

ADDRESS OF THE GOVERNOR OF NYAMIRA COUNTY, H.E HON. JOHN NYAGARAMA ON LAUNCH OF BAMBOO GROWING AND DAIRY GOAT FLAGSHIP PROJECTS ON TUESDAY, 19TH MAY, 2015 IN NYAMUSI, BOKEIRA WARD

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, "JAMBO"

It is my pleasure and honor to preside over the growing of Bamboo and promotion of Dairy Goat Production flagship projects which are geared towards our vision of socio-economic transformation of Nyamira County.

The County economy primarily depends on the natural resource base. Increasing access to sustainable water is a priority of the government within the existing policy framework. The main challenges facing improvement of access to water resources include: inadequate funding, poor local ownership of projects and planting of blue gum trees along riverbanks and other riparian areas.

Unsustainable land use practices, particularly the riparian zones which have been virtually covered by the water guzzling Eucalyptus trees which provide timber and industrial/domestic biomass fuels. Riparian zones and wetlands have been lost to eucalyptus while the catchments have been lost to agriculture. Due to these factors the water resources in the County have been degraded and declined drastically. The water shortages especially in the short dry spells become a big community concern.

My Government has initiated sustainable land management (SLM) programme that will encompass protection, conservation, rehabilitation and reclamation of water catchment areas. This will entail appropriate afforestation of hilltops, intensification of agroforestry in the over-cultivated mid-slopes, and replacing Eucalyptus species from the wetlands and all riparian zones with appropriate water friendly species like bamboo which

plays a vital role in the protection of soil and water resources in forested catchment areas.

Bamboo has been and continues to be a material of choice for traditional crafts throughout Africa. It is also used for construction, fencing, basketry and many other uses. These uses of bamboo will make a significant contribution to rural income and employment in my county when fully exploited. It matures within three years from planting.

My Government has initiated an ambitious programme of replacing Blue gum along water catchment areas and replacing them with Bamboo. My County Government will, therefore, provide two million seedlings of bamboo within the next three years. Thirty thousand seedlings will be issued to farmers and public primary schools.

My County Government in collaboration with Kenya Forest Service has been in the frontline in the promotion of afforestation and tree growing. So far, over 5,000 people have been sensitized and trained on tree growing, tree nursery establishment, Bamboo propagation and environmental conservation. Kenya Forest Service and my County Government is promoting planting of 2,000,000 various tree seedlings this financial years.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Agriculture remains the backbone of our economy. It is an important avenue for wealth and employment creation. Moreover, growth in the agriculture sector is very closely linked to the overall growth of the economy. It is on the realization of this importance, that the County Government has given priority to the revitalization of the sector as avenue to reduce poverty.

Food security remains a priority objective for our County, especially among the small scale farmers. I note with concern that the county does not produce as much as it should despite being endowed with a conducive

climate for production of a wide range of crop varieties and livestock species.

My government is aware of the reducing land sizes which adversely affect agricultural output and food security. My government is implementing flagship projects that enable farmers to reach maximally from the small land holdings.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, I am here to launch Dairy Goat Promotion Project. This is one of the flagship projects under the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. I will support vulnerable groups with 360 dairy goats. Dairy goat production squarely fits into small land holding capacity of the people of Nyamira. We have designed a dairy goat production to not only support vulnerable groups but also utilize the small land holding of farmers in Nyamira. I thank World Vision, Nyamusi ADP for identifying with this strategy by supporting group with 21 dairy goats.

Dairy goats are easy to own and manage, adapted over wide climatic conditions, require minimal infrastructure, reproduce quickly, require little food and mature early. These are important aspects that farmers need to take advantage of and improve dairy goat production in the county.

