



A Strategic Partnership to Promote Destination Laikipia



A Lodge at Solio Ranch

By Nahashon Maina

Laikipia hospitality industry players are angling for a bigger tourism pie through an innovative partnership with their coastal counterparts. The players will be in Mombasa for two days next this week networking with their counterparts along the coast and learning on the best tourism practices that Laikipia can employ to attract more tourists.

More than 20 Laikipia hotels will participate in the marketing event aimed at promoting Destination Laikipia.

With Africa's tourism sector being rated as one of the fastest-growing markets globally, Laikipia is making serious efforts to position itself strategically as a preferred destination of choice.

The choice of Mombasa for the strategic partnership has been informed by its growing number of tourists which is only second to Nairobi.

Many international tourists land into the country through Moi International Airport, Mombasa before embarking on visiting different attractions in upcountry.

Laikipia is yearning to be a leading tourism destination and has been wooing domestic and international tourists to visit the county during

their holidays. Among the industry players taking part marketing volley at the Coast is Ol-Pejeta conservancy which will slaughter two bulls to showcase Laikipia's best beef product.

Laikipia is Kenya's leading producer of Borana beef meat. Those attending will have a taste of this delicacy.

Others are Maiyan, Falcon Hotel and also some real estate firms.

Laikipia is the gateway to Mt. Kenya and has a diverse culture, scenery and abundant wildlife in private conservancies.

"We are targeting tour operators, hospitality owners, tourism associations. What we are looking for is to see how Mombasa and Laikipia Counties can complement each other in terms of joint marketing of tourism products," Laikipia Tourism CECM, Biwott Tirop said.

The key outcomes expected is to have tourists are coming for seven-day holiday spend four days enjoying the beach in Mombasa and three days for the game drive and mountain climbing in Laikipia.

The main aim is to sell Laikipia as a tourism and investment destination. The event will also provide an opportunity for industry players to interact on ways of diversifying their products to

raise the profile of Destination Laikipia.

With lifting of the curfew, Laikipia is set to witness an increased number of tourists visiting various attraction sites in the county.

"Currently we have around 300 rooms whose owners are willing to lease and going into festivity, we expect the increase in tourist to occupy them," CEC said.

Laikipia is also targeting between 15-20 real estate firms to showcase various offers they have in Laikipia for investment".

He added that when one looks at the national scale, Laikipia has become a prime destination for tourism and investment.

The government is already expanding Nanyuki Civil Airstrip. The upgrade of Kenol-Marua Dual carriage road and rehabilitation of Nairobi– Nanyuki railway line will increase tourists in Laikipia.

"The dual carriage will be perfect for people who love road trips," said the CECM.

The county government is also modernizing Laikipia urban centres under the smart towns initiative attract investment. The event will culminate with a golf competition at Nyali Golf Club.

Wanjiku's Speciality is Making Traditional Porridge for Ceremonies

By Muriithi John

Most of the traditional celebrations involving wedding preparations are not complete unless there is a quality traditional porridge. Many families that have such occasions go to extreme levels in search of people who can prepare them what is needed, owing to the fact that there are few people with such expertise. Laikipians are lucky to have an expert in this field who started this work in 2018, mainly doing it in Rumuruti and the surrounding areas. Madrine Wanjiku is a common name now related with making of quality traditional porridge for special occasions. Asking her how and why she started this business, Wanjiku responds that she just started it as a showcase for cultural celebrations for the Kikuyu culture. Little did she know that this would come as a breakthrough for her 'Ngakiwa Fermented Porridge' business.

"It was back in 2018 when the County Government had organized an Indigenous Technology Trade Fair and people would exhibit what their forefathers were taking as food and drinks. I decided to participate and make porridge that was used during 'uthoni'," said Wanjiku, highlighting that she learnt the skill from her parents and grandparents in Kirinyaga County.

Before COVID-19 hit the country, there were such celebrations in Rumuruti taking place on 10th and 11th of December every year. People would display traditional meals like honey, traditional beers, porridge, among many others.



Wanjiku, who also works in the section of Culture and Social Services under the depart-

ment of Education says she has taught the same to different groups in her area of work. These groups in turn helps in making such traditional celebrations lively and complete.

