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KILIMO KWANZA

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SUPPORTING THE PROMOTERS OF THE GREEN REVOLUTION

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**THE QUEST FOR
TAKING PEASANTS
TO THE NEXT
LEVEL**



“There is no farmer who wishes to stagnate in poverty... Farmers, who are eager to advance to the medium level, deserve all the support they need to modernise and commercialise their undertakings.” This is what the Agricultural Council of Tanzania works for and wants to happen now

SPECIAL

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Assessing
achievements
and challenges**
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The politics of transforming peasants into large scale producers

As we were preparing this issue of Kilimo Kwanza, a colleague with whom I engage in some rather interesting tête-à-tête's approached my desk. After the customary greetings, he rather bluntly asked me whether I still believed in the green revolution. Sensing that he had something up his sleeve, I responded in the affirmative, adding that if Kilimo Kwanza were a religion, then I would be a deacon serving in temple and my family would probably be singing in the choir.

Undeterred or perhaps spurred on by my response, he proceeded to gesture at a copy of the Ten Pillars of the Kilimo Kwanza Green Revolution that was on my desk. 'And so you want to tell me that these so called Pillars have been implemented?' he queried. I told him that the Ten Pillars of Kilimo Kwanza are akin to the holy writ of the religion, the text book that forms the foundation on which all other actions and decisions are based.

He then revealed his trump card. Apparently sometime last year, the colleague invested some hard earned money in agriculture. He purchased a number of acres in Arusha which he duly proceeded to cultivate and sow maize on. Fortune smiled on him and he recorded a bumper harvest in his very first attempt. But then so did other farmers and soon the market, at least the local one, was flooded with grain and prices dropped drastically.

Looking to make some profit from the sweat of his brow, the colleague invested additional funds in a grain storage facility. He hoped that with time the ban of cross border trade in food crops would be lifted so that he could take advantage of the existing regional market for the staple grain. And indeed he claimed, a high ranking leader of this country visited his area and made a podium announcement that following the bumper harvests and sufficient grain in the national reserve, from then onwards, farmers were free to sell their grain across the border. The farmers cheered, looking forward to the financial windfall that was about to come their way. But according to my colleague, nothing came of the announcement as the ban remained tightly in place. After a few months of playing wait and see, he decided to sell his grain locally at a loss, rather than watch it go to waste.

At this juncture he thumbed through my copy of the Ten Pillars of Kilimo Kwanza and pointed at Pillar No 6. 'Read this' he said. In this pillar, the Government committed itself to determine fiscal and other incentives to stimulate investments in agriculture. According to this pillar, a task force

was to be formed to review and recommend necessary fiscal and other incentives to stimulate Kilimo Kwanza, including reviewing the cost of doing business in the agricultural sector to make it more competitive. Among other things, market barriers to agricultural commodities were to be addressed, along with regularisation on cross border trade in food crops.

'You see my friend,' he said, 'Perhaps if the promised regularization and not bans on cross border trade on food crops were instituted, I may have sold my tonnes of maize at a profit and enjoyed the fruits of my labour. Instead I am left to count my losses and rue missed opportunities, all because what our leaders say doesn't always translate to action on the ground. As such, please keep this Kilimo Kwanza religion to yourself. I will never... and I repeat; never, ever again engage in farming.' He left, leaving me without an appropriate rejoinder.

This brings us to this month's issue of Kilimo Kwanza. When it was first mooted at a two day meeting on 2nd and 3rd June 2009 in Dar es Salaam to discuss the policies and strategies for the transformation of Tanzania's agriculture under the theme "Kilimo Kwanza" and its implementation; the Government declared that the greatest challenge facing Tanzania is to combat poverty and that this would only be possible through enhanced agricultural productivity.

Conscious of the fact that considerable effort had already gone into the transformation of agriculture without much success; it was resolved that Kilimo Kwanza would be integrated into the Government machinery to ensure its successful implementation; while mobilizing increased quantum of resources towards its realization.

