

The Farmers Voice

KENYA NATIONAL FARMERS' FEDERATION

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KENAFF In Brief...

Kenya National Farmers' Federation, (KENAFF), is the apex umbrella farmers' organization in Kenya; also referred to as the National Farmers' Organization (NFO) representing all farmers in Kenya be they in crops, livestock, aquaculture, trees and forestry; making it a critical cog in the country's agriculture sector; the mainstay of the Kenyan economy.

The Federation's core mandate is to represent, articulate, promote and protect the interests of all the farmers in Kenya. This mandate is operationalized through lobby, advocacy and policy action; capacity building on organizational development for farmers' groups, cooperatives and associations and empowerment of farmers for better and transformed livelihoods.

KENAFF NFA

On 7th of February 2020, the Federation held its National Farmers Assembly. Some of changes proposed included; the revision of the KENAFF Constitution, the new proposed membership categories, Organizational structure which will factor in sub-county associations at the sub-county level; County associations at the county level; regional offices and the National level. The Secretariat headed by the CEO, shall be comprised of five departments headed by General Managers namely:

- Administration (Human resources, Legal affairs, Communication).

- Resource Mobilization (Kilimo Biashara Centers, Beginning Farmer Institute, Kenya Grown, Mutual Aid Schemes, Agro-tourism, Consultancy).
- Finance and Planning (Planning and Budgeting, Accounting, Procurement, Audit).
- Technical services (Research, Advisory services, Project management and Innovation).
- Member Services (Advocacy, Associations, Membership, Representation, Networking).

Roles and responsibilities of KENAFF at different levels were defined into general, lobby and advocacy, and services so that to set clarity for national level involvement in county chapters and extent of support they can be accorded



KENAFF AGM

The Kenya National Farmers' Federation (KENAFF) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on the 20th of February 2020. In attendance were three delegates drawn from each KENAFF county associations to discuss several issues, in particular, the importance of farmer organization and organized agricultural sector, the various government strategies and interventions to the sector and the importance of agricultural sector in development.

Outcome

- Poverty eradication in Kenya through promoting the welfare of farmers all over Kenya, KENAFF being ambassador.

- Farmers' organizations, including KENAFF, the national farmers federation, working towards the socioeconomic transformation of their members' livelihoods.
- KENAFF shall continue supporting all well thought out development plans; particularly those that touch on the livelihoods of its members including the Big 4 Agenda, Agriculture Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy (ASTGS), Kenya Vision 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 8, 13 and 17.
- KENAFF emphasizing the importance of farm forestry, afforestation and other sustainable land management practices as part of Government initiatives aimed at protecting our natural capital, forests, soil and water.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

March 8th marked the International Women's Day where we joined the rest of the world to celebrate women and their incredible achievements. We remember women who have sacrificed themselves for a better world for generations to come.

This year's theme for International Women's Day being, "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights", we reflect on opportunities and struggles women face in pursuit of agricultural, social and economic progress; It is important that we enable women influence the decisions about their future. Generation Equality tackles issues of women across generations, from early to late years, with young women and girls at the centre.

It is true we don't have an equal world at the moment and women are thirsty for change, and concerned about the future. They are radically impatient for change. It's an impatience that runs deep, and it has been brewing for years. As an organization we champion for the rights of women farmers' since they play a vital role in our society. We have initiatives that women and youth are involved in.

In our strategic outlook 2019-2028, we have incorporated the need to have youth and women in agri-food systems through linkage and coordination, capacity building, lobby and advocacy, research, Partnerships and resource mobilization.

Rural women need more opportunities to participate, improve their skills, and gain access to assets. Let us all work together to empower women to achieve food and nutrition security. For their sake and the sake of their families and communities.

The majority of women, especially in Kenya, are involved in agriculture and the sector is crucial to their livelihoods. They play a pivotal role in food production, food distribution and food utilization – the three components of food security – as well as in various activities that support agricultural development such as environmental conservation, afforestation and crop domestication.

