



From struggling farmers to millionaires.

That's how farmers describes the transformative journey...
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Climate-Smart Agriculture Champion Excites Delegates at Global Climate Change Conference >>Continued on Pg 10



KILIMO MAKUENI

Feeding our County



Rabies Vaccination Campaign

Department of Agriculture and Livestock launches campaign to eliminate rabies in Makueni.



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Makueni Receives Grain Dryers to Combat Aflatoxin, Enhance Seed Crop Quality

Makueni receives grain dryers to help improve quality of seed crop.

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Kenya's 4th BIGGEST LIVESTOCK YARD Coming up in Makueni



Makueni Embarks on Charm Offensive to Revamp Coffee Sector

Over 4,600 active coffee farmers from Makueni produced 320,000 kilograms of coffee cherry earning Kshs. 46 million in

2022/23 Financial year.

This paled significantly to the national total export which stood at 47,861 tonnes worth

Kshs. 36.6 billion as per statistics from the National Coffee Directorate.

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Editorial Note:

We are thrilled to unveil the inaugural edition of Kilimo Makueni, a publication brought to you by the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, Livestock, Fisheries, and Cooperative Development.

As we launch this first edition, we celebrate the dedication and ingenuity of farmers county-wide, whose tireless efforts sustain our community's food systems.

In these pages, you'll find a wealth of insights into the latest advancements in agricultural technology, sustainable practices, and innovative farming methods.

We also explore the interventions by the department and the county government at large, to support farmers in confronting global challenges such as food security and environmental sustainability, among others, to enhance agricultural productivity and profitability.

In the spirit of collaboration, we invite you to engage with the content in this publication to share your experiences and to join us in fostering a more resilient and sustainable future for agriculture.

Happy Reading.

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Kenya's 4th Biggest Livestock Yard Coming up in Makueni

Kathonzweni is set to become the 4th largest livestock sale market in Kenya after Dagoretti in Nairobi, Lolkuniani in Samburu, and Matuu Livestock Market in Machakos.

The yard, now at 90 percent construction, is spearheaded by the Department of Agriculture and Livestock in partnership with Small Scale Irrigation and Value Addition Project (SIVAP).

When complete, the sale yard arena will have a capacity to hold 1000 goats and 500 cattle on a market day.

The project is intended to improve access to markets and strengthen the livestock value chain.

During a recent development tour of Kathonzweni Ward, Governor Mutula Kilonzo Jr. asked the department to set aside funds for an abattoir and also consider introducing goat auctions to expand the market.



“1500
*The number of cattle
the yard can hold
on a market day”*



Utangwa Farmers Reap Millions From Irrigation Project

From struggling farmers to millionaires. That's how Matilda Muendo, a farmer from Woyani village in Kithungo Kitundu ward in Mbooni Sub-county, describes the transformative journey of a group of local farmers.

In April 2023, the National Government through Small Scale Irrigation and Value Addition Programme (SIVAP) completed establishment of Utangwa irrigation scheme availing water for irrigation to 565 farmers in the ward.

The project entails 10 weirs constructed along Kinyongo and Utangwa rivers at a cost of Kshs. 70 million. Completion of the project saw 110 acres put under irrigation where a variety of crops ranging from green maize, French beans, kales, spinach, cabbage and tomatoes are grown.

Muendo who serves as the chairperson of Utangwa Farmers Association says the project was a big relief and transition from the furrow irrigation they used before where a lot of water would be lost between the source and their farms.

88 of the farmers engaged in French beans production are now smiling all the way to the bank after signing a contract with an off-taker to buy all their products for export. In December 2023, Lui Farm exporters paid the farmers Kshs. 8 million.

The off-taker has saved the farmers from profiteering middlemen who used to exploit them. Lui Exporters pays a minimum of Kshs. 70 a kilo at the farm-gate.



Muendo added that they were trained by County government experts on good agricultural practices which has helped to improve agricultural productivity.

"Farming as a group has helped us to have bargaining power in the market. Initially, brokers used to buy our produce at a throw-away price," Muendo says.

She says that she has been able to pay school fees for her 3 children who are in the university and other 2 in high school.

However, Lui Farm Exporters note that there is a high demand for French beans in the export market which they have not yet been able to meet. To fill this gap, Muendo is urging more farmers to join the group and earn good money.

The cash trickle has enticed more farmers into joining the group of French beans producers. Muendo expects the numbers to grow to over 300 before end of 2024.



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Coffee production in the county has declined by 83 percent from 1,971,448 kilograms in 2000/01 to 320,000 kg in 2022/23 due to several challenges. These include; huge debts accumulated over the years due to unregulated borrowing; aging farming population averaging 60 years; inadequate processing, value-addition and marketing and poor pulping and drying.