"I have been working with Excel Catering and Decoration group which provides outside catering. Their knowledge in making the rare porridge acts as an added advantage for them to get more customers," she said.

Certification

According to Wanjiku, the porridge she makes has lots of nutritional values coming from the ingredients that form this meal. All the raw materials are natural to ensure no intoxication to the user.

"The porridge is made with dried cereals, rich in nutrients, that is- maize, millet and sorghum. It is ready within two days after preparation

The entrepreneur who is a Community Development Assistant in Igwamiti ward, tasked with empowering the community to



Wanjiku demonstration a traditional way of grinding millet for making porridge

help in job creation in the community to lift livelihood describes how she makes her porridge: One grides the dry cereals with a griding stone, then dips it in hot boiling water then stores on guard for fermentation. The ready porridge can go up to a month.

Wanjiku explains that the porridge requires hot places as it is cold, and that is the reason why she has more customers in Rumuruti.

Though this business is seasonal, she says once she gets all the certifications, she will start repackaging the product and venture into mass production. The product will even help her in establishing a permanent working area.

This porridge is not only for use during wedding celebrations, marriages and dowery, but as food especially when making long journeys.

"I remember when I was young and we would go to shamba from morning with only a guard full of porridge. It is a meal by itself," concludes Wanjiku who is hopeful that people will embrace this traditional meal and improve on their health.

HPV Vaccine Key Step to Reducing Cervical Cancer Burden



Agnes Muteru, Deputy Nurse in Charge, LHS Nanyuki Maternal and Child Health Clinic

By David Serem

Towards the end of 2019, LHS Nanyuki joined a nationwide vaccination campaign aimed at preventing young girls from getting cervical cancer.

The HPV Vaccine campaign, which is still ongoing, targets to immunize girls of 10 years of age, who are not into the sexually active group. So far, the effort has seen the vaccination of close to 300 of the target beneficiaries, a big step towards addressing the possible future health and financial implications of cancer management.

The Human Papilloma Virus vaccine, which is

administered twice in six months interval free of charge, targets to build immunity against the associated complications for the young girls.

The growing awareness among the communities on the benefits of the vaccine is driving the success of the project even higher. It is the result of proper consistent information dissemination by the teams of healthcare providers behind the campaign that has seen communities relax their previous stance against the vaccine. By passing the right information on the role of the vaccine in shielding families from future financial setbacks, parents are now making informed choices and presenting their children for vaccination.

HPV is sexually transmitted, and can lie dormant for over 10 years even if symptoms never occur during which it can be actively transmitted.

There are many different types of HPV. Some types can cause health problems including genital warts and cancers.

Cervical cancer affects women of prime age, meaning it impacts negatively on social-economic progress of a society.

Although a healthy immune system can clear an infection without treatment in two years, the virus poses risks to women and girls whose immunity may not be strong. It is for this reason that the vaccine is particularly beneficial for HIV positive persons, who's already compromised immunity gives a leeway for infection.

Health care providers are also exploring health education in schools to ward off early sexual contact, as it is the surest way to avoid HPV related complications.

HPV can lay dormant for many years after a person contracts the virus, even if symptoms never occur.

The Ministry of Health in 2019 announced the countrywide vaccination campaign alongside other routine infant vaccines through public, private, faith-based and NGO health facilities, and administered close to 800,000 girls, who are 10 years old.

Cervical Cancer is amongst the leading causes of cancer deaths among women in Kenya. In 2018 alone, 49,000 new cancer cases were diagnosed and 33,000 deaths documented. Nine women die from cervical Cancer in Kenya alone, every day.

Globally, cancer remains a major public health concern. Last year, in 2018 alone, 18.1 million new cases were diagnosed with 9.6 million deaths reported.

Laikipia Farmers to Receive 10,000 High-yielding Fruit Tree Seedlings

By Mollin Wanjiru

Ward Agricultural officers will distributed more than 10,000 fruit trees to farmers across Laikipia county.

This will boost the income of the marginalized and low-income earners and also boost food security. The fruit trees include 6,000 avocados and 4000 mangos.

Wards in Laikipia East sub county will receive more avocado fruit trees while Laikipia West will receive only mango fruit trees in this distribution.

