



WEEKLY REVIEW



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Members of Kiam-bogo – Kianjogu Self Help Group in Kieni West Sub County harvesting potatoes recently.

Nyeri commercial potato farmers earn Kshs. 1.37 billion

According to Nyeri County Horticultural Officer Joseph Macharia over 10,000 potato farmers in Nyeri were able to earn Kshs. 1.37 billion in the last financial year of 2019/2020 after they produced 83,766 tonnes.

Potato is the second most consumed crop after maize and is produced in 20 of Kenya's 47 counties under varying socio-economic and climatic conditions.

Globally, potato is grown successfully in tropical and subtropical climates, with

about 100 out of 140 potato growing countries being located in the tropical and sub-tropical regions.

Potatoes are used for a variety of purposes, not only as a vegetable for cooking at home. In Kenya, Irish potatoes have many uses; fresh potatoes are baked, boiled,

fried or used in a staggering range of recipes such as mashed potatoes, potato pancakes, among others.

The importance of potato in Kenya is anchored on its role in alleviating poverty and fighting hunger as well as an income generator. It plays a dual role as a

food and a cash crop with the potential of helping the country realize the food security agenda and also ease the strain of food price inflation through diversification of the crop.

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Interview with Karatina Fire Station Officer Charles Mugenyu. Pg 5,6

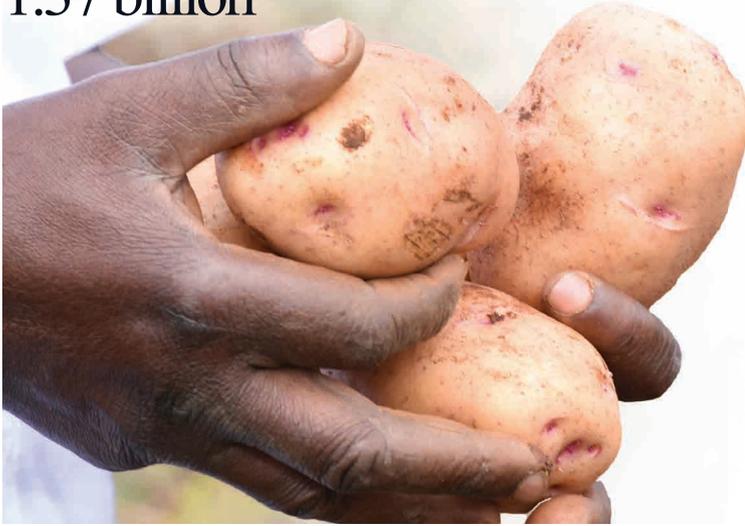


Nyewasco plants 10,000 trees in honour of the late MD Peter Gichaaga. Pg 7



Stakeholders discuss the Nyeri Community Health Bill draft 2020. Pg 9

Nyeri farmers turn to commercial potato farming earning Kshs. 1.37 billion



The Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Project (KCSAP), which seeks to build resilience in the agricultural sector in order to promote inclusive growth and shared prosperity has been collaborating with the County Government of Nyeri under the stewardship of the Governor H.E Mutahi Kahiga to ensure potato seed production.

This has been done through organized farmers groups in commercial villages, which received Ksh. 21.8 million worth of certified potato seeds for further bulking from KCSAP and Kshs. 2.2 million worth of certified seeds from the county government.

There are 15 commercial villages both in Kieni West and East sub-counties. In total, 45 groups benefited from the project, 36 supported by the county government while KCSAP supported 27 groups. The varieties distributed were Dutch Robijn, Kenya Karibu, Kenya Mpya and Shangi.

According to Nyeri County

Horticultural Officer Joseph Macharia, it is because of these efforts that over 10,000 potato farmers in Nyeri were able to earn Kshs. 1.37 billion in the last financial year of 2019/2020 after they produced 83,766 tonnes.

The county government has involved partners such as KEPHIS, KCSAP where input suppliers, producers, traders, transporters, processors and consumers are engaged in potato value chain. For instance, KEPHIS carries out seed inspection, registration and capacity building of seed producers.