Today, we explore what efforts, if any, have gone into transforming peasant and small farmers to commercial farmers through emphasis on productivity, tradability and promoting medium and large scale farmers for the full realization of the vision of Kilimo Kwanza.

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To have your organisation promoted in Kilimo Kwanza. Call: 0754 909854

Taha at 10: Assessing achievements and challenges



By Likati Thomas, Taha

What Taha is proud of Recently, Tanzania Horticultural Association (Taha) celebrated its tenth anniversary. Since its establishment in 2004, the organisation has achieved a multitude of milestones. Of these, eight stands out as follows:

Taha played a central role in molding the horticulture industry into the fastest growing sub-sector, within Tanzania's agriculture sector, with an impressive 11 per cent of annual growth for the past six consecutive years

The association also successfully increased partnerships on both local and international levels in support of the horticulture industry.

Partnerships improved
It also played a pivotal role to achieve improved collaboration with the government (as part of promoting Public-Private Partnerships) which led towards a better business enabling environment through policy and advocacy reform

Significant increase in production of fruits, vegetables, flowers, spices, herbs and seeds by more than 75% since 2006. This growth is attributed by

increased participation in horticulture production- particularly by women and the youth

Another interesting achievement is that, Taha facilitated a 500-700 per cent increase in horticultural yields as a result of development intervention on the ground. Taha and its partner, USAID/TAPP, have implemented capacity building programs which have had farmers adopt innovative farming technologies and good agricultural practices such as post-harvest technologies, land preparation and drip irrigation

Export value up
Another achievement is that, Taha facilitated an increase on export value from USD 64 million (108billion/-) in 2004 to USD 375 million (638billion/-) in 2013. "This development has the horticulture sub sector contributing to about 35% of overall agricultural exports in Tanzania," reads the Taha press release in part.

Also, the association achieved escalated involvement of small farmers in the horticulture value chain. Out-growers, who are contracted by exporters, have contributed to about 90% of total horticultural export volumes

Last, but not least, Taha played a central role in achieving improved mar-



"Taha and the government are working together to improve the business environment and also support trade facilitation processes for the sake of improving supply chains in various regions of Tanzania. However..."

Awards for excellency

During Taha's anniversary commemoration, several awards were presented to different individuals as an acknowledgement for their championship in pushing the development of Tanzania's horticulture sector.

The distinguished individuals included: Colman Ngalo, who was Taha's former chairman; Tjerk Scheltema, Managing Director of Multiflower Company Ltd; Godfrey Kirenga, CEO of SAGCOT; Dr David Nyange, and Senior Policy Advisor in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, who also serves as professor at the Michigan State University.

Taha also celebrated the efforts of journalists who have contributed in promoting the horticulture sub sector. The journalists who were awarded during the ceremony are, from newspapers: Adam Ihucha (The East African), and Zephania Ubwani and Patty Magubira (The Citizen).

Others are, Mark Valentine (from Arusha Times), Charles Ngezeza (The Guardian & Nipashe), Elia Mbonea (Mtanzania), and Erick Toroka (Jambo Magazine & Business Times). From TV are, Ramadhan Mvungi (Star TV),

Jamillah Omar (Channel 10) and Mwanaidi Mkwizu (ITV).

Horticulture trade conference
As part of celebrating its 10th year anniversary, Taha and its partner the International Trade Center (ITC) jointly organized a Horticulture Trade Facilitation Conference held on November 27 and 28 at Mount Meru Hotel.

The theme of the event was addressing investment and trade development challenges in the horticulture industry. There was also a platform to discuss and define strategic policy and business development plans for facilitating a better role for horticulture integration in other development sectors such as tourism.

The Tanzania horticulture industry has shown huge potential in supplying high-end markets like touristic hotels as well as growing supermarket chains across the region.

Improving the business environment

Taha and the government are working together to improve the business environment and also support trade facilitation processes for the sake of improving supply chains in various regions of Tanzania. However, this will require partnership solutions, between agro-industry producers, service providers, retail chains and hotels, in formulating strategic responses suitable for supporting improvements in supply and value chain logistics.