Laikipia North which has Mukogodo East, Mukogodo West and Segera will also receive a favorable share of both.

According to Mr. Patrick Maina, a Farmer in Nanyuki ward Nturukuma area, this will be a major benefit to farmers because of the economic advantage associated with these crops.

"One Hass avocado tree produces an estimate of 1500 avocados with 1Kg going for ksh.120 locally. The minimum amount a farmer can make from 1 tree in one season being ksh.12,000," he said.

Mr. Maina has more than 800 avocado trees, 20 of them being fully ma-

tured. He added that this particular type of avocado can produce fruits for at least 2 seasons or even more with ample water supply.

Mrs. Margaret Munyiri, the Laikipia East Sub-County Agriculture Officer also stated that Hass avocado and the Mango fruit trees have done very well in Laikipia having worked closely with different farmers in the county while offering extension services to them.

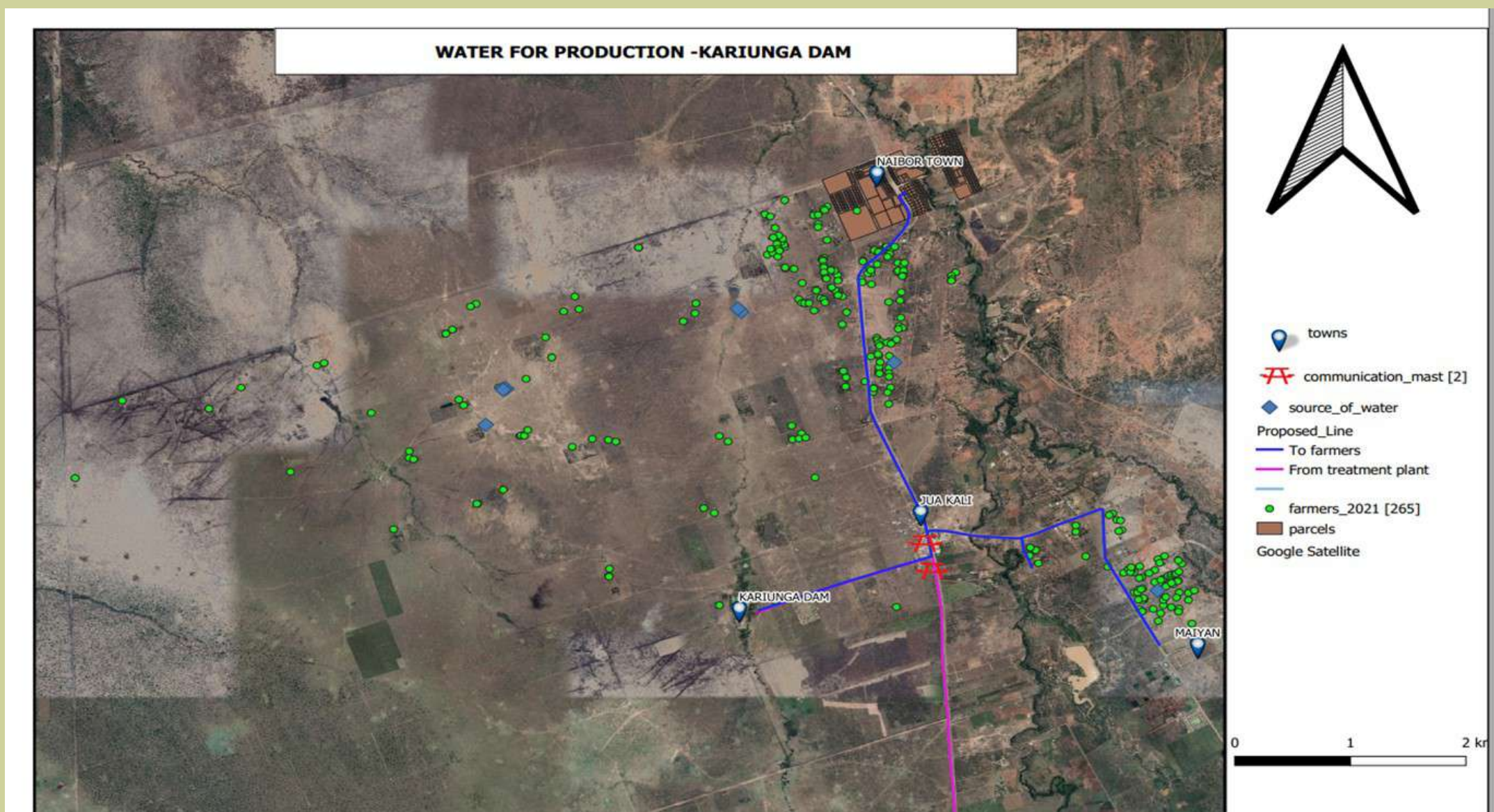
She also added that Mangos and avocado production has increased in many parts of Laikipia West and is being done in large scale for export.