On the other hand, they are often constrained heavily by discriminatory policies and social norms that limit their access to productive inputs, assets and services. This increases their vulnerability to food insecurity and heavily limits their contributions to agricultural productivity.

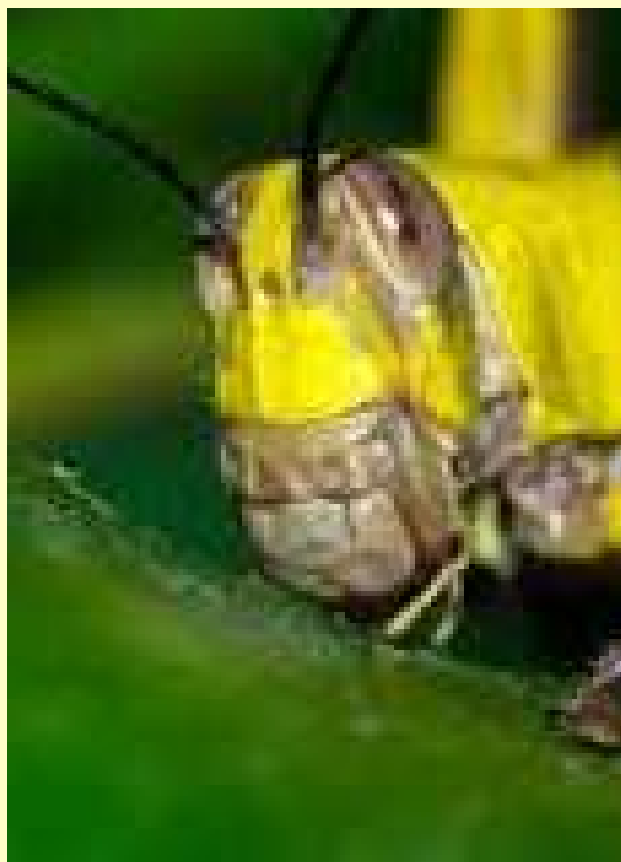
Eliminating gender-based discrimination under the law, ensuring gender-awareness policy, and giving women a greater voice in decision-making at all levels are important for mainstreaming gender within agriculture and food security programmes and policies.

The increased participation of women and their empowerment, which includes giving them better if not equal access to resources such as land and credit, are essential components of sound agricultural, social and economic policy. Empowering women means improving agricultural development and food security for the nation as a whole.

KENAFF is ready and committed to work with organized women and youth farmers to improve their livelihoods and will always advocate for generational equality not only to farmers but all women and youths of Kenya.

LOCUST INVASION IN KENYA

The earliest major locust invasion in colonial Kenya was in 1928. They entered Kenya from Turkana and flew southwards along the Kerio Valley, stopping here and there to breed and feed. They struck again in 1931 and 1932; more voracious and destructive possessing a strong preference for plants like millet, finger millet and maize. These locusts migrated from the upper reaches of River Niger and invaded Kenya from the direction of Uganda via Bungoma. Methods used then to subdue the locusts included killing hoppers by beating them, digging trenches and driving hoppers there, driving locusts into brushwood piles and burning them there, driving stock to trample over them and to force them to fly away, trapping them, spraying both hoppers and locusts with arsenate of soda, and digging up and destroying their eggs



Since their invasion on December 28th, 2019; the desert locusts have spread to 12 counties especially in the Northern regions of Kenya; Wajir, Marsabit, Isiolo, Garissa, Meru, Embu, Mandera, Samburu, Turkana, Tharaka Nithi, Laikipia and Machakos. While farmers were relatively lucky as their crops had already matured or been harvested by the time they arrived, herders face another heavy blow as vegetation for their animals is consumed by the voracious locusts.

Kenyans have been seen shooting in the air, banging cans and racing around, waving sticks in desperation to shoo them away, pesticide spraying has been able to kill about 280-600 million locusts. The government through the Ministry of Agriculture has set aside 230 million for efforts on control and elimination.