Jipange-Kimuri is a youth group in Mugunda ward, Kieni West sub-county that is engaging in seed bulking. The group received 1,250kg bags of Shangi variety potatoes in June, two and a half months later, they harvested about 120 to 160 bags.

Lilian Gathogo, the group's treasurer, highlighted that before planting, soil testing is important to ensure the right amount of acidity

or alkalinity. The group members also underwent training by KCSAP on technology, innovation, management practices on sustainable crop husbandry and management diversification options.

"We were trained by KCSAP on how to plant this variety, routine practices like spraying against pests and diseases and even how to harvest. We prefer this variety since it matures within two and half months and does well even with little rain. The aggressive extension officers from the county government have been instrumental in training us on ware potato production, good agricultural practices, soil sampling, proper land utilization, safe and effective use of chemicals and even post-harvest practices," said Ms Gathogo.

She challenged other youth to embrace farming instead of whining there are no jobs for them.

"I wish to encourage my fellow youths to take action and delve into agribusiness

instead of waiting for office jobs," she said.

Gathogo's concerns were echoed by Officer Macharia who encouraged the youth to get into agriculture through introducing innovation which is youth friendly and maximizing on technology in production for higher returns in agricultural enterprises.

"I encourage the youth to involve themselves in agricultural enterprises and more so in fast maturing crops. They can also venture into value addition to earn income," he said.

Stephen Ngatia, a member of the group expressed his pleasure in the technology used to control weeds as they spent no time weeding hence saving time. He hopes that the group will be able to teach other farmers this method of potato propagation.

H.E Mutahi Kahiga and Gatarakwa MCA Hon. Clement Warutere during the flagging off of the potato seedlings outside the Governor's office.





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“We have been performing well on seed potato bulking and I am particularly happy because we used herbicides to control weeds instead of weeding manually, which is quite tiresome and time consuming. Now, the villagers can benchmark with us as we are ready to teach them what we have learnt through KCSAP,” he added.

According to Wambugu ATC Farm Manager John Wambugu, Shangi is a fast maturing, disease and drought tolerant variety.

The farm received 32 bags courtesy of KCSAP.

“This variety matures really fast at approximately 75 days, and can give high yields even without irrigating it. It is also disease resistant. Shangi has really tasty chips, crisps and is desired for manufacturing starch,” Nyeri Agriculture CEC James Wachihhi added.

Kiambogo-Kianjogu is an-

other farmers group which benefitted with the potatoes. The group received four bags, 50 kgs each and projects to harvest 50 bags. This has been realized through good practices, also taught through KCSAP.

According to chairman of the group, Lee Waithaka, the good routine practices have helped the group make such tremendous achievements.

“We have previously sold 259 bags to farmers which we harvested from a one and a half acre piece of land. This time, the harvest will be used for further multiplication of seeds,” said Waithaka.

Lucy Muthoni, a member of the group said the Shangi variety is of benefit to the farmers owing to its fast maturity. She also expressed gratitude towards the county government and KCSAP for taking time to teach them good practices of potato farming.

“We were taught how to space the crops, the fertilizers to use and even how to harvest. Now I can use those skills even at my own piece of land and get good income. This project will be of benefit to the community by providing clean seeds,” said Muthoni.

Esther Wanjiru, also a mem-

ber, is quite happy with the progress the group has made. She is confident that the group has the capacity to train other members of the community on good practices.

“This project has earned us income and we have become ambassadors of good agricultural practices in the community and we hope to secure more land for growing ware potatoes,” she added.

Potato business has for the longest time been cumbered by brokers, something the chairman wants the county government to look into.

He terms the market as oppressive and proposes that a cooperative be formed which will protect the interest of the farmers as well as engage more farmers.

“The potato reforms should be enforced to protect farmers from brokers as it is the only way that farmers will benefit. We look forward to value addition and with help from the county government, we will be able to move away from the brokers,” added Waithaka.



Horticultural Officer Macharia assured farmers that the county government is making efforts to curb exploitation of farmers by brokers by sensitizing them to form strong producer and marketing organizations. The county government has also been providing market information, market linkages and contract farming and

other stakeholders. We are also working in conjunction with the Trade Department to see to it that these regulations are obeyed," noted Macharia.