Farmers growing avocados can also explore the export market which is very promising.

Mango fruit production in Laikipia has also been successful and this effort by the department will help farmers enjoy maximum returns.

Young people can also get involved in this venture as it requires less care and less space. Mango farming is a long term investment which is worth the effort and can withstand the dry weather condition.

Kariunga, Mutirithia and Naibor Water-for-Production on Course



Kariunga, Mutirithia, and Naibor (KAMUNA) integrated small-scale irrigation project in Segera Ward is 45% Complete.

The project is targeting 300 households translating to 2,000 persons.

The project is being implemented by the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in partnership with the Kenya Climate Smart Agricultural Project (KCSAP) at the cost of Ksh 29.5 million.

The project scope involves:

- Construction of water irrigation infrastructure.
- Promotion of efficient irrigation methods.
- Promotion of high-value fruit trees.

Promotion of high-value horticultural crops.

The department will also introduce fish farming, intensified livestock production, aggregation, market access, farmer organization, and capacity building.

The work components for the project will comprise of constructing 5 Km supply and distribution line from Kariunga dam to Jua kali, 4 Km Supply and distribution line for Mutirithia borehole, 5 Km Supply and distribution line for Habitat borehole, two 225 m³ masonry storage tanks, rehabilitation of Naibor Dam and Supply of 300 ¼ drip kits.

The county department of agriculture will introduce tomatoes farming as the reference crop for irrigation in the ward. The department targets 75 acres to put under tomato farming as water will be readily available throughout all seasons. The projected total

yield per acre is 16000 kgs, and with a kilo retailing at Ksh 30, the estimated income for farmers will be Ksh 480,000 per acre. Successful implementation of 75 acres for tomatoes farming will earn farmers Ksh 36 million per season. The department hopes with a good reticulation system for water, each household can set aside a ¼ acre for agriculture irrigation, particularly tomatoes, which can increase their income to Ksh 120,000 per season.

The project will create employment opportunities for 300 farmers to engage in full-time farming, with over 600 persons employed as casual laborers on farms. The agriculture department and her partners have trained 300 farmers on good agronomic practices, value addition, and marketing.

The project will also spur business growth by

introducing an aggregation center, cold storage, value addition. The department will put farmers into a marketing platform- producer organization.

The department is also targeting fodder improvement and is already engaging 30 targeted lead model farmers, with each setting aside 1 acre with reference grass being Rhodes. This will support livestock production by availing enough fodder as an acre is expected to yield 200 bales per season. Hay farming is done twice per year, and the department targets the model farmers to produce 12000 in the first year.

The dairy sector is expected to increase milk production from the current 5 litres per cow per day to 15 litres as there will be improved pastures in the area.



Mutirithia Masonry Tank

Impacts of Leasing Program in Laikipia County to Rural People



Grading of a road in Ol Moran ward under the leasing programme

By Vivian Wachira

A reliable and well-maintained road system offers access to business, health, employment and education.

This stimulates the economy and social development in an area. Laikipia county is hailed by many for implementing the leasing program.

The leasing program has enabled Laikipia to mobilize equipment for road improvement, enabling the residents to enjoy the services that come with it.

Since the inception of the leasing program in September 2019, 127 kms of roads have been graded, 451 kms graveled and 112 kms opened up.

This financial year, the county government is targeting to improve at least 60 kilometers in each of the 15 wards using five road-construction brigades.