The locusts are the latest symptom of extreme conditions that saw 2019 start with a drought and end in one of the wettest rainy seasons in four decades in some parts due to a warmer western Indian Ocean, a climate condition known as the Indian Ocean Dipole IOD. The ongoing rains and lack of control in parts of Somalia and Ethiopia where the locust originated not undertaking controls, the aerial spraying by Kenya is unlikely to contain them.

CLIMATE SMART FODDER

Smallholder dairy farming plays a critical role in sustainable rural development and growth in Kenya and provides milk and dairy products for the family and a regular income. Fodder production still remains one of the key factors that determine the success of dairy sector in Kenya. Proper fodder production and management would therefore greatly reduce the cost of production as well as increase milk production. Kenya National Farmers Federation is currently promoting Brachiaria grass technology in Machakos and Kirinyaga counties under the project Innovafrica which is an EU funded - Horizon 2020 programme. KENAFF main role is to mobilize smallholder farm families and agro based enterprises to upscale the uptake of the brachiaria technology.

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Brachiaria grass offers several benefits among them improving milk productivity of dairy animals by 15% to 40%, drought tolerance, high plant vigor as well as providing good quality and palatable fodder to the animals

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Through an active farmer participatory process on selection and evaluation of the cultivars. The result revealed that *Brachiaria brizantha* cv. MG-4, *B. brizantha* cv. Piata, *B. brizantha* cv. Xaraes and *B. decumbens* cv. Basilisk were the most suitable for the larger East Africa region and Kenya in particular. In the wake of challenges facing fodder production in Kenya, Brachiaria grass offers several benefits among them improving milk productivity of dairy animals by 15% to 40%, drought tolerance, high plant vigor as well as providing good quality and palatable fodder to the animals (Njarui et. al, 2016). It has also been successfully used in control of striga and stem borers under push-pull system. In addition, it has been documented to be resistant to pests and diseases, establishes easily and regenerates within a short time. Further, the grass can be conserved in various ways. Brachiaria also improves soil quality and enhances soil carbon sequestration by accumulating organic carbon. In addition, the grass has ability to maximize plant nitrogen use efficiency contributing to reduction in the greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. N₂O and CH₄). This makes it climate smart and an appropriate alternative livestock fodder (Gichangi et al., 2016).

FUTURE FARMERS OF KENYA



In Kenya youth unemployment is higher than the overall national unemployment rate. The youth unemployment challenge is therefore primarily a challenge of economic growth and job creation. However, the agriculture sector presents a huge opportunity for the creation of employment to absorb the youth and to ensure achievement of food security for future generations. Statistics indicate that the average age of a Kenyan farmer is 60 years while that of Kenya in general is 19.5 years, which increases suspicions whether the country can be food secure when its most active population is not willing to participate in food production. Moreover, in a country where food security is a challenge, young people do not see and take advantage of the opportunities existing in the agriculture sector. Over the years, students in secondary level have been taking up agriculture subject as part of the curricular and have to carry out a year-long project where they grow a certain crop or raise livestock. Such projects are expected to translate the theoretical aspects of the subject into more practical and lasting experience for the candidates, many of whom end up becoming future farmers. The Federation has a potential of playing an important role in nurturing students in agriculture by developing youth agri-initiatives to address the issues of attraction, engagements and retention of the young students in agriculture.

Agriculture needs to be promoted as an attractive and important business. The Kenyan youth has grown up with an attitude that agriculture is outdated, unprofitable, hard and dirty work. KENAFF through lobby, advocacy and capacity building is working with the youth through Youth Agricouncil to change perception of agriculture being associated with academic failures and retirees with an aim of nurturing them into next group of farmers who will ensure food and nutrition security in this Country.

The Federation is also developing innovative financing concepts and strategies to identify and fund sustainable agriculture projects and platforms targeted at young people interested in agriculture and agribusiness as a source of sustainable livelihood and an income generating venture.

Technology is a big contributing factor in bringing the youth on board especially through social media. These platforms are used to spread knowledge, build networks and reduce farmers' costs in market access and information gathering while increasing their profitability.