According to Wambugu, ATC Farm Manager, potatoes should be harvested using sticks to prevent bruising and eventual rotting. Sorting and grading of the harvest soon

removed from the sun to prevent solanine which turns potatoes green. He cautioned that green potatoes are poisonous and should not be used for food.

Potatoes are stored in diffused light stores, where temperatures are low and humidity high to encourage shootings to develop (chitting) for seed pota-

put in place plans for value addition which include capacity building of potential value addition groups, establishment of an incubation centre at Wambugu ATC and partnering with development partners in supporting potato value addition.

In this current 2020/2021 financial year, the department plans to inject



marketing. Apart from this, the Department of Agriculture and Trade have collaborated to ensure that packaging regulations are adhered to.

"We are making efforts to protect the farmers from brokers by launching and implementing the Irish Potato Regulation 2019 and sensitizing farmers and

follows where potatoes are graded according to sizes. These include; chats (very small sizes), grade one and two (for seed) and ware (big sizes for food). He discouraged farmers from using chats as seeds since they are poor in quality and low yielding. Immediately after harvesting, potatoes should be

toes. For ware potatoes, they are stored in cold stores to reduce sprouting and prolong storage awaiting market price improvement. Nyeri County has four potato stores in Kieni East and West sub-counties with a total capacity of 40 tonnes. On the other hand, the county government has

Kshs.1.5 million into seed multiplication through apical cuttings to increase the acreage of seed potato to eight acres. The department will also continue to capacity build farmers through; training and demonstrations, post harvest management practices and marketing.

Exclusive interview with Karatina Fire Station Officer Charles Mugenyu

Give us a brief history of Karatina fire emergency unit. This unit falls under which department?

Karatina fire emergency unit was started in the year 2002 after several rapid fire incidents occurred in the area. For instance one at Sophia Estate which reduced many houses to ashes and Waima Building where people were trapped with no exit. The unit is under the Department of Gender, Youth and Social Services and is headed by Francis King'ori and five other officers. The team operates under two shifts.

What are the duties and responsibilities of fire officers?

Main responsibilities of fire officers from management to the juniors are; to save

lives, prevent more destruction of poverty and humanitarian services. The officers are categorized in to two levels; a duty officer who supervises and gives directives and a junior officer who responds to different disasters including fire fighting and rescue activities.

When you talk of disaster, what does it entail? Which common disasters are usually reported Mathira East and Mathira West sub-counties?

A disaster is a sudden accident or serious occurrence that disrupts the normal functioning of a society causing great damage or loss of life, such that the affected community cannot withstand the effects and is overwhelmed. Most occurring disasters at Mathira East and West sub-counties

include fires and drowning of individuals in man-made dams, rivers and wells

Which areas does your unit cover? Do you sometimes help those neighbouring Kirinyaga County?

Karatina fire emergency unit covers four sub counties:-Mathira East and West, Mukurwe-ini and Othaya and we even assist along the edge of Kirinyaga County.

Tell us about disaster preparedness in your unit.

The fire officers are well trained and we have a fire engine at our disposal that is well equipped with the necessary equipment.

Do your officers have what it takes to respond to emergencies in matters of training and machinery?

My officers are well trained and passionate about their work, however, I would like to request for additional staff depending on the need.



What is the capacity of your unit, i.e in form of machinery and human resource (staff)?

Currently, we have two functional fire engines and a rapid intervention vehicle which is currently grounded but waiting for inspection and a total of 15 officers.

What normally happens when you arrive late after fire is extinguished by may be the community or run out of water before the fire is put off?

In most instances, we timely respond to fires cases unless we are called late through the exchange line. In the event it happens, we always get to the scene and assess the damage and write a report on the same. On the issue of water, we always go back to the nearest hydrant to fetch more water and that is why we urge for addition and servicing of hydrants to ward level.





Karatina Fire Station Officer Charles Mugenyu (left) with his colleagues at the station based in Karatina town, Mathira East sub county.

How do you deal with indiscipline in your unit mostly of drunken drivers?

I have acquired necessary skills for management of indiscipline among members of staff which include having one on one talk with the involved member. If sitting does not solve the problem I involve the chief officer for more advice on the matter.

