



Future
Agricultures

The Role And Performance Of The Ministry Of Agriculture In Eldoret West District

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1. Introduction

Agriculture is the backbone of Kenya's economy. Well managed, agriculture can be the single source that will spearhead the economy and alleviate poverty among the over 80 percent of Kenya's population dependant on it. The sector has been fragmented into 10 ministries that all came out of a large Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) that is still seen as the parent Ministry and is viewed as the main player in the sector. This study was aimed at gaining a better understanding of how the sector is managed, and to critically examine the structure, capacity and coordination capabilities of the Ministry of Agriculture in Eldoret West District.

This study analyses the role, performance, financial and human capacity of Ministry of Agriculture in Eldoret West district in Kenya's Rift-Valley Province. Particular attention is given in to how the ministry interacts and plays a coordination role among agricultural stakeholders in the district.

The objective of the study is to generate evidence on the patterns and trends in the scope and leverage of MoA at the district level and to draw implications for its capacity to play a coordination role and be demand driven.

This study covered the two expansive divisions that constitute Eldoret West district using qualitative methods of collecting data mainly through interviews with various agricultural stakeholders. An interview checklist was used to guide conversations with key informants who covered a wide range of government and non-governmental players. 23 interviews were conducted with various officers at the district, division and at location levels of five different ministries; MoA, Ministry of Livestock Development, Ministry of Cooperative Development, Ministry of Fisheries Development, and the irrigation department of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. Interviews were also

conducted with five farmer focus groups, six individual farmers, four farmer's group organizations, four farm input stockists, three farm output buyers, one NCPB official, one import/export company, Horticultural Crops Development Agency - HCDA, two seed companies, two faith based organizations, one consultancy firm and two credit institutions. Data collection was undertaken in March 2009 and a validation workshop held in February 2010.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 1 continues with a description of the district. Section 2 presents the agricultural activities and opportunities in the district and Section 3 describes the challenges for agriculture in the district. Section 4 describes the roles and duties of MoA at the district level, and documents the challenges experienced by farmers as perceived by different stakeholders. In section 5, the study looks at the performance of the ministry and the sector over time and Section 6 discusses MoA's interface with other stakeholders in the district. Section 7 highlights the limitations of MoA in service delivery. Conclusions and policy implications are presented in section 8.

Eldoret West District

Until 2008 what is now Eldoret West District was part of Uasin Gishu District. Uasin Gishu is located in Kenya's Rift Valley Province (between 34° 50' and 35° 37' East and between latitude 0° 03' South and 0° 05' North) and bordered Kericho and Koibatek in the East; Keiyo and Marakwet in the North East; Trans Nzoia and Lugari in the North West and West respectively. Uasin Gishu was then divided into three districts: Eldoret East, Eldoret North and Eldoret West.

Eldoret West District covers 1088 square km. At the time of the 1999 census the current Eldoret West area had a population of 258,332 persons (Table 1). Using a 2.5% p.a. growth rate, this gives an estimated population in 2009 of

330,687 and a density of 304 persons/sq km¹. The district is divided into two administrative divisions, 17 locations and 32 sub-locations (Table 2).

Kenya's 4th largest town – Eldoret - houses the headquarters of Eldoret West district as well as Eldoret East and Eldoret North. Eldoret West is the parent district and enjoys some privileges