CONSERVING THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental conservation is anything we do to protect our planet and ensure sustainable utilization of natural resources and stability of future farming generations. In Kenya we have prioritized the protection and conservation of environment since we attained independence. In support of the Government, KENAFF has been working on projects that contribute positively towards environmental conservation such the biogas project, afforestation among others. Burn stove is an ongoing project and KENAFF having a close relationship with farmers is helping in the distribution of the burn stoves.



The BURN Stove project allows families in rural Kenya to cook food using cleaner, more efficient cook stoves, thereby consuming less firewood. The stove's 'natural draft' technology reduces fuel consumption by up to 45% and cooking time by up to 50%, saving families up to \$300 on fuel a year.

It is important to note farmers will be able to enjoy good health and wellbeing as the stove lowers exposure to indoor air pollution, which is a primary cause of respiratory disease, is affordable and clean energy; the cook stoves are important when it comes to helping developing communities gain access to sustainable energy for household tasks and a source of employment to many youth as it has created over 100 local jobs in making the stoves, and through monitoring, education and training programmes hence boosting the Kenyan Economy indirectly.

The stove's 'natural draft' technology reduces fuel consumption by up to 45% and cooking time by up to 50%, saving families up to \$300 on fuel a year.



SOCIAL MEDIA MEETS AGRICULTURE



Agricultural extension and advisory services primary element is communication, as such, social media is a potential goldmine. Farmers are now using the platform to engage with clients online, voice the issues affecting the agriculture industry and engage with all the actors in agricultural innovation systems. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, and Whatsapp are the major platforms for agricultural information dissemination.

Farmers don't need to depend on a single source for information anymore and with increased contact with peers tried and tested information at the right time can prove to be a very important input. Social media platforms like Mkulima Young, Young Farmers Market, Digital Farmers Kenya and Mkulima Hub Kenya on Facebook educate and inform on agricultural matters as well as facilitate market for agricultural produce and related products.

Social media has already impacted the wind of global development making people more informed and aware. Its introduction for agvocacy is about the representatives of agriculture proactively telling their story, visibility of extension websites which is another big advantage for quicke information dissemination.

For researchers and academicians, creating peer networks is an important part of career advancement as well as dissemination of important findings that can be translated on farms and social media provides a very good platform for academic and professional networking. Social media has huge opportunities and incentives for all the stakeholders in agricultural sector but more importantly, it is an excellent platform for making all the actors a part of the greater agricultural community. In spite of the opportunities, the use of social media is still just beginning in Agricultural Extension Advisory Service is still low mostly because of lack of awareness extensionists and extension organizations are much laid back by stereotyping farmers and believing they are not technologically savvy.



Twitter indicates the growing space of agriculture and increased popularity of farming among the non farming community, providing a unique opportunity for extension to reach an increased number of audience in lesser time and with reduced resources. Blogs are efficient platforms for personally connecting with clients and peers and sharing stories, opinions, and experiences aided by interactivity with audience at an individual and organizational level. For research and extension organizations, they also provide the opportunity of opinion mining to understand farmers' concerns. Whatsapp groups of farmers are actively sharing information and seeking advice from experts when needed and are requesting the government to use Google Earth and Whatsapp for accurate and efficient information delivery.

FROM THE COUNTIES

DAIRY GOATS REARING AND BEE KEEPING



Siaya County especially Bondo Sub county exhibit Semi-Arid Properties. The interventions by KENAFF Siaya county Chapter have seen farmers and farmer groups engage in suitable income generating projects for the area, notably is the introduction of Dairy Goats in collaboration with partners. Dairy goat milk is known for medicinal properties in Asthma patients, high in Iron and calcium minerals. It also attracts a higher price where a litre goes at Kshs 150 compared to Cow milk which goes at Kshs 60