The conference provided a practical, professional and exciting platform whereby views were shared among over 250 local and international delegates who support the growth of horticultural trade.

It attracted participation from senior government officials, value chain actors in horticulture, international partners and CEOs of private sector organisations.

The guest of honour was Dr Christopher Chiza, the Minister for Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, who was there to represent Dr Mohamed Gharib Bilal, the country's Vice President.

Send your comments for free starting with (TAHA) to 15774

Agricultural council keen on taking small farmers to the next level

By Cleophas Rwechungura, Agriculture Council Tanzania

Who is a small farmer?

There are many different definitions of a small farmer. The distinction is normally based on the locality, type of crops grown, and the economic level of the society. Generally, there are two definitions that are internationally recognised.

One is given by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (Fao), which describes a small farmer basing on the land size he/she manages. The second one is given by the World Bank, which describes a small farmer basing on his/her business turnover.

However, the second definition is contentious since the yardstick to measure who is a "small or medium or large" farmer may vary greatly.

Typical smallholders

Small farmers own plots ranging from 0.5 to 5.0 hectares (approximately 1 to 12 acres). They also keep few domestic animals or poultry for home consumption. A typical smallholder engages in subsistence production of food crops for home use and market the surplus to nearby markets.

In most cases, family members do all the field works. Since family needs cannot be met by selling crop surpluses only, some households supplement the shortfall by working as part time labourers, or by engaging in small businesses.

In some cases, young family members migrate to urban areas or agricultural estates searching for casual jobs during seasons when their labour is not needed in their own farms. This scenario is mostly common among smallholders who grow annual crops.

Other feature of smallholders is the use hand tools in farm operations. Mechanised farming is out of their reach. They cannot afford to access improved seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, as well as modern agricultural technologies.

These factors contribute very significantly to low crop production and productivity, thus perpetu-



"I wish to emerge from subsistence farming to become a commercially oriented farmer. For this to happen, I wanted to purchase a bigger farmland and use oxen driven implements, However, I was crippled by lack of encouragement and support from the powers that be.

ating poverty among rural communities.

Breaking 'the poverty barrier'

Alex Kyarwazi, a smallholder based at Kamachumu in Muleba District, Kagera Region has this to say. "I own a plot of approximately 2.5 acres (equivalent to one hectare) in which I intercrop bananas, coffee and beans," he says.

"In the past, when the soil was fertile and the rain pattern was predictable, these two food crops were sufficient to survive on. Whereas the coffee crop fetched me a good income to take care of other family needs," he adds.

Alex says that currently, things have changed to

the worse. Due to poor farming practices, soil fertility has diminished significantly. Furthermore, the mishandling of our environment has impacted negatively to the annual rains.

All along, Mzee Kyarwazi, who is in his mid-seventies, has been craving to break the poverty barrier. But his dreams turned out to be a wishful thinking. "I wish to emerge from subsistence farming to become a commercially oriented farmer.

"For this to happen, I wanted to purchase a bigger farmland and use oxen driven implements. However, I was crippled by lack of encouragement and support from the powers that be," he laments

with bitterness.

Hardly breaks even

Gillius Magombeka is a prominent paddy grower at Mgeta area in Kilombero District. Despite of attending to his crop with diligence, he hardly breaks even. "I have twelve acres out of which I harvest approximately 120 bags per season. The harvest is not much because I depend on rain water. Irrigation farming is tricky and unpredictable. My agricultural technical advisor says with irrigation I could triple the yield easily," he says.

Magombeka is among very many subsistence rice growers in the vast Kilombero Valley which is

nationally acclaimed for its fertility.

Acquiring land to practice agriculture is becoming a problem in many major rice producing areas, including: Kilombero, Mbarali, Kapunga and Dakawa. There are two ways to address this challenge. Either to shift ones residence in order to acquire a larger piece of land elsewhere, or to increase production per unit area through intensive farming, which entails maximum utilisation of the land available through the use of improved seeds, application of fertilisers and pesticides, as well as irrigating the crops.