Figure 3. Map of Eldoret West District

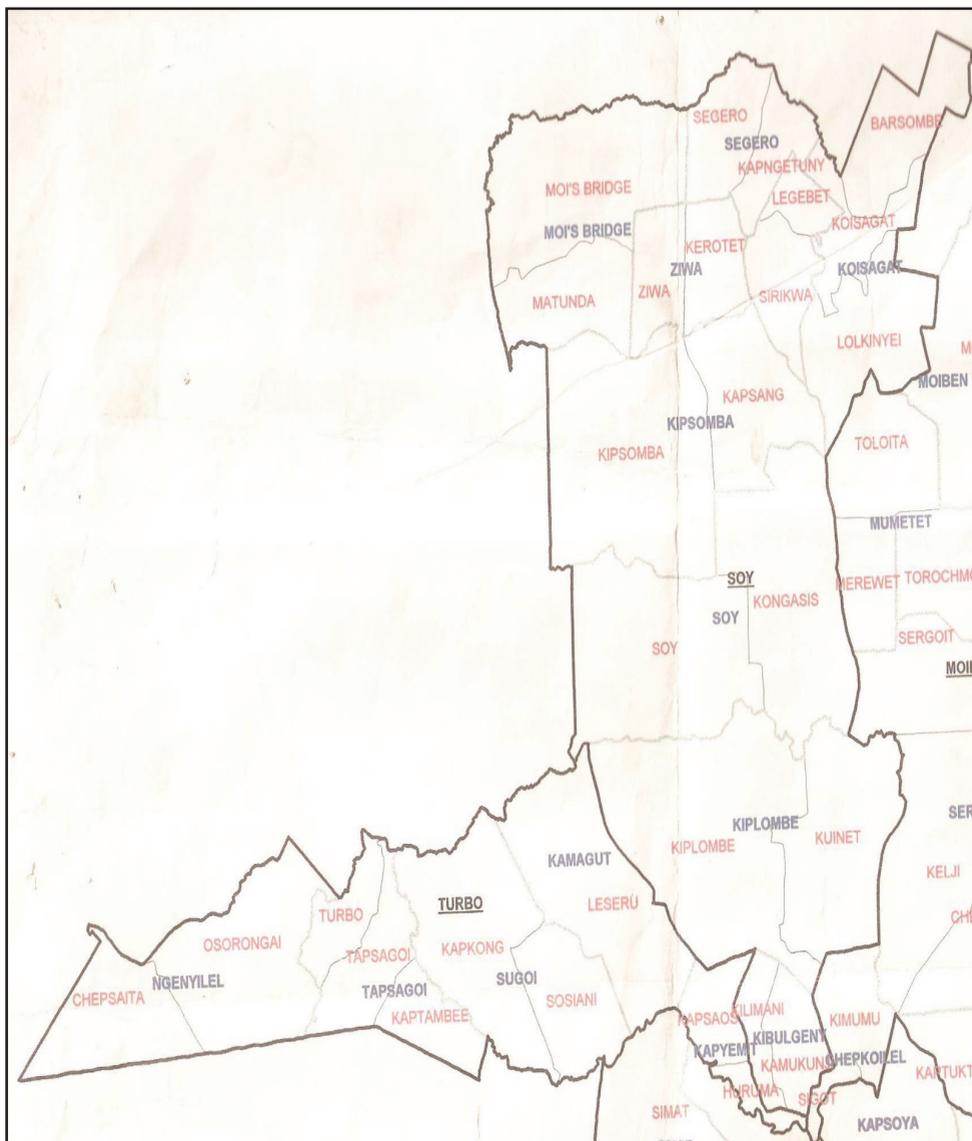


Table 1. Population of Current Eldoret West District in 1999

Division	Population	Households	Farm families	Population density (persons/km ²)
Soy	172,933	42,906	42,906	226
Turbo	85,399	26,072	24,732	266
Total	258,332	68,978	67,638	237

Sources: Population Census (1999)

Table 2. Administrative Divisions of Eldoret West District

Division	No. Of Locations	No. of sub-locations	Total area (km ²)	Area under water/rock(km ²)	Arable land(km ²)
Soy	10	21	766.8	191	575.0
Turbo	7	11	321.2	64.2	257.0
Total	17	32	1088	255.2	832.0

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Eldoret West district

over the other two, with more vehicles, and larger and more numerous offices than the other two. Its DAO is the Dean² of about 10 districts in the North Rift.