This means each brigade will be responsible for construction of roads in three wards. Improvement of the rural roads that is; graveled, earth and bitumen roads has enhanced mobility of goods and services by interconnecting feeder roads at the village level.

The improvement of rural roads in Laikipia county has led to:

Reduction of transport cost

The enhancement of transport system reduces transport cost and in turn, increases profitability of businesses around.

“I thank Governor Ndiritu Muriithi, and the MCA Ngobit ward for the work they have done of repairing our roads as we are able to sell our milk. Initially we had difficulties and had to travel for quite a distance especially during rainy seasons to transport milk, causing high transport fee but now we

just step outside and our milk is picked,” said Ndirangu Gikonyo from Ngobit ward.

Improved roads in the county have made transportation schedules and deliveries more reliable and timelier

Joseph Muriithi, a bodaboda rider who transports milk says since the construction of the road in Ngobit ward road taking milk to the market has been made easier at all seasons especially the rainy season where mud was a hindrance to the transportation of milk because the road was slippery. Linda Muchuru from Shamanei says “since the construction of the Shamanei road, going to get stock for my shop from Nyahururu has been easier. Even when sending a bodadoda person takes less time to and from the market.”

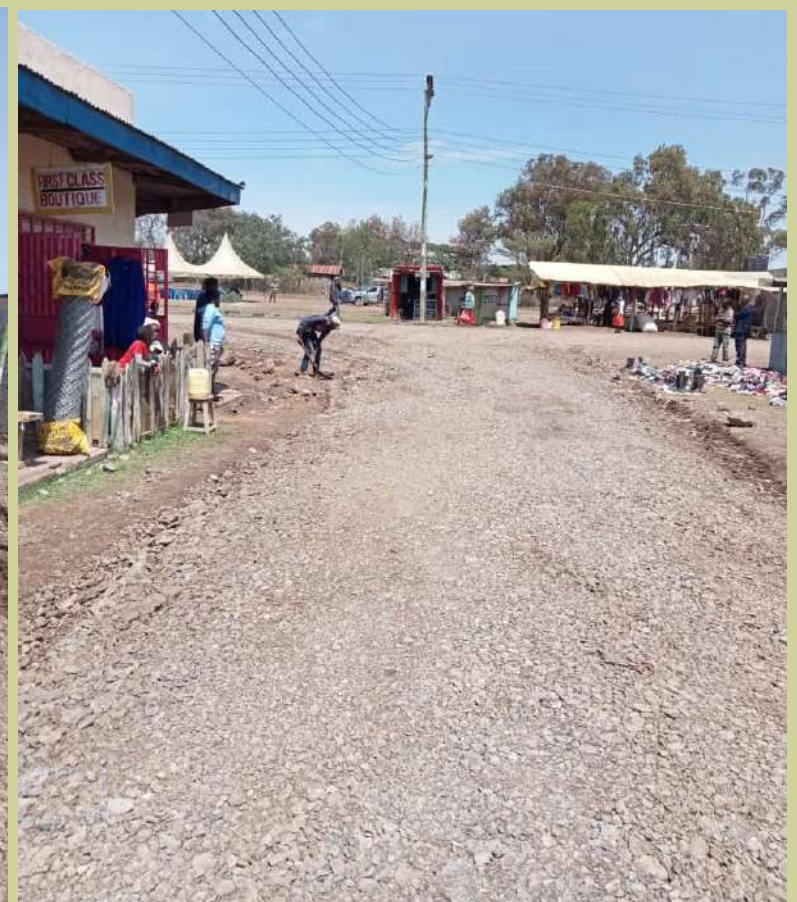
Reduction of maintenance cost.

Improvement of rural roads has also helped in reduction of both vehicles and motorcycles maintenance cost as compared to before thus, increasing the lifespan of these machines.

Enhanced interconnectivity.

There has been interconnectivity between farms and the market due to improved roads. Produces from the farms reach the market in good time.

According to the MCA Thingithu ward, Stephen Kamau, farmers growing cabbages along the river around Mirera area have benefitted from the construction of the of the Njoguini road. This has made it easier for them to get their products to the market as compared to before.