Others include coffee theft from parchment stores; high operational costs at the factory and society levels; low adherence to legal and policy guidelines; high cost of inputs – chemicals, fertilizers; and low access to credit/financing facilities.

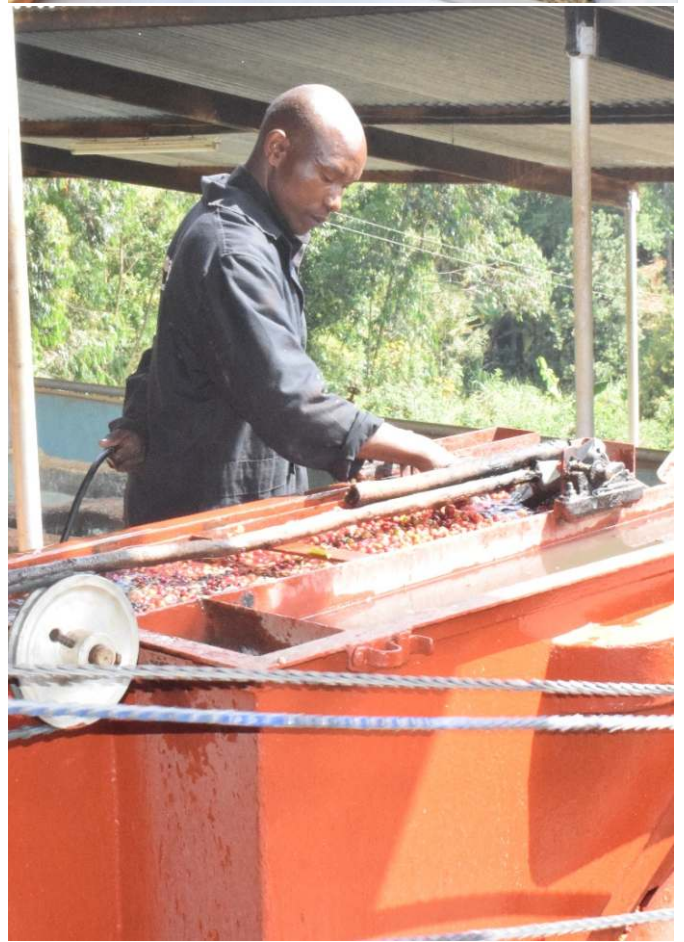
To breath a new lease of life into the sector, the Department of Agriculture has put in place far -reaching strategies which are beginning to bear fruit which include; partnering with the New Kenya Planters Cooperative Union which allowed 1,200 farmers to access Kshs. 5.4 million Cherry Fund (Coffee Cherry Advance Revolving Fund) to enhance production and opening satellite depots in partnership with the NCPB

at Kikima, Kithumani, Nunguni, Kasikeu, Mukuyuni, Kitise and Tawa so that farmers can access subsidized fertilizer.

Cooperatives Development Director Munene Mwindi says the county government has been promoting capacity-building among the farmers. Together with New KPCU, they have set up a demonstration farm at Mulima Coffee Factory to train farmers on good agronomic practices.

To ensure farmers in the county keep abreast and adopt modern coffee production methods, 32 farmers drawn from Kikima, Kithangathini, Kithumani and Masokani societies were supported to visit a model coffee farm in Meru, Mukarimu Coffee Estates owned by the best coffee farmer in Kenya.

“46M
*Amount earned by
 Makueni coffee farmers
 in 2022/23 Financial Year.”*





Makueni Young Agripreneur Dennis Muoki hosts Governor Mutula Kilonzo Jr at his Mavindini farm for a demonstration on new technologies for dry land Agriculture



Governor Mutula Kilonzo Jr hosts Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture and Livestock, Mithika Linturi

Makueni, ADSE, MESPT Sponsor 480 Trainees on Agricultural Skills

The County Government of Makueni, Anglican Development Services Eastern (ADSE) and Micro Enterprises Support Programme Trust (MESPT) have invested Kshs.11 million to fully sponsor 480 trainees, including youth and women farmers for agricultural skills training at the Makueni Agricultural Training Centre in Kwakathoka.

The training aims at creating a critical mass of skilled expert farmers as a catalyst for increased agricultural production in Makueni according to Agriculture and Irrigation Executive, Joyce Mutua.

The group forms the first cohort of trainees comprising 60 youth and 420 women farmers who underwent a 3-month comprehensive training on horticulture, dairy and poultry farming.

Mutua says the funds covered tuition fees, accommodation,



meals and exam fees for the 3-month coursework.

up capital for their agri-business investments.