Eldoret West has few tarmac roads leading into its major market, Eldoret. The road from Soy division headquarters to Eldoret is good with a few potholed sections. Turbo, the other division, lies on the main tarmac highway joining Eldoret and Kitale that is in perfect condition. However feeder roads from the interior where the bulk of the farmers live are very dusty in the dry season, and trouble during rainy seasons. According to Mr Chepgetich³, a farmer in Tapsagoi location, the roads are a nightmare when it drizzles and impassable when it rains heavily or for a long time.

1.1. Farm Holdings

The MoA has categorised farm holdings in the district into three groups according to average farm sizes (Table 4):

Table 5 shows the approximate numbers of farm holdings, by size class, across the two

divisions of the district. Note that the total in this table is less than the number of farm families recorded in Table 1. Some of this difference is attributable to the presence of workers and their families on the larger farms in the district. However, simple discrepancies in the data cannot be ruled out.

1.2. Rainfall

Average annual rainfall ranges from 900mm to 1200 mm. The main rainy season starts in late March or early April, and peaks in July/August. The wettest months are April, May and August. Average temperature is 18 degrees centigrade.

Table 4. Farm sizes

Area (farm size)	Category
1 – 20 ha	Small scale farms
21 – 40 ha	Medium scale farms
41 ha and over	Large scale farms

Source: Min of Agriculture, Eldoret West district

Table 5. Distribution of Farms by Size Class and Division

Division	Small	Medium	Large	Total
Soy	18,920	14,990	146	34,056
Turbo	17,050	8,986	36	26,072
Total	35,970	23,976	182	60,128

Source: Min of Agriculture, Eldoret West district

1.3. Soils

The Northern parts of the district have red loams which are mainly good for maize, wheat, and livestock. Red clays in Soy are good for maize and wheat production. The district has two main agro-ecological zones, i.e. Upper Midlands I, II and III and Lower Highlands I, II and III.

2. Agriculture in Eldoret West.

Agriculture is the mainstay of Eldoret West district. The district is one of the high agricultural potential districts in Kenya and is rightly referred to as part of the grain basket of the country. It produces wheat and maize in large quantities. People of this district know very little outside the main agricultural activities of wheat, maize and livestock (mainly dairy farming).

The district has one season for both maize and wheat. Maize is planted in March to mid April and harvesting occurs from November through to early January. Wheat is planted in April-May and harvested in August and September. Wheat is mainly grown in the large farms around Ziwa. Maize is grown all over the district.

According to Bates (1989, p 69), “a government based on the support of export crop producers emphasizes investment and the accumulation of economic wealth, whereas a government based on the support of food grain producers emphasizes the redistribution of wealth”, and ever since 1978 when Moi took over power, there has been a remarkable increase of wheat production as his administration increased emphasis on cereals. His predecessor Kenyatta was more inclined towards export farming of tea and coffee.

The little but far reaching economic favouritism that Moi extended to Rift-Valley where he comes from and where our study district also lies, culminated in an agricultural and economic boom as many other businesses sprung that supported farmers and farming activities like sales of farm inputs, transportation, storage, processing etc and those that served the consumption interests of upwardly mobile farmers and construction firms that benefited from the government determination to improve infrastructure in this region.

Table 6. Hectareage under cereals and horticultural crops

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Maize	55,917	63,585	65,758	66,000	86,028	70,528
Wheat	41,500	42,100	37,500	37,080	29,500	37,108
Cabbages	380	440	450	373	247	*
Kales	390	450	460	282	263	*
Passion fruits	321	331	295	345	150	*4

Eldoret West District benefited from the Moi regime but the benefits were not to last long as in mid 1980's Kenya started experiencing shortages of cereals and most of the farmer support structures like Kenya Farmers Association (KFA), Agricultural Finance Association (AFC), Kenya Planters Cooperative Union (KPCU), Kenya Grain Growers Cooperative Union (KGGCU) went under due to embezzlement, mismanagement and political interference.