Ladies and gentlemen:

The utilization of Goats Milk is affected by various social issues despite the fact that it is easy to drink and has high nutritional content. Goat milk is a high quality food and very good for young and old. It is important to note that nobody is allergic to goat's milk and is useful in the treatment of

ulcers. I therefore take this opportunity to encourage you to drink goat milk for your health.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In keeping with the promise of making Nyamira county food secure for all, my government will support fertilizer and maize seeds. So far, 729 tons of subsidized fertilizer has been distributed to farmers since July 2014. In this coming year, I will support 2,000 vulnerable persons with fertilizer and seeds free of charge.

In the last year, my government implemented a number of flagship projects in agricultural sector. As a result, farmers realized ksh.12.6 million from sale of green-house tomatoes for the first two harvests. From fisheries directorate; farmers realized ksh. 20,390,100 from 117,600 kgs of fish harvested. Further, 211 farmers were supported with 21,100 tissue culture bananas, 3,500 passion fruits were given to 35 farmers and 150 farmers were supported with local vegetable seeds.

My government is also promoting sunflower and grafted avocado farming. Local poultry improvement project realized 2,000 eggs sold, 700 chicks and 600 chicken were sold earning farmers a total of ksh.710, 000. Further, 1,021 bales of Rhodes grass hay and 70 tonnes of fodder crops were produced this earned ksh.1.5 million from commercial fodder production. Further, 2,586 kgs of honey have been realized from the short time commercial bee keeping project has been implemented. This earned farmers a total of 2 million to bee keepers. We are in the process of procuring 15,000 improved chickens

Improvement of genes is a key strategy that the county government is using to improve productivity. Subsidized artificial insemination project has so far realized 11,200 inseminations to date and 2,000 calves have been born out of the project.

Pests and diseases have been an impediment in improving productivity. My government has vaccinated 17,000 animals against killer diseases; foot and mouth disease, anthrax, black quarter, lumpy skin diseases and rabies.

In the coming year, I am injecting 312 million to the department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. In this financial year, my Government will undertake to assist fish farmers with 430,000 certified fingerlings, 27,000 kgs of fish feeds, 10 fish pond nets, 10 fish pond liners and 10 cooler boxes to reduce post-harvest losses.

Livestock farmers will be supported with 10,000 kgs of fodder seeds, 15,000 improved local chickens, hydroponic technology kits and 400 bee hives. Additionally, 10,000 inseminations and 20,000 vaccinations shall be conducted on major livestock diseases.

My government will also support tissue culture bananas by distributing 20,000 plantlets, 2,500 kgs of local vegetables seeds as well as supporting vulnerable through fertilizer and seeds.

My Government will train farmers on modern farming technologies and best management practices. I urge all the farmers to take advantage of new technologies and build lasting bridges for increased agricultural production and income generation.

We are working closely with stakeholders to establish a soil analysis and tissue culturing laboratory and have regular semen and liquid nitrogen supply to solve challenges in these enterprises.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Whereas the County Government is committed to creating an enabling environment for agricultural production, our farmers will need to take farming as a business and not just a way of life.

Towards this end, the County Government will review various policies and legal frameworks with the aim of creating conducive environment for private sector participation in agricultural development in the county. The County Government will also carry out commodity reforms in several sub-sectors with a view to increasing productivity, enhancing stakeholders' empowerment and conforming to the changing economic environment.

I therefore urge farmers to take advantage of these reforms to improve productivity on their farms.

The County Government is in the process of preparing various bills and policy in livestock fishery, crops to spearhead this important sub sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This region is endowed with a vast market for agricultural produce and a good road connection to major towns and cities in this region. However, most farmers sell their produce in raw forms which attracts very low prices.

I take note of high levels of post-harvest losses of agricultural produce due to poor storage and lack of value addition techniques. However, these losses can be reduced if the storage and value addition technologies are

adopted by farmers and handlers of agricultural produce. The technologies to enable you achieve enhanced productivity, reduce post-harvest losses and value addition are available in extension officers and from other service providers many of whom you have interacted with today.

Finally Ladies and Gentlemen:

I wish to thank all of you for turning up for this launch today, the organizers of this event, the stake holders and all the participants during this important occasion and those who contributed towards making this launch a success.

Thank You and May God bless you