How do you access the scene of fire incidents especially in slums where there are no roads or landmarks in the county? What other challenges does your staff experience in their line of duty?

Some places like slums are quite hard to access as such; we use more than ten delivery hoses to reach the scene. In other instances, we join the community and use buckets to put out the fire. It is therefore necessary to repair the firefighting land rovers which can

access the scene. Other challenges we experience include; poor infrastructure, hostile crowds on scene of fire, lack of enough personal protective equipment, lack of psychological support like counseling after a dangerous situation and lack of enough man power.

Tell us about the inspection of building for assessing fire hazards and risks and ensuring availability of emergency exits and adequacy of means of escape in public buildings. Have all the building in the county met the required conditions?

The inspection of fire equipment and escape routes falls under the Department of Infrastructure but what I can say is most buildings have not met the standards in terms of protection like erection of dry or wet risers, heat and smoke detectors, sprinklers systems, hose reel hose, alarms, evacuation proce-

dures among others.

What efforts has the County Government of Nyeri done to improve your working conditions? And what more is needed to reach international standards of disaster preparedness?

The county government has done quite a lot including providing us with PPEs and two new state-of-the-art fire engines. However, if we are to get to international standards we have to: build modern fire stations to the sub-county levels, set up a command center where all county distress calls will be dispatched to, operationalization of the toll free line, erection of water hydrants to the ward level, frequent drills, recruitment of additional personnel and installation of modern firefighting equipment.

For how long have you been in the service and what is your experience so far?

I have been in the service for 30 years, through which I have risen to various cadres including fireman III, leading fireman, cadet fire officer and Ag. chief fire officer in the year 2008 to 2009. I have gained a wealth of knowledge and skills through numerous trainings and have been awarded a special duty allowances.

Tell us about the famous disaster you once faced that you will never forget?

The most famous disaster that I can never forget was one that could have claimed my life at Waima building Karatina town. We received a distress call of a fire at Waima building, where upon our arrival, we found people trapped in the fourth floor and exit was blocked. We were able to rescue people through the window, except for one infant who died before we arrived.

Nyewasco plants 10,000 trees in honour of the late MD Peter Gichaaga

This year's theme was 'Conserve the Environment a tree at a time' with a slogan: Preserve, Restore and Conserve.



Nyewasco acting MD Eng. Peter Kahuthu (left) with his colleagues planting trees at Kiganjo Sewer Pumping Station in honour.

Nyeri Water and Sanitation Company Ltd (Nyewasco) staff and Nyeri youth planted 10,000 tree seedlings in honour of the late Managing Director CPA Peter Gichaaga who passed on recently.

During the company's environment day, Nyewasco's fraternity planted the trees at Kiganjo Sewer Pumping Station to remember the team leader who was a committed conservationist. He liked saying "Conserve the environment today, it will save you tomorrow!"

Both indigenous and exotic trees were planted during the exercise which was led by

Nyewasco acting MD Engineer Peter Kahuthu.

Nyewasco holds an environmental day annually whereby various activities aimed at conserving the environment and water catchment areas are undertaken.

This year, through a strategic partnership with Kenya Forest Service (KFS), the company acquired a variety of seeds which were planted on seedbeds and nurtured to healthy seedlings for transplanting.

This year's theme was **'Conserve the Environment a tree at a time'** with a slogan: **Preserve, Restore and Conserve.**



Pupils of Kanoga Primary School in Nyeri town planting trees. The event served as a school greening programme whose initiative is to mentor the pupils to grow more trees.

Greening programme in Nyeri County

The Department of Public Service and Environment officers led a tree planting exercise which was held at Kanoga and Gitathi-ini Primary School, Rware ward, Nyeri Central sub-county. The event was presided over by Nyeri Central Environmental Officer Kennedy Kanoga Mundia and Kenya Forest Service Forester Mr. Robert Kiplagat Tarus.

The event served as a school greening program whose initiative is to mentor the pupils

to grow more trees with a desire to conserve the environment from a tender age.

It also aimed at educating the pupils on the importance of adopting a tree which they can nurture with a view of protecting the environment.