Over emphasis by the Moi administration on cereals led farmers to focus on their production to the detriment of other viable and high valued crops and enterprises. Gradually horticultural production is emerging in most parts of the district. From the relatively small farms of Turbo division to the larger farms of Ziwa in Soy division, the uptake of horticultural crops is felt albeit in very small quantities. The horticultural crops grown are French beans, passion fruit, snow peas, baby corn, cades peas and tomatoes. There are also cabbages, kales and avocados.

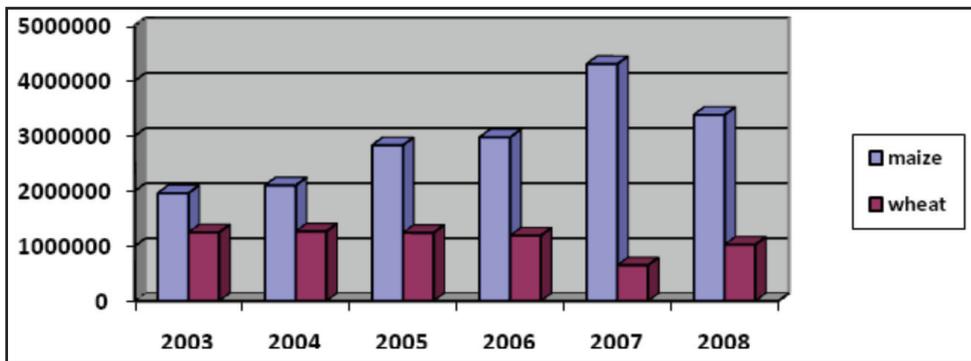
The table below shows the acreage under the two main cereal crops and three other horticultural crops. Figure 7 represents the amount of maize and wheat produced in the district since 2003. Observable from the two diagrams is the fact that the area under production and the yield of maize has been increasing over the years. However, in 2008 production declined by

about 21% which was largely attributed to the post-election violence that adversely affected the district. The remarkable and gradual increase of maize production is attributed to the overwhelming dependency on maize as the only recognizable food among most Kenyans, the better prices the cereal has been attracting coupled with well developed market and marketing system and the support maize production gets from the government like free or subsidized inputs like hybrid seeds, fertilizer and chemicals.

When one crop fetches more returns, farmers in the district tend to shift away from the other which is doing badly. Wheat has been a victim of such circumstance for a long period of time. Wheat has always had a stagnant price around Ksh 2,800 per 90 kg bag. More often than not wheat production is under contract and prices are predetermined. It is only due to this relief from the dictates and uncertainty of market and prices that wheat is still in production.

Livestock rearing is also prevalent with almost every farmer keeping some dairy cows. Farms are still relatively large and dairy cows can still be kept under free range open grazing or in paddocks. Very few farm families keep their cattle under strict zero grazing system. Milk production has been increasing over the years (Fig 11) especially after the revival of the Kenya

Figure 7. Production (bags of 90kgs) of maize and wheat from 2003 to 2008



Cooperative Creameries - KCC and the emergence of Brookside. Exotic poultry keeping is also spread across the district, but mostly in the small holder farms in Turbo division. Both layers and broilers are kept and the market for poultry and poultry products is high within the locality in Eldoret. A few farmers keep dairy goats, sheep, pigs and bees.