Inevitable challenges

Basic elements that characterise a medium-cum-emerging farmer include: bigger farm land, mechanised farm operations, increased application of modern technologies, substantial increase of crop yields per unit area, determined marketing systems, higher incomes and improved lifestyle.

As a matter of fact, agricultural businesses are becoming more and more the domain of big entrepreneurs. The number of smallholders is dwindling because they cannot survive in the intensely competitive environment.

The solution is either to pool their resources and



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neighbours, improved the landscape and soil fertility, hence increased its value.

Farmers, who are eager to advance to the medium level, deserve all the support they need in order to modernise and commercialise their undertakings. There is no farmer who wishes to stagnate in poverty," asserts Tesha.

She further recommends, "The government should create a conducive environment to enable smallholders access loans from financial institutions on affordable terms. With such support, we can expand the farm land, acquire and utilize time saving implements, and apply modern and appropriate technologies."

She intimates that her survival depends entirely on her zeal to succeed.

Avoiding risks

Small farmers shy away from taking risks because very often they are prone to adverse conditions, especially droughts and floods. This is why they prefer to diversify their businesses by growing a mixture of crops and raising a few livestock.

In case for any reason one crop fails, they survive on other crops. Moreover, mixed cropping has extra advantages since leguminous plants (such as beans and ground-nuts) improve the soil structure by fixing nitrogen.

Another risk mitigation strategy is to perpetuate some indigenous crop varieties because they endure adverse climatic conditions. Also they require little industrial inputs, that's, fertilisers and pesticides.

Most small farmers hesitate to invest heavily in agriculture for fear of not meeting corporate standards. They neither have the necessary market information, nor trust to crop mongers and the volatile market. Their main concern therefore, is to manage risks with the little means at their disposal.

Change things for their favour

It is obvious that small farmers will not survive and thrive under current conditions. Things should change to their favour. In this regard, the public and private sectors should cooperate to initiate measures to bail out smallholder farmers.

They need to be connected to big farms to take advantage of the services and advanced technologies available. The value chains should be designed and made less complex for the farmers' benefit.

Such connections are likely to generate a lot of interest leading to small farmers embarking on profitable farming and rising to the medium class level. After all, this is what ACT is pushing and wishes to happen for them.

Send your comments for free starting with (ACT) to 15774

Why milk quality, hygiene need extra care



By Herry Ngoitiam, Tampa

How much do you know about milk quality, hygiene?

Good quality raw milk has to be free of debris and sediments; free of off flavours and abnormal colour and odour; low in bacterial count; free of chemicals and of normal composition and acidity. The quality of raw milk is the primary factor determining the quality of milk and milk products.

Good quality milk products can be produced only from good-quality raw milk. The hygienic quality of milk is of crucial importance in producing milk and milk products that are safe and suitable for their intended uses. To achieve this quality, good hygiene practices have to be applied throughout the dairy chain.

Among the causes of small dairy producers' difficulties in producing hygienic products are informal and unregulated marketing, poor handling and processing of dairy products; lack of financial incentives for quality improvement; and insufficient knowledge and skills in hygienic practices. That's why on this issue, we inform you about milk quality and hygiene.

Underlining human health

The use of milk and milk products as human food has got a very long history. The milk - as it is meant to be the first and sole food for offspring of mammals - is an almost

complete food. It contains in a balanced form all the necessary and digestible elements for building and maintaining the human and animal body.

In addition, it contains immunoglobulins which protect the newly born against a number of diseases. Research has shown that milk and milk products have an immune enhancing property as well, particularly for the benefit of HIV/Aids affected people.

Additionally, milk contains various properties, which make it easy to convert into different milk products or to use it as an ingredient for other food items. Various human cultures have their own traditional ways of using milk and preparing different milk products.

Compositional quality of milk

The composition of milk is not constant, but shows a wide variation. In the first place the composition depends on the species of animal. But also within a species we find big differences between the breeds and between individual animals within a breed.