“The course cost approximately Kshs.11 million with a 25% contribution from the county government while ADSE contributed 60%. MESPT contributed 15%,” said Mutua.

Chief Officer Dr. Victoria Kyallo says that upon completion, some of the trainees will receive start-

Subsequent cohorts will share training costs with partners to ensure sustainability of the program.

“Trainees to receive start-up capital for agri-business investments.”

AGRICULTURE

Farmers Receive Seeds for Pasture Establishment

Over 125 farmers residing in Mavindini Ward have received pasture seed (Ndata Kivumbu- African Foxtail) from the Makueni County Government to expand pasture acreage and livestock feed resources.

Livestock Chief Officer Japheth Kiminza says this particular seed variety is climate resilient and ideal for low rainfall zones to augment household incomes and livelihoods by enabling farmers to vend their pastures.



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Makueni has received two grain dryers from the Ministry of Agriculture to help improve the quality of seed crop.

This is a key milestone towards combating the menace of Aflatoxin which has in the past claimed several lives.

The dryers were received by Governor Mutula Kilonzo Jr. from Cabinet Secretary Mithika Linturi.



Small-scale farmer Phoebe Mwangangi from Makindu, Makueni received a standing ovation for her innovative climate-smart farming technologies during the COP28 UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai.

The delegates keenly followed as the nurse-turned farmer narrated how she makes hundreds of thousands of cash in a season while her neighbours stare at withering crops as a result of erratic rainfall.

Mwangangi has practised conservation agriculture on her 10-acre farm for four years.

She harvests surface run-off water from a nearby road which is stored in a concrete-lined pond for irrigation during dry spells. The pond is also seeded with catfish which she sells at the local market.

While other farmers use tractor disc plough cultivation during planting, Mwangangi employs deep tillage as well as planting pits also known as Zai pits as one of the soil conservation innovations. This helps hold water for a better crop even when the rains are minimal.

To beat the vagaries of climate change, Mwangangi has adopted growing of drought-tolerant crops like sorghum, millet and cow peas which require little rainfall. Half of her farm is used for pasture growing which is sold to dairy farmers.

Her resilience in adopting climate-smart innovations was spotted by an NGO, Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA) who supported her through training as well as sponsorship to attend the COP28 summit.

Meet Phoebe Mwangangi: Champion of Climate-Smart Agriculture who Excited Delegates at Global Climate Change Conference



“We are extending the skills and the innovation to the community, since I am the community extension volunteer, I make sure that every farmer has the right information to ensure that the community is food secure,” reiterates Mwangangi.

Mwangangi says that she started with 23 farmers in 2020 and the number has grown to over 100 as other farmers have seen the benefits of the innovations.

The County Government of Makueni has put several interventions in place to ensure that farmers in dry lands reap big from climate-smart farming.

The government distributes drought-tolerant seeds such as sorghum, cow peas and green grams to dry regions like Kalawa and Kibwezi-east wards every rain season.

County Director of Agriculture and Irrigation Mary Muteti says the county partnered with

KCDMS to provide deep tillage services to over 2000 farmers before the onset of the short rains last year to ensure maximum production.

Other interventions are the excavation of farm ponds, construction of sand dams as well as promotion of pasture growing in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

“Phoebe's innovations attracted a sponsorship to the COP28 Summit.”





Ngosini Dam Revamp to Benefit 7,000 Farmers

At least 7,000 residents of Mavindini and Muvau/Kikumini wards are gearing up for irrigated farming following the rehabilitation of Ngosini Concrete Dam.

The dam has a capacity of 67,000,000 litres of water meant for irrigation in a bid to increase food security in one of Makueni's driest and water stressed areas.

The rehabilitation of the dam was implemented through a partnership between the County Government and World Bank through the National Agricultural & Rural Inclusive Growth Project (NARIGP).

This project is one of Governor Mutula Kilonzo Jr's flagships to bring water closer to the people as well as agricultural retooling towards irrigation.

**“67,000M³
the capacity
of the dam”**



FISHERIES

Makueni Spearheads Campaign to Promote Aquaculture

Makueni County in partnership with the National Government has stocked 38 dams with over 200, 000 fingerlings as part of a campaign to boost aquaculture.

The initiative aims at improving the incomes, food security, and nutritional status of households.

The dams have each been stocked with 5,000 fingerlings of catfish and tilapia, the two most popular species for aquaculture due to their adaptability and market demand.

County Fisheries Officer, Josephine Makumbi says Common Interest Groups (CIGs) have been established for each dam to monitor and manage the projects. She further says community involvement is key to the sustainability and success of such initiatives.

To further support fish farming in Makueni, the county government has established a fish hatchery unit and a feed centre at ATC Kwakathoka. This facility serves as a training point for farmers, where they can also purchase quality fingerlings to stock their ponds.