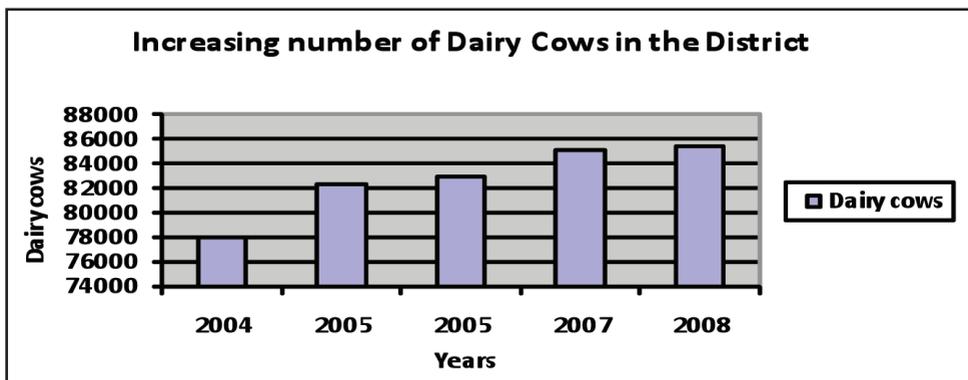
Farmers in the district seem to have realized the opportunity in dairy and are doing their best to increase production as suggested by the increasing number of dairy cows shown in Figure 8 and in the increasing production over the years reflected in Figure 11. Milk marketing in the district has evolved since 1992 from better to worse and now gradually to better again though it is still not yet at its best. Farmers are still not comfortable with the Ksh 22/litre and would want at least Ksh 26 a litre. They argue that at Ksh 22 they barely break even. Both KCC and Brookside deduct Ksh 5 if they collect the produce at farm gate. Farmers in the district feel that they are being cheated. "Why are we paid Ksh 22 a litre when KCC and Brookside do little value addition and sell the litre at not less than Ksh 60, and still, from the same litre the farmer sold, these milk plants are still able to extract butter", laments Mr Stephen Ngosei⁵.

2.1. Opportunities for agriculture in Eldoret West.

Every stakeholder in the district, right from the peasant farmer in Tapsagoi village to the Agriculture Minister who comes from the area attest to one thing; the district's great potential in the emerging horticulture sector. The climatic conditions are superb, the soils are good, the political will is present and the market is begging for more! For a long time, Uasin Gishu has been known for the production of cereals and milk. But now the horticulture wave is sweeping the district. Not, however, without problems.

CANKEN International is an import-export company based at Eldoret airport. The company imports dry cargo from Dubai in the Middle-East. CANKEN also does logistics, customs clearing and forwarding, air and sea freight and warehousing. Through its Kenyan subsidiary RUMARCO, CANKEN is allowed to export and/or process horticultural produce for export. RUMARCO was registered when CANKEN saw the need for a backload cargo for their forty ton plane six days in a week. To maximise their profits, they saw the need to identify commodities that are in high demand in Dubai so that the planes can be loaded on their way back. Horticulture fit the bill due to the favourable climatic conditions in the district. They embarked

Figure 8: Number of dairy cows in Eldoret West District



on promoting horticulture production and the subsequent emergence of export horticulture was born in the district.

CANKEN has struggled and invested a lot in order to ensure increased and sustainable production of horticulture in Uasin Gishu. They have employed and equipped qualified agronomists, trained the Locational Extension officers and have literally opted to work with every stakeholder to ensure that they get the quality

and quantity of assorted vegetables they need. Their efforts have been somehow thwarted mostly by the smallholders who only represent 20% of the total volume produced. The smallholders' production of horticultural crops, according to Mr Ahmed Mohammed⁶, the Managing Director of CANKEN, has been highly politicised and the farmers are somehow incorrigible. CANKEN initially accepted sub-standard produce from the farmers to encourage them

Table 9. Challenges faced by farmers in the district.