The composition might even change from day to day, depending on feeding and climate. But also during one milking the first milk differs from the last milk drops. Average figures of the composition of milk from cows, sheep and goats, are given in the table.

| Composition of milk from different animals in percentage | | | |
|--|----------|-----------|------------|
| | Cow Milk | Goat Milk | Sheep Milk |
| Water | 87.2 | 85.8 | 81.6 |
| Total Solids | 12.8 | 14.2 | 18.4 |
| Fat | 4.0 | 4.9 | 6.5 |
| Protein | 4.5 | 4.3 | 6.7 |
| Lactose | 4.5 | 4.1 | 4.3 |
| Ash (Minerals) | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 |

It should be noticed that milk consists mainly of water and the remaining are milk consisting of fat, protein,



“In other words, milk is mainly contaminated with bacteria during milking. It is possible to milk animals in a clean way that the raw milk contains only 500 to 1,000 bacteria per milliliter.

lactose and minerals.

Nutritional value

Milk is very tasteful and is an excellent source of high quality protein that can be digested easily. Milk also contains lots of important vitamins and minerals. In many countries milk and milk products provide 5 – 10 per cent of the total calories of the daily human diet. It represents one of the best natural sources of essential amino acids for human nutrition.

Moreover, milk is an outstanding source of calcium and a good source of phosphorus. As these elements play an essential role in building the bones and teeth in the body, it is clear that milk should be included in the diet of humans in all their stages of life.

In fact, milk is the most important source of calcium in the diet of almost all people. These nutritional attributes have made milk a mainstay in the diet, particularly of growing children. It is recommended to drink 3 – 4 glasses of

milk per person per day.

It's estimated that worldwide some 8,000 to 10,000 different milk products are available. This makes milk an exceptionally versatile raw product. The nutritional as well as the economic value of milk is directly associated with its solids content. The higher the solids content the better its nutritional value and the more of a milk product can be made out of it.

For example, cheese yields are directly related to the protein and in particular to the casein content of milk. When milk emerges from a healthy udder, it contains very few bacteria.

Beware of contamination

However, milk is a perishable product. It is an ideal medium for micro-organisms and as it is a liquid, it is very easily contaminated and invaded by bacteria. Almost all bacteria in milk originate from the air, dirt, dung, hairs and other extraneous substances.

In other words, milk is mainly contaminated with bacteria during milking. It is possible to milk animals in a clean way that the raw milk contains only 500 to 1,000 bacteria per milliliter. Usually, the total bacteria count after milking is up to 50,000 per ml.

However, counts may reach several millions bacteria per ml. That indicates a very poor hygienic standard during milking and the handling of the milk or milk of a diseased animal with i.e. mastitis. Raw milk is one of the most suitable media for the growth of a wide variety of bacteria. Especially immediately after milking when it is almost at body temperature.

In whatever way, milk contains a natural inhibitory system which prevents a significant rise in the bacteria count during the first 2 - 3 hours. If milk is cooled within this period to 4 °C, it maintains nearly its original quality.

Timely cooling ensures that the quality of the milk remains good for processing and consumption. The bacterial load in fresh raw milk should be less than 50,000 per ml when it reaches the collection point or processing plant.

To prevent too high multiplication of bacteria, the milk has to be produced in hygienic condition and should be cooled or heated at the earliest. Hygienic milk only originates from mastitis free and healthy animals.

Cows suffering from a disease may produce milk with pathogenic bacteria. Consumption of raw milk therefore might be dangerous to the consumer. Some of these diseases, like tuberculosis, brucellosis and anthrax, can be transmitted to the consumer. Whatever the milk is used for during processing, the hygienic standard of the produced milk at farm-level forms the basis of the quality of the ultimate milk products.

*On the next issue of Kilimo Kwanza Supplement, we will write about processes involved in dairy products from the farm to the retail shelf.