Makueni Chicken Queen Unveils Poultry Feed to Enhance Productivity & Profitability

In 2016, tired of being a housewife, Mary Mathuli decided to start a small poultry farming project at Muvau Village to supplement her husband's income.

She began with 10 indigenous birds which increased over the years to the current 3500 chicken.

In an interview with Kilimo Makueni, Mathuli said high cost of feeds for the increasing flock rendered the venture unprofitable, sending her to the drawing board. An idea she had toyed with for years about formulating own feeds came to fruition and Mama Feeds was born.

At first, the feeds were only meant for her birds and a few small-scale neighbouring farmers but she later ventured into commercial production and now stands out as one of the renown feed manufacturers in the county.

Mama Feeds is now certified by the Kenya Bureau of Standards as a commercial livestock feeds brand.

This major stride was made possible by the generous support of Seeds of Change through the Mission Grow project implemented by Farm Input Promotions (FIPS)-Africa in partnership with the Government of Makueni County.

The feed initiative is a breakthrough for at a time when many farmers are witnessing a decline in the



number of chicken per household due to diseases and high cost of feed.

The farmer credits her prowess in farming to a 2014 training by Micro Enterprise Support programme Trust, an NGO promoting climate-smart agriculture.

She has also benefited from various capacity building programs, courtesy of the Government of Makueni County and her partners such as Cereals Growers Association (CGA).

Mathuli uses her farm to train locals on enhanced agricultural production and has mentored over 5000 farmers.

In 2022, Mathuli's farm attracted wide admiration when she hosted American philanthropist and world billionaire, Bill Gates.

Makueni Agriculture Chief Officer Dr. Victoria Kyallo says the government is committed to developing local feed brands as entrenched in

the County Integrated Development Plan and the Makueni County Animal Feed Strategy.

“10 Tonnes
the number of feeds
produced monthly **”**



Local Farmers' Yield Doubles as County Records Bumper Harvest



After years of recurring failed rain seasons, Makueni has bounced back in food production with a 60% increase in the seasonal average recorded in the past decade.

According to the Makueni County 2023 Short Rains Food and Nutrition Security Assessment Report, the county produced 694,198 bags of maize compared to a long-term average of 431,504.

Elizabeth Nzola from Mbooni Ward is one of the farmers who experienced bumper harvest of 25 bags of maize from her 2-acre farm. Previously, she used to get 10 to 15 bags from the same farm.

Nzola is among 27,000 households who received certified seeds distributed by the County Government in a bid to ensure that farmers access quality seeds for increased production.

"I am expecting to harvest 25 bags of maize this season. I think it is because this time round the rains were good. I also received high quality

maize seeds from the county just before the onset of the rains," she said while taking the Kilimo Makueni team on a tour of her farm.

Agriculture and Irrigation Executive Joyce Mutua says the department provided high-quality seeds for maize, beans, cow peas and green grams in a bid to improve food security at the household level.

The county government has also in partnership with the National Cereals Produce Board established seven fertilizer depots to ease access to subsidized fertilizer.

The stores include Kikima and Tawa in Mbooni Sub-county; Mukuyuni and Kilungu in Kaiti Sub-county; Kithumani and Kitise in Makueni Sub-county; and Kasikeu in Kilome Sub-county.

Nzola says that before the operationalization of Kikima depot, she used to cover over 270 kilometers to Wote through Machakos to access the subsidized fertilizer which

was very expensive. At times, she would find the stores out of stock, making her expensive trips futile.

Now she walks less than 5 Kilometers for her fertilizer supplies.

“694,198
the number of maize bags
produced during the 2023 Short Rains”



Makueni Rolls Out Campaign to Eliminate Rabies

The Department of Agriculture and Livestock has launched a campaign to eliminate rabies in Makueni in line with the National Rabies Elimination Strategy 2030. The campaign targets to vaccinate 40,000 dogs across 17 wards in the county in the 2023/24 Financial Year. Other wards will be covered in successive years.

The rabies vaccination programme is part of a larger government effort to control livestock diseases. It also intends to prevent the expensive treatment for rabies estimated at not less than Kshs.10,000.

The campaign is premised on a pilot done between 2016 and 2018 where over 210,000 dogs were vaccinated across the county. The launch was officiated by Deputy Governor Lucy Mulili at Kyangoma in Mbooni Sub-county.



GOVERNMENT OF MAKUENI COUNTY

Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, Livestock,
Fisheries and Cooperatives Development

MAKUENI RABIES

ELIMINATION PROGRAM

- Free rabies vaccination
- Free Spay and Neuter services
- Education on rabies prevention.



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