Farmers were also issued with trees so as to promote on-farm forestry with the goal being to increase tree cover within Nyeri County and towards achieving the 10% tree cover requirement in Kenya.



Eat More Fish campaign in Nyeri central sub-county

The County Government of Nyeri through the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries continued the Eat More Fish Campaign, a Nutrition Initiative under the Aquaculture Business Development Programme (ABDP) at Mununga-ini Chief's Office, Kamakwa/Mukaro ward, Nyeri Central sub-county. The aggressive Eat More

Fish campaign is being conducted across the eight sub-counties in the county and is geared towards increasing the income, food security and nutritional status of the wider communities of poor rural households.

This year's theme is: 'Fish for Health and Wealth'. Fish farmers interacted with county fisheries officers led by Agnes Kinyua and learnt about various

effective fish husbandry techniques that will help boost fish farming and increase their income. Farmers were also educated by Alice Mukami on the importance of cleaning and packaging their fish produce well as well as value addition and nutritionist Purity Njairia on the health benefits of fish consumption which contains essential oils and is a great source of protein and

minerals.

The youth were also encouraged to take part in fish farming as a source of income.

Fish is a low-fat high quality protein filled with omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins such as D and B2. It is also rich in calcium and phosphorus and minerals including iron, zinc, iodine, magnesium, and potassium. Further, eating fish is recommended as part of a healthy diet since it's packed with protein, vitamins, and nutrients that can lower blood pressure and help reduce the risk of a heart attack or stroke.



Health check-up and social visit for Sarah Wairuri



Department of Gender Youth and Social Services officers together with Kari-

ma ward MCA Hon Reuben Wahome visited Sarah Wairuri from Kiruguru village, Othaya sub-county, after a report that she was unwell to check on her well being. The mother of 9, was

living in a deplorable condition before well wishers led by Ms. Faith Nganga of #beyourbrotherskeeper and support from the county government, constructed a decent house for her. Sarah, who suffers from a mental illness, has been receiving treatment from the Health Department through regular check ups. She was taken to a health facility for routine check up and medication.

The officers, who presented a food package to the family, thanked Faith Wangui, a neighbour, who has been taking care of Sarah and the children. Faith was thankful to the county government for the continued support towards Sarah, and also for providing the family with a dairy goat which she said has been very beneficial to the family.

Stakeholders discuss the Nyeri County Community Health Bill draft 2020

The bill comprises of six clauses: Preliminary, Rights, duties and responsibilities, Implementation framework, Community Health Volunteers, Community Health Assistants, Miscellaneous.

The Department of Health Services in partnership with Amref Health Africa and Johnson & Johnson organized a meeting to discuss the Community Health Bill 2020. Stakeholders were drawn from County staff, County Health Management Team, Non-governmental Organizations, Faith-Based organizations, Hospital representatives, Youth, Women and Community leaders.

The meeting aimed at getting views for the amendment of the clauses. This will ensure inclusivity of all the aspects of interest as per the representatives. Once passed, the bill will be enacted into the law by the County Assembly.

Nyeri County Community Health bill, 2020 is an act of the County Assembly of Nyeri to provide for framework to coordinating the provision of community health services, to recognize and make provision to



recruit and train community health volunteers, community health assistants, to ensure community participation in community health matters, and for connected purposes.

The bill comprises of 6 clauses: Preliminary, Rights, duties and responsibilities, Implementation framework, Community Health Volunteers and Community Health Assistants, Miscellaneous.

The purpose of this bill is

to establish a framework for coordinating the provision of community health services, to recognize and make provision to recruit and train community health volunteers, and to provide for the responsibilities of community health assistants and community health volunteers.

The County Secretary, Ben Gachichio noted that the bill is important in ensuring health delivery at the community level. He further

added that CHVs form an integral part of the health sector and hence should be incorporated into access of rights and protection by the law.

The CS noted that prevention is better than cure and called on efforts towards prevention of diseases by sensitizing the community on important aspect such as healthy diet, hand washing and other practices.

In brief..



H.E Governor Mutahi Kahiga (left) joined colleague governors during Health Sector Intergovernmental Forum on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) which was meant to discuss on how UHC can be scaled up and ultimately get rolled out to all counties.

