages.

Through the commissioning of the Lorien Agroforestry for Sustainable Land Management Project, by the Department of Agriculture, through Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Project (KSCAP) a 12 Km solar powered electric fence has been installed, over 17000 fruit trees planted, 110 beehives installed and 7.2 tonnes of beans planted.

The fence has helped protect approximately 300 acres of land that are under crops. The farmers have adopted conservation agriculture in growing beans and fruit trees for conservation of the environment. The farmers are grateful as their crops are protected from the



wildlife as well as their homes. Gone are the days when residents spent sleepless nights in the dark protecting their farms from marauding elephants.

The 110 beehives, which have been installed across the fence, is an additional measure for protecting the farms against elephant attacks. The area is now safe and the environment is one you will be proud of.

Officers from the department have trained the farmers on different ways they can improve farming and make it a business. The aim is to help improve the quality of their crops to ensure attainment of Universal Health Care through prevention of diseases that originate from poor food quality.

Seeing the farmers harvest com-

fortably season after season is a relief for the department. This will as well help meet the rising demand for food which is one of the key goals of Agriculture and Vision 2030 and the Agricultural Sector Development Strategy 2010–2020 (ASDS).

For sustainability of the project the 280 direct beneficiaries will be trained and sensitized on how to contribute and maintain the solar powered electric fence. They will also be taught on how to pursue more development projects in the future.

Similar projects will be implemented in other areas across the county in the coming months.