Ngoma Farmers Association	Emgwen women s/h group	Kabatic centre Kwanza s/h group	Kosman s/h group	Nitai Women group
Prevalence of livestock and crop diseases/lack of gov't vets	Lack of capital for inputs purchase	High costs of farm inputs	Lack of enough trainings	Unsupportive husbands
High costs of farm inputs	Pests and diseases of our cattle	Absence of government Vet services/diseases	Lack of gov't vets/diseases	Lack of land to propel our initiatives, land belongs to men
Poor information dissemination from the government agencies	A near absolute absence of gov't vets, we pay heavily for private ones	Absence of clean drinking water for the cattle	Available trainings offered in very technical methods	Absolute lack of irrigation facilities
Lack of capacity building from the government	Poor market rates for our produce, especially milk	High cost of credit facilities	Marketing issues, poor market prices	Market problems when CANKEN started mass rejection
Poor feeder roads	Reduction of our produce prices by KCC, Brookside without consultation	Market problems,, the fluctuation of market rates of milk and cereals	Water problem, more during dry seasons	Lack of capital to purchase high cost farm inputs
Lack of clean water	Lack of clean drinking water for our cattle	Poor roads (murrum)	Expensive credit facilities	Lack of proper trainings
Lean government presence at the location level	Increasing costs of farm inputs		Lack of proper storage facilities	Poor roads during rainy seasons

N/B Apart from Ngoma and Emgwen groups, the rest of the groups were sourced by MoA officials.

to produce more. They accepted the produce but taught the farmers on what will be accepted next time. Unfortunately farmers brought in worse produce than before and CANKEN rejected them all - even passion fruit produced on the farm of the Minister for Agriculture.

Horticulture farming hit a snag with many farmers saying that they would rather go back to the cereal production that they are used to than to be dragged into horticulture production and later be turned away with their produce. This public outcry and the rejection of his own produce caused the Minister to fly back to his home district to address the issue. He advised farmers not to give up but to embrace good crop husbandry so that they could produce the standard of horticulture required in the Middle East market. 60% of production is contributed by the large scale farmers who apparently have no production problems, and CANKEN itself produces another 20%. Smallholder farmers contribute only 20% of total production and few of them have embarked on it seriously. Reasons for this were explored further in the validation workshop. Farmers mentioned the capital intensive nature of horticulture production, the need for hand labour unlike the mechanized cereals farming they are used to, natural risks like hailstones, together with stringent high standards as the main factors keeping them away from horticultural farming.

2.2. Challenges facing Agriculture in Eldoret West.

The district faces a number of agricultural challenges. Five different farmers groups and

associations were interviewed to explore these and the findings are recorded below. Problems are arranged in the same order the groups brought them up suggesting that the first ones mentioned could be the most serious. Most of the problems recur and cut across all groups spread all over the district.

2.2.1. Veterinary Officers and Livestock Diseases.

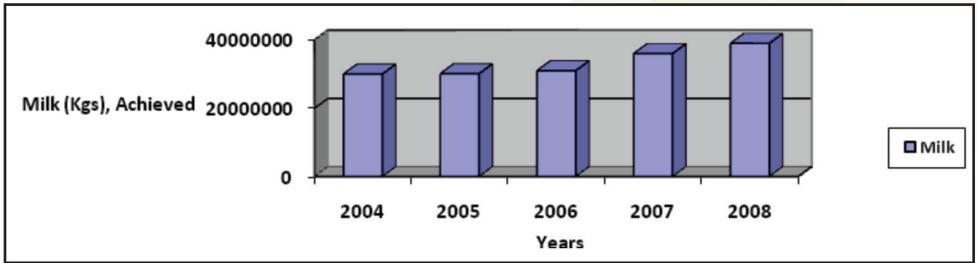
The absence of government vet officers is closely tied to livestock diseases and cuts across all the groups. The Veterinary Department of the Ministry of Livestock Development had not recruited since 1999 until a national recruitment of a meagre 100 new staff - recently recruited and yet to be posted - joined in 2009. Insiders say they are too few to be of much help. Veterinary personnel on the ground are so few and far between that they cannot attend adequately to farmers needs. At the moment certificate holders are manning the divisions whereas they should be at the location level. As more vets retire positions left vacant are filled by junior officers. This causes a vacuum at the lowest frontline that should be in direct contact with farmers. The lower level officers - animal health assistants - are ill equipped with no vehicles or motorbikes that could have enabled them to be more effective. Officers mainly walk and therefore meet very few farmers - two on average and three on a good day.