Ex-prisoner promoting a crime free society

Mwangi, an ex-prisoner was convicted in 2010 and sentenced to nine years in prison. He however served a seven-year jail term and was released on presidential pardon.



Gender CECM Esther Ndung'u joined Chris Halfway Home Director, Christopher Mwangi and other stakeholders during a graduation ceremony of 60 school going children aged six to 17 years who had undergone through mentorship, life skills training, guidance and counseling with an aim of curbing crime and creating a crime free society. The event took place in Iria-ini ward, Mathira East sub-county. Mwangi, an ex-prisoner

was convicted in 2010 and sentenced to nine years in prison. He however served a seven-year jail term and was released on presidential pardon. After the release, he resolved to play his part in reducing crime in his village by reforming young people, diverting them from crime and restoring a positive attitude in them by establishing the home in 2017.

The children and youth are trained on life skills, taken through guidance and counseling, awareness creation on crimes and the

consequences, skills and talent development, developing their sense of personal responsibility among others.

The home also serves as a temporary home to other ex-convicts who are unable to go back to their families for fear of stigmatization, are rejected by their families, or have lost their livelihoods while in prison. They are housed for a period of six months. During this period, they are prepared and supported for re-integration into the community without

re-offending or being socially isolated. The period of transition from custody to the community can be particularly difficult for ex-convicts. For this reason, the home in partnership with other stakeholders takes them through education, mental health care, counseling, mentorship, re-entering into the job market as they enhance the skills learnt while in custody. The ex-convicts also train the youths on skills they acquired while in custody.

The young people were encouraged not to engage in illegal behaviors and other social vices. The parents were also encouraged to support their children, engage them and be on the lookout especially during this period where teenage pregnancies is on the rise. The community members were also encouraged to support in the re-integration of the ex-prisoners.

In brief...

The recently installed expages borehole solar panels in Mweiga ward, Kieni West sub-county.

Pumping of the water to be launched soon.



Clean-up exercise at King'ong'o

The Department of Environment, Natural Resources and Sanitation held a cleanup exercise in King'ong'o area, Nyeri Town. This is in line with the county's strategic plan towards the improvement of environmental and sanitation conditions in Nyeri, as well as the national clean up monthly campaigns.

Members of the community were sensitized on the importance of environment care that will provide the re-birth of the environment and give green renaissance.

The department's Chief Officer Violet Koigi informed participants of the county's efforts to ensure environmental issues are factored in all developmental and policy formulation by subjecting them to Strategic Environment Assessments, EIA and Environmental audit.

She also said that the county is in the process of enacting a solid waste management act that is core in enforcing civil responsibilities towards environmental issues.

Those present noted the importance of enforcing the civic responsibility of the citizens to take care of our environment.



CGN receives pulse oxymeters courtesy of PATH



The Department of Health Services represented by acting director, Dr. Marion Gituanja and Disease Surveillance Coordinator, Lydia Njaramba received 8 pulse oxymeters which were donated by PATH.

The hospital representatives also underwent a practicum on the use and maintenance of these machines.

The equipment will be distributed to all level four hospitals across the county and Narumoru Health Centre.

Dr. Marion hailed the mutual collaboration noting that the machines will go a long way in service delivery notably in the isolation centres. Further, she added that this is step ahead in integrating technology in delivery of health services. PATH is a global non-governmental organization and a team of global innovators working to accelerate health equity to ensure that the community thrives.

Tree planting exercise at Karima Hill, Othaya

KEFRI Board of Management chairman Dr. Sammy Latema and Nyeri County Public Service Management, Environment and Sanitation CEC Beth Karimi presided over a tree planting exercise at Karima Hill, Karima ward, Othaya sub-county. The planting exercise also

involved the launch of tree planting at Karima Hill rehabilitation sites.

The event served as a build up activity for the upcoming tree planting challenge, which will involve rehabilitation of the forests both gazetted and community forests in Nyeri County,

both indigenous and bamboo trees (recently declared as the 16th cash crop in the country).

The County Government of Nyeri fully supports the growing of bamboo by farmers and will improve its value chain as a marketed commodity.

