

# FAO Kenya Newsletter

October– December 2013 | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations | Kenya



Welcome to the last newsletter this year from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Kenya.

This edition highlights our World Food Day activities including the inaugural Media Awards. There are also reports on how sorghum farming is improving livelihoods in various parts of Kenya and the effect of this year's long rains on food distribution in the country. In addition, we focus on how transboundary animal diseases threaten food security and highlight a nutrition initiative underscoring FAO's lead in delivering as one UN.

Luca Alinovi  
FAO Representative in Kenya

## World Food Day celebrations in Bungoma County

### Interventions set to alleviate food shortages

"My government has set aside over Ksh. 840 million to support various programmes and interventions to alleviate food shortages, enable farmers' access to productive resources and strengthen institutions that support farmers in the county." This is what H.E. Hon Kenneth Lusaka, Governor Bungoma County told his county residents on 16 October 2013 during the 33<sup>rd</sup> national observance of World Food Day commemorating the 68th Anniversary of the founding of FAO.

This year's celebrations which took place at Mrs. Gladys Muyundo's Farm in Bungoma County brought together farmers, agro-processors, farm input suppliers and government experts, among other stakeholders, to a platform where they could network and exchange knowledge and information on best farm practices. This year's theme focused on *Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition*. FAO is championing a nutrition initiative in conjunction with six other UN agencies and the Government of Kenya.

Speaking about the nutrition programme, Mr. Robert Allport, Assistant FAO Representative in Kenya observed that "the programme, aligned to the national priorities enshrined in Vision 2030, aims to improve and sustain the food and nutrition security of vulnerable people, for the progressive realization of their right to food,". Mr. Felix Koskei, Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries who was the guest of honor said that the Government of Kenya had set aside more than Ksh. 3 billion for a fertilizer and seed fund and that his ministry has dispatched 42,000 metric tonnes of fertilizer to farmers for use during the October – November planting season.

This year's celebrations were the first to be observed under the new devolved system of government and were celebrated in all the 47 counties of the Republic of Kenya. ■

Contact [Eric Kimani](#), Communication Officer.  
Email: [Eric.Kimani@fao.org](mailto:Eric.Kimani@fao.org)



Mr. Robert Koigi winner of the World Food Day Media Award in Kenya receives a certificate from Dr. Augusta Abate, FAO Assistant Representative in Kenya.  
©FAO/Emah Madegwa

## FAO unveils winner of the 2013 World Food Day media award

Mr. Robert Koigi's insightful article "City dwellers insulate themselves from food price spikes with urban gardens," scooped the top prize in the inaugural 2013 World Food Day Media Award in Kenya.

Robert's article tells a compelling human interest story of families who are insulating themselves from food spikes through innovative agricultural solutions such as roof top gardens, tyre and sack farming that not only provide food but also provide an alternative source of income.

The 1<sup>st</sup> runner up and 2<sup>nd</sup> runner up are journalists Maurice Oniang'o with his article "Food waste: the irritating thorn in our flesh," and Janet Otieno with her article "Give them bread: feeding the hungry no longer a science," respectively. ■

Contact [Emah Madegwa](#), Communication Assistant.  
Email: [Emah.Madegwa@fao.org](mailto:Emah.Madegwa@fao.org)

Guests visit the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) Depot in Bungoma County during the World Food Day national celebrations. This was a courtesy call by Mr. Felix Koskei Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries; H.E. Hon Kenneth Lusaka, Governor Bungoma County; and Mr. Robert Allport, Assistant FAO Representative in Kenya.  
©FAO/Emah Madegwa



## Contact:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

FAO Representation in Kenya

United Nations Office, Nairobi

United Nations Avenue, Gigiri, Block 'P' 3<sup>rd</sup> level

Mailing address: P.O Box 30470-00100 Nairobi

Telephone: +254-20-7625920 | E-mail: [FAO-KE@fao.org](mailto:FAO-KE@fao.org)

[www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

## Improving livelihoods using sorghum: Smart logistics solution

Ms. Rose Mutuku is improving livelihoods of farmers in arid and semi-arid areas by supporting sorghum farming in various parts of the country. Rose mobilizes farmers to cultivate sorghum in parts of Eastern, Western and Nyanza regions of Kenya.

Sorghum is a drought resistant crop that was on the verge of extinction due to lack of a ready market and the fact that many farmers viewed sorghum as a traditional crop that had no place in the modern world. "I quit a well-paying job to start a business that can empower rural communities and become a formidable power in raw materials supply," says Rose, the managing director of Smart Logistics Solutions Ltd.

The company organizes farmers into groups and helps them access farm inputs and equipment such as seeds and threshing machines. Furthermore, Smart Logistics teams up with agricultural officers to educate the farmers on farming methods and practices that guarantee high yields. The firm works closely with the government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MOALF) to ensure that



Sorghum farm: ©Smart Logistics Solution Ltd.

farmers are supplied with certified Gadam sorghum seeds, a hardy, high-yielding sorghum variety which performs well in arid and semi-arid areas.