Send your comments for free starting with (TAMPA) to 15774



By Kilimo Kwanza Correspondent, Metl

Metl Agro among them

Considering the importance of agriculture, industries and business in changing the Tanzanian economy, Metl Agro Tractors & Implements Ltd, a subsidiary company of the Metl Group, participated fully in the African Industry Day exhibition which was

held at the Mwalimu J.K Nyerere Trade Fair Grounds recently.

The exhibition started on in November 17, this year and was officially opened by the Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry, Janet Mbene. The show ended on November 21 and was officially closed by the Minister for trade and commerce, Dr Abdallah Kigoda, on behalf of the Vice President, Dr Mohammed Gharib Bilal.

The main aim of the exhibition was to educate the public about development of African factories for the local products. Also, it was aimed to inform the public about agriculture industries such as agricultural inputs, quality tractors, and fertilisers.

TBS, TFDA were there as well

Interestingly, two state agencies – the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) and Tanzania Food and Drug

Authority (TFDA) – participated in the exhibition to make sure that safety of food and standards were acceptable.

Metl Group of Companies focus on servicing Tanzanians by improving the economy at the individual and national level through its subsidiary company – Metl Agro Tractors and Implements – which is the solution for farmers in Tanzania.

The company showcased its trac-



“The company showcased its tractors and other products... Metl Agro products are of good quality and affordable compared to products from other companies.

tors and other products, which are TAFE, tipping trailer, non-tipping trailer, disc plough, disc harrow, disc ridger, UREA fertiliser, CAN, DAP and others. These Metl Agro products are of good quality and affordable compared to products from other companies. For more information about their products, please log in into www.metl.net.

Quality, affordable products

Metl Agro sells and distributes tractors, tipping trailer, non tipping trailers, disc plough, disc harrow, disc ridger, fertilisers and other agriculture inputs with the best quality at affordable prices. Farmers are advised to buy agriculture inputs like TAFE tractors from Metl agro because they work in any soil condition.

Metl agro has branches and distribution stations in regions including Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, Songea, Kigoma, Tabora, Makambako, Morogoro, Njombe, Iringa, Moshi, Masasi, Mtwara, Tunduma, Kahama, Arusha, Dodoma and Tanga other regions.

Also, Metl Agro distributes its products in neighboring countries such as Burundi, Congo, Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia.



Africa needs to make agriculture create wealth not just food

Doubling earnings

Nairobi. Nancy Njeri lugs a sack of fresh coffee berries to a hilltop factory from her small farm, which produces one of Kenya's main cash crops yet earns barely enough for her family of seven children.

"We are toiling hard and the coffee does not give us good returns," she said, after reaching the processing plant where the berries from her 200 coffee trees are de-husked and the extracted beans are graded and dried ready for roasting.

On big estates, one tree can produce 10-15 kg of coffee berries a year using fertilisers and other chemicals. But these are too costly for Njeri and other small-scale farmers. Their trees on the small plots in Kirinyaga County produce just 3-5 kg.

This means that with a little help, Njeri's earnings of equivalent to \$300 to \$500 a year could be doubled.

It is a story repeated across Africa, where export crops like coffee, tea, cotton and cocoa are often produced by smallholders whose incomes cannot both support families and pay for products to improve harvests. Many smallholders are reduced to growing food staples, adding to Africa's farming inefficiency.

"Africa has to move away from agriculture for food in the stomach to agriculture for wealth into the economy and into the pockets of farmers," said Martin Bwalya, the head of The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), an African Union (AU) initiative.

Experts say that this needs action from governments and others to invest in research to produce higher-yielding crop varieties, improve marketing and add more value to produce instead of

exporting raw commodities from which others profit.

Bwalya's CAADP has led a drive for change, but progress has been slow. Under the CAADP initiative, African presidents committed in 2003 to lift annual agriculture funding to 10 per cent of their budgets.

More than a decade later and only eight of the AU's 54 nations have reached and maintained that goal, although some others are improving. Bwalya said 40 nations now devoted 5-6 per cent of their budgets to farming, up from just 3 per cent.