Farmers are also engaging in Bee keeping and most recently rearing and feeding of the Quail birds is slowly taking root in the area As the chairlady Madam Rose Ong'onga puts it there is need to invest more in these projects given that crop production is not more effective compared to livestock keeping. KENAFF is also looking at possibilities to supplement reliance on supply from Lake Victoria

SIAYA COUNTY

LOBBY AND ADVOCACY FOR FARMERS

Kakamega county chapter is putting a lot of emphasis in engaging the county government to address issues affecting farmers. In response; the county government has prioritized agricultural support programmes to mitigate farmers in the production process. KENAFF has been driving farmers' agenda as a partner of government through its chairperson Mr. Joseph Ngaah and this has seen the following issues addressed by the county government In one of the recent engagements we lobbied for employment of extension workers. The governor promised to employ extension workers in each ward to intensify access to information at the local level



KAKAMEGA COUNTY

PASSION FRUIT VALUE ADDITION



Taita-Taveta County comprises of large scale and small scale farmers. Most farmers indulge in various value chains activities just to mention; poultry, horticulture, dairy, agroforestry, beekeeping and value addition of Moringa, passion among others. Passion being the third most popular fruit after mango and banana respectively is a gold niche to a youth group in the area.

The youth group identified by KENAFF during member service and value chain mapping has a great impact on the community and members involved. The team processes organic passion juice, brands it and sells the juice locally. This ensures high standards of healthy living in the community. The youth group consists of six men and four female members equipped with different skills and knowledge.

The passion fruits are collected from more than 350 self-driven and registered CBOs. The team expects to reach a wider market, especially in hotels and supermarket once they acquire the recommended auto pulper and pasteurizer machines required for certification by KEBS. The machine currently in use has a low volume processing ability, handling 300 kg of passion weekly which varies from a 3000 kg of collected passion fruits per week. Therefore, great loss of passion fruits emerges along other challenges like time-consuming, poor storage facility and fluctuation of prices by brokers.

The youth group believes in KENAFF intervention alongside various stakeholders they can attain an increase in production and marketing.



TAITA TAVETA COUNTY

FROM THE COUNTIES CONT...

ORANGE FLESHED SWEET POTATO VALUE CHAIN



Sweet Potato is a perennial vine adaptable to different agro-ecological zones, widely grown on a small scale mainly in subsistence farming. As a result of its nutritional value, a modern factory in Maua is producing bread, cakes, doughnuts, and crisps out of the orange fleshed sweet potato. Climate change is affecting amount and rainfall patterns, however sweet potatoes are more weather resilient crops therefore farmers with Meru Friends Sacco are urging their neighbors to grow more sweet potatoes. It is easy to cultivate even in poor soil and versatile conditions. Interested farmers are provided with drought-tolerant, disease-resistant vines that have been propagated for the project by the Kaguru Agricultural Training Centre, under Meru County's agriculture department. The number of suppliers are steadily growing as farmers are drawn by the extra income and a nutritional boost for their families.

Benefits of the orange fleshed sweet potato:

- Sweet potatoes are well-suited to the erratic rainfall fed regions in Kenya. The vines can be planted at any time of year and require little water. They grow fast as long as the weather warm, that helps provide farmers with a continuous food supply.
- Farmers sell directly to the plant for double the price they got before. The sweet potato value chain is helping with the creation of employment for the youth and women while keeping Kenya, a healthy and food secure country.

Despite the challenges, in a country where many people can barely scratch a living from their fields, growing sweet potato could provide some relief.



MERU COUNTY

DAIRY GOAT FARMING

In Kenya the rapidly increasing population is concentrately reducing the land in rural areas. The increasing human population is leading to increased land pressure. Consequently, the smaller land sizes cannot support dairy cattle, making the dairy goat a better option as they require smaller land to rear hence known as the poor man's cow.



The World Bank through the government of Kenya is funding community based organizations in alternative sources of livelihood and diet that require limited space and expertise to implement. Several community's self-help groups are encouraged to start dairy goat rearing project as a source of meat and highly nutritious milk as a way of income generation, improved and sustainable livelihood. The dairy goat rearing is gaining popularity as the cost of rearing one dairy cow is enough to raise six dairy goats making it an ideal enterprise for farmers with small land parcels. Several groups have affiliated themselves with DGAK to be assisted in dairy goat production as a business.