Roads around Lamuria trading centre in Tigithi ward undergoing remake under the leasing programme

ASDSP Linking Agricultural Value Chain Actors with Financiers



Farmers at Tomatoes farm in Ol-Moran ward

By Muriithi John

The Agricultural Sector Development Support Programme II (ASDSP II-Laikipia County) started the 10th month of 2021 on a higher note as they brought representatives from farmer groups and financial institutions together for a constructive conversation on how to realize mutual benefits.

On Friday 1st October brought together Financial Service Providers, Cooperatives and self-help groups in a meeting aimed at making the linkages that has been lacking between these groups.

Many Cooperatives and Self-help groups belonging to farmers have been anguishing following lack of money to carry out their businesses.

On the other hand, there are financial institutions, like saccos who lack sufficient customers, yet they have unutilized money.

Linkage

The linkage that ASDSP brings is to ensure that the groups get their money through loans from the financial institutions. The financiers also benefit with loaning the groups and getting interests.

Ng'arua Cereals is one of the Cooperatives in the County who have severally benefitted from a Laikipia County financier- Laikipia County Revolving Fund. According to the Cooperative chairperson Nahashon Kagiri, the funds have helped in improving their members' lives and those of the community.

"We have received an accumulative figure of Ksh 17.5 million in the four time we have applied. We have used the money to buy directly from our members and sell directly as a cooperative, thereby eliminating the brokers who used to exploit them," said Kagiri.

The 126-member cooperative has helped over

3,000 farmers, both members and neighbors. Last season they bought a 90kg bag of maize at Ksh 2,500 against the brokers' buying price of Ksh 2,200.

Ng'arua Cooperative also buying the right fertilizers in bulks for the members at reduced costs and ensuring quality in farm produce.

Other organized groups can also enjoy such services with access to funds as loans or grants and help in improving the quality of lives for members and the community at large.

Six Percent

It was a great experience as farmers and other group representatives, 26 of them, expressed their gratitude for learning new things from nine financial institutions represented.

Some admitted that they learnt for the first time that there are sources of funds that charge very low interest rates, way below the main banks.

For example, Youth Fund that does not charge any interest. Women Fund also does not have an interest rate, and so also is the Uwezo Fund.

Others like the Revolving Fund and Laikipia County Economic Stimulus fund offers loans at very little percentage.

The Revolving fund's interest rate is six per cent while the economic stimulus' interest rate is 7.5 after the county government of Laikipia agreed to pay for the client's five per cent.

Other organizations that may be a source of loans for the farmers included Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC), Nyala Sacco, LMA CBO Kilimon and Nyala Sacco.

At least 500 value chain actors were represented as each of the 26 farmers' cooperatives

has 20 to 30 members. These include Nduru-mo cereals, Ngarua Cereals, Salima SHG, Shalos Dairy, Muruku Dairy, Msinduka, Sipili cereals Sacco, Kilimo Bora, Majani, Lalamatak, Laikipia Dairies, Miti Mingi Mashambani, Kijabe Dairy, Kiriita Umoja, Laikipia Produce, Karaba Dairy, Withare Dairy, Olmorani LMA, Nyambugichi, Bahati Digital, and Karandi Farmers.

A take home from the meeting was that everyone present must take up a challenge and handhold a youth group as there is a gap in youth groups.

Many young people claim there is no money for them to do business, yet they do not organize themselves into groups which is the basic requirement to get loans or grants from most of the financial institutions.

Productivity

The County Government Officials present promised to help the groups struggling to come up with a business plan that can help the groups access financial services for economic empowerment.

ASDSP aims at increasing productivity, especially of the three VCA through enhancing skills encouraging innovation and also enabling climate smart agriculture.

It is currently working with 3742 people in three value chain group actors; 14 in Maize, 15 in sheep and goat sector, and two in cow milk business. The aim is to reach 5256 people.

Having a business mind in any farmer enables them create a clear business plan that analyses the possibilities and challenges the business is likely to face, thus avoiding surprises.

CFL's Passion for Safe Motherhood Bearing Fruits



First lady engaging with mothers at mahianyu dispensary and LHS Salama Health Centre during the Hongera Mama Kit event



By Wanjiku Wambaki

Laikipia First Lady Maria Mbeneka continues to demonstrate commitment in ensuring that the health of mothers and unborn babies is a priority.