Value at home

Investing more could yield significant returns. In Kenya, farming accounts for nearly a quarter of national output, a common figure across the continent. As agriculture is also a huge employer of Africa's roughly 1 billion people, supporting farms, which are mostly small, helps many people.

Edward George, the head of research for soft commodities at Ecobank in London, said farming was being held back by a failure to invest in crop processing and building local African demand.

Pointing to African cotton farmers, he said only 30 per cent of their harvest was turned into yarn and textiles locally, with the rest exported in the form of lint bundles.

"It is possible there is a cotton farmer in Burkina Faso who is wearing a shirt made with the cotton that he grew, but the shirt was made in China," George said.

Developing local consumption of farm products in Africa could encourage more local industry, avoiding the fate of cocoa farms in Ghana and the Ivory Coast, who earn just 7-8 per cent of the value of a chocolate bar made from their cocoa beans, he said.

It is a similar picture elsewhere. Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda, which are some of the continent's main coffee exporters, mostly send beans abroad but farmers and producers could earn more if value was added at home.

A standard 50-kg bag of top AA beans, a grading that relates to size, can earn up to \$400 to \$500 at the peak auction period. But farmers can earn that amount by roasting and packaging lower grade beans, which would be worth half the value of AA beans if sold unprocessed at auction.

Some farmers are doing that in Kenya, but it is a small portion and held back due to limited local consumption, although coffee shops serving a growing middle class are starting to spread in Nairobi, Kampala and Kigali.

"Only 4 per cent of coffee is roasted locally while the rest is exported," said Matthew Mugo, managing director of Kenya's Gibsons Coffee at his outlet in downtown Nairobi.

Focus on farming

Work is going on to boost agricultural productivity. The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is researching improved seed varieties for African staples such as sorghum, cassava and millet, which have received less attention than crops like wheat and rice.

Such research is vital when AGRA says the continent's population is expanding 50 per cent faster than food productivity. Africa's food deficit could reach 60 million tonnes or \$14 billion by 2020, if action is not taken, it says.

But gains are uneven. Productivity has been among the fastest in Africa's most populous nation Nigeria, but has shrunk in politically troubled Zimbabwe.

Some governments are too wedded to grand infrastructure plans that fail to address particular farming needs, say experts. Morrison Rwakakamba, head of the Kampala-based think tank Agency for Transformation, says this is the case in Uganda.

"When they invest in, say roads or in health or the environment, they think somehow agriculture benefits," he said. "There have not been specific efforts to address issues unique to agriculture and that has been a problem."

For many authorities, it is a question of cost. In Kenya's Kirinyaga County, Governor Joseph Ndathi illustrated the funding challenge, saying only a third of the county's spending resources of 3.25 billion shillings (\$36.79 million) for the year were available for development. Most would go on roads, schools and clinics.

Agriculture would receive a fraction, he said, even though 90 per cent of the county's 560,000 people relied on farming for their livelihood.

The best-paid farmer in his county earned 70 shillings per kg of coffee this year, while better marketing and farming practices could lift that to 200 shillings, he said: "That is the surest and fastest form of development."

Kenyan Agriculture Minister Felix Koskei said the government was working to improve the use of technology and introduce better warehousing to lift productivity and cut losses. But he acknowledged farms could deliver more for the economy.

"(Agriculture) does not reach its full potential," he told Reuters, adding that developing efficient markets for local produce so farmers can get the right price for their goods is key. "The most important thing is markets."

Reuters

KILIMO KWANZA DIRECTORY

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- Drilling and Dam Construction Agency (DDCA) Tel: +255 22 2410430/2410299
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INDUSTRY SUPPORT AND ASSOCIATIONS

- Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO) – Email: dg@sido.go.tz, info@sido.go.tz ANSAF - P.O. Box 6370, Dar es Salaam CNFA - info@cnfatanzania.org
- Tractors Limited Cells: +255 784 421606, 786 150213
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- Private Agricultural Sector Support (PASS) Tel: 023-3752/3758/3765
- Cotton & Textile Development Programme Tel: +255 0718 835 679 Email: ctdp@tanzania-gatsby.com