Smart Logistics is just one of many small and medium agro-enterprises (SMAEs) that are being supported under the "Agribusiness Support for Smallholders" (AbSS) project. Financially supported by Germany's ministry of agriculture, the initiative has been implemented by FAO over the past three years in close collaboration with .

The project plays an active role in making agribusiness more competitive in Kenya and raising awareness about the importance of SMAEs as engines of growth that is essential for the realization of vision 2030. ■

Contact: JJ Franc De Ferriere, FAO Agribusiness Advisor.

Email: [Jeanjacques.Francdeferriere@fao.org](mailto:Jeanjacques.Francdeferriere@fao.org)

## Rain-fed food security

### How the rains will affect food availability in 2014

Crop performance will be below average between January and June next year according to the Long Rains Assessment (LRA) released by the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG). According to Mr. Simon Muhindi, FAO's National Food Security Officer, the country should prepare for a possible food shortage due to the expected low harvest.

Contributing factors include the late arrival of subsidized fertilizer and seeds, as well as the Maize Lethal Necrosis Disease (MLND), a viral maize disease that has hit parts of the country. However, from the report, slight improvement in maize supplies is expected after the short rains harvest in January/February 2014 based on the performance of the short rains season from October to December of this year. ■

Contact: Simon Muhindi, National Food Security Officer. Email: [Simon.Muhindi@fao.org](mailto:Simon.Muhindi@fao.org)

## FAO on radio

The long awaited radio show, Mifugo ni Mali, is now running on the national broadcaster KBC's Radio Taifa every Friday between 8:00 pm and 9:00 pm. with a half hour repeat every Wednesday from 6.30 pm. Mifugo ni Mali, swahili for "livestock is wealth", is an interactive radio programme that disseminates lessons to livestock owners and producers in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs). The show will run until February 2014. Recognizing the importance of radio in reaching rural people, FAO is supporting this and other informational radio programmes. ■

Contact: Joseph Njuguna, FAO National Livestock Officer. Email: [Joseph.Njuguna@fao.org](mailto:Joseph.Njuguna@fao.org)

## Delivering as One UN for improved nutrition

### FAO teams up with other UN agencies to enhance food security and nutrition

Seven UN agencies in Kenya have joined hands in an initiative that seeks to improve food security and promote better nutrition for vulnerable populations. With a vision to realize the right to food for the targeted populations, the FAO-led joint programme that brings together WFP, UNDP, UNICEF, OCHA, WHO and UN Women seeks to support improved nutrition levels through agricultural methods that take into account issues of nutrition, thus linking the agricultural and health sectors.

The project will improve infant and young child nutrition and increase availability and access to food. At an institutional level, the project will improve coordination and disaster management for food security and nutrition. The model for joint programming and implementation will also benefit from this initiative for the sake of "Delivering as One". ■

Contact: Anne Chele, Programme Coordinator.

Email: [Anne.Chele@fao.org](mailto:Anne.Chele@fao.org)

## Transboundary animal diseases a threat to food security and livelihoods

Transboundary animal diseases (TADs) are a threat to livestock based livelihoods, food security and public health. According to Dr. Bouna Diop, Regional Manager, FAO ECTAD Eastern Africa, transboundary animal diseases are not only a threat to household food security but also represent a barrier to national, regional and international trade and hence an impediment to economic and livestock development.

The priority TADs in Kenya include Foot & Mouth Disease, African Swine fever, Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia, Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia, Newcastle disease and Peste des petits ruminants. These TADs are highly contagious and infectious viral and bacterial diseases affecting cattle, goats, sheep and

poultry and are a threat to livestock in Kenya. FAO's Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD), is supporting eastern African countries in developing strategies for prevention and control and providing training on good emergency management practices. In addition, ECTAD envisions enhancing the country's capacity on early warning and rapid alert using new technologies and addressing both animal health and food safety issues. All these are geared towards getting prepared and responding to TADs in a structured and coordinated manner. "There will be a real time training on Foot and Mouth Disease diagnosis from 18-24 November, 2013 in Nakuru County", Dr. Diop informed. ■

Contact: Bouna Diop, FAO ECTAD Eastern Africa's Regional Manager. Email: [Bouna.Diop@fao.org](mailto:Bouna.Diop@fao.org)

## FAO Kenya gets new Representative



Luca Alinovi is the new FAO Representative in Kenya. Before joining the team in October 2013, he served as the Officer-in-Charge & Senior Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordinator of FAO in Somalia leading FAO's response to Somalia's worst food security crisis in 2011.

An Italian national, he holds a PhD in Agricultural & Natural Resources Economics and has published papers on food security and complex emergencies. Luca replaces Dan Rugabira who went to head FAO's regional office in charge of central Africa. ©FAO/Eric Kimani