Apart from crating awareness about the Linda Mama, she launched the Hongera Mama Kit initiative which helps expectant and new mothers to stay healthy.

She encourages regular check-ups at pre-natal clinics during pregnancy so as to identify and reduce risks to either the mother or the unborn baby.

Complications before and during birth can also be prevented through these check-ups. Any noted complications can be attended to.

“Health care providers can educate women about healthy pregnancy behaviors, danger signs of complications, breastfeeding and family planning; identify and treat pregnancy-related conditions such as pre-eclampsia; refer mothers to specialized care when necessary; encourage the use of a skilled birth attendant and minimize the risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV,” she said.

Antenatal care is also advised for mothers who have given birth. This will help to treat or prevent any threats posed on a new born baby and their mother.

The First Lady advises mothers all over the county to visit antenatal clinics at least 5 times but in case they are unable to do the five times, they should do a minimum of four times. Mothers

should also embrace exclusive breastfeeding for six months and child spacing for three years.

The county government, through the office of the First Lady, has worked in conjunction with Pathways Policy Institute and Laikipia Health Service to provide care for mothers in the county especially those in remote areas. This is called the **Hongera Mama Kit Initiative**. The initiative was designed to help expectant mothers deliver their babies with basic minimum provision of skilled birth, professional medical assistance before, during and after child birth.

The only requirements from mothers in order to be part of the initiative, is that they should be registered for Linda Mama, have attended at least four antenatal clinic visits and give birth at the clinic where they went for check-ups.

The kit consists of slippers, a basin, baby shawl, diapers, navel medicine, soap and petroleum jelly which act as a starter pack for newborn mothers.

She has visited places like Mbogo-ini, Matwiku, Thigio, Seria and Lorien in Laikipia west.

“Hongera Mama Kit Initiative aims at ensuring better health care for the people of Laikipia which is in line with Governor Ndiritu Muriithi’s manifesto on access to universal health care,” Ms Mbeneka said.

County Government Rolls Out Livestock Breeds Improvement Programme



By John Mwaniki,
Deputy Governor, Laikipia

We are keen on improving livestock breeds in our county, bringing in superior breeds and crossing them with our local breeds to ensure our livestock wealth is economically viable and competitive.

In this financial year 2021/2022, we have identified five types of livestock; beef cattle, camels, goats, poultry (chicken) and sheep.

On October 30th 2021, we started off with sheep, bringing the superior high yielding Dorper sheep. Together with Governor Ndiritu Muriithi, guided by Agriculture CEC Wangari Wachira and her Chief Officer Emily Kioko, and joined by Umande MCA Hon. Daniel Mugweru, Segera MCA Hon. Cherubo Kaparo and Tigithi MCA, Hon. Mutahi Mûiritu, we distributed 25 Dorper rams to three wards.

Why the Dorper me sheep? One, they attain market weight early. Two, they reach up to 40-60 kgs of weight in just a year-and-half. Three, they are highly marketable. Five, unlike other types, Dorper meat has no scent and it's not only sweet, but softer and tender.

Twelve groups from these wards benefited. In Umande, Ngegima Self-help Group, Gakuri Self Help Group, Urumwe Kalalu, and Githuchi Self Help Group benefited.

In Segera, the following benefited: Muramati Mukima SHG, Muramati elders, Kariunga Jua Kali boda-boda and Nabulu Women Group.

In Tigithi, the following benefited: Mwichokaniriria SHG, Pastor fellowship, Toat Toat Men SHG, and Wakama SHG.

To the question of who is benefiting, the answer is simple; firstly, the properly organised and registered groups within Laikipia.

Secondly, priority is given to marginal mixed farming wards. And thirdly, whilst even men in SHG benefit from the programme, women were mostly targeted for the fact that, women groups are way more disciplined and organized.

The programme continues to Rumuruti Ward, Ngobit ward, Salama ward and OlMoran Ward.

These groups will be monitored and will be undergoing regular training and capacity building to ensure in the locality they are situated, every member benefits and any other farmer who wishes to cross their livestock - ultimately do.

The objective is to increase food and nutrition security at household level, better market access, more income at the household level and increased trade. It's a one step at a time programme, we keep moving forward boldly.