BASICS OF DAIRY GOAT FARMING

Housing for dairy goats must be clean, well ventilated and free to encourage an active lifestyle therefore increasing production. Unlike indigenous breeds which are left free to roam for themselves dairy goats are zero grazed hence they require structures which will shield them from direct sunlight, wind and rain water. Structures are constructed using locally available materials that are affordable to many farmers.

The floor of the cages is raised and constructed in a way that allows urine and manure to drain and fall easily. This ensures cleaning is easy and cages remain dry to prevent diseases. The trough is strategically constructed with ample feeder allowing farmers to easily feed and water their goats.

Breeding: These involves cross breeding of local goats which are more disease resistant with the toggenburg and Germany alpine breeds, which are certified by Dairy Goat Association of Kenya to ensure that farmers get only highly yielding varieties. Goats are prolific feeders therefore multiplying very first with mostly twin kids born.

Milk production is determined by the breed and the genetic of the dairy goat, farm management and feeding practices. The dairy goat that is well taken care of produces enough milk for the family and excess for sale. The milk is preferred because it is highly nutritious especially for children and for recuperating patients.

Feeding: Goats have a superior production capacity than a cow. A dairy goat requires good health for better milk production. The feed should be chopped and the goat should be given clean water and enough mineral salts thereafter.

Disease Management Worms and pneumonia are the most common diseases on the goats. The symptoms of worms are worms or eggs in the goat's stool and low milk production or a thin poor coat, treated by deworming. Sneezing, coughing, heavy breathing and self-isolating by the goat from others are symptoms of pneumonia therefore the farmer is advised to consult a veterinary. Goats need to be free from ticks and fleas. If spotted, spray the goat, the house and the surrounding. Also spray any new goat coming into the house.

Return On Investment . A high breasted cow cost 80,000 Kshs that most of the small holder farmers cannot afford. Feed for one cow can be used to raise six dairy goats, they can give birth two times a year and have the potential of twin kidding giving rise to four kids per year.

NYERI COUNTY

FROM THE COUNTIES CONT...



DURING PLANTING SEASON CONSIDER...

Seed selection: There are several diseases that are transmitted via the seeds. If infected seeds are used for the next crop, seed-borne diseases are transferred into the farm. Seed selection should therefore start by obtaining seeds from healthy plants. Small, shriveled and broken seeds contain less nutrition for the developing seedling. By removing these inferior seeds, the farmer is able to grow stronger and healthier seedlings.

How to select seed: Some plants may have characteristics that are more desirable. During the growing season, the farmer can try to observe these differences and mark preferred plants with a ribbon or with a stick. During the harvesting season, the seeds of these plants can be reserved as seed for the next crop. In this way, the farmer can slowly improve the quality of their varieties.

Proper spacing: If crops are planted at recommended spacing, the plants cover the ground quickly reducing the need for weeding.



Intercropping: Farmers should consider intercropping cereals with other leguminous crops such as cowpeas, groundnuts, pigeon peas, soya beans, kidney beans and nuts. This can help fight noxious weeds such as striga in the farm. The striga weed roots cannot attach to the root system of the leguminous plants and will therefore die. The Push-pull farming technology is a proven farming method that helps control the parasitic weeds.

Timely planting: Maize planted at the right time has vigorous growth and becomes well-established before the growth of weeds. The seeds should be planted at the onset of the rains. This allows the seeds to establish before weeds develop.

Weed control: Weeding should be done three to four (3 to 4) weeks after planting. For a healthy crop, weeding should be done two or three (2 or 3) times because a young maize plant is very sensitive to weed competition. It should start when the crop is about 7.5 cm high but once the crop is about 45 cm tall, weeding is not necessary except in a few cases where there are favorable conditions for weed growth.

TRANS NZOIA COUNTY

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