Mrs Teresia Chepchumba⁷ of the Emgwen women group also says "The government veterinary officers take too long to attend to our urgent cattle needs and in order to save our

Table 10

Handling/day	New KCC	Brookside
Potential	460,000 litres	200,000 litres
Currently	130,000 litres	140,000 litres
Prices	Kshs 22/ litre	Kshs 22/litre

Figure 11. Milk production in the district



cattle lives, we've had to resort to private practitioners in as much as they charge exorbitantly'.

Mr. Isaac Kipchumba⁸, Divisional Veterinary Officer for Soy Division reported that, on some days, more than ten farmers can demand services. Due to lack of transport, he and his colleagues can only attend to a fraction of these. He acknowledged that farmers have some justification for claiming that they rarely see extension staff, because staffs are indeed over-stretched. Mr Kipchumba, and his Turbo Division counterpart Mr Eboya⁹ feel that the government needs to employ more in the veterinary department and provide proper facilitation as well. They feel that in as much as the government privatised artificial insemination and clinical services, more effort should be channelled toward disease control.

2.2.2. Market problems

Most groups cited marketing problems – particularly prices. Farmers complain about the price of milk and accuse the milk processing giants, KCC and Brookside of fluctuating prices without consulting them. "It's a normal economic phenomenon for market prices to fluctuate according to the forces of supply and demand and this is something we cannot go explaining to farmers every now and again", says Mr Cheplimo¹⁰, the New KCC head of Mutwot collection point. Mr Cheplimo believes that farmers

will always complain. "When KCC went under, they really wanted us back as they did not have anywhere to take their milk, now that we are here and taking their milk, they are complaining about the rates" he said. Some of the farmers interviewed feel that it was the re-emergence of New KCC is a big relief and now have no problem with marketing their milk. The following table shows the handling capacity of New KCC and Brookside, an indication that the dairy farmers still have an incentive of producing more. New KCC is handling slightly more than a quarter of its capacity. Brookside is well above half of what it can handle despite the fact that it came to the market several years before New KCC. With the revival of New KCC, many farmers have gone back to serious production.

Complaints about marketing export horticulture to CANKEN can be expected to be short lived. Once they adjust to the standards required, their marketing woes will be greatly reduced.

Cereal farmers in the district enjoy alternative marketing strategies and options. Wheat and maize farmers are well experienced. Once the crop is harvested, farmers deliver either at the NCPB or to private millers like Unga Limited who are always ready to take in the commodity. Maize farmers also have the option of selling to middlemen who transport the commodity to deficit regions.

Selling to the NCPB and millers is not so easy. Due to the stringent rules about moisture

content, etc a number of farmers in the district end up selling at the farm gate because of the following reasons;

- There are no stringent rules, the broker/middleman buys the produce as it is
- Inadequate information about alternative markets other than the local markets, Soko Mjinga and Eldoret market
- High transport costs from the farms to the markets due to poor infrastructure and individual selling
- Collapse of collective marketing through co-operatives which left farmers having lost their pay. This resulted in mistrust among community members
- High level of domestic commitments among women, who would be the main sellers in local retail market
- Low level of production (scaled-down) after collapse of key marketing agencies in 1990's

2.2.3. Water

Farmers in Eldoret West have sunk bore holes to provide them with water for domestic use, mini irrigation and for the cattle. The problem only arises when there is a long spell of drought and the bore holes dry up. The alternative River Sosiani, happens to criss-cross Eldoret town as it finds its way down to the larger Uasin Gishu. The river is highly defiled in town with industrial as well as domestic wastes and meanders across the district highly polluted and unfit for irrigating vegetables or animal consumption. This is a very big problem, although it only occurs in a season and the farmers who risk taking their cattle to this river must be on stand-by with private veterinary fee just in case the cattle show some symptoms of ailment. Some farmers are quite a distance from the river and by the time the cattle are brought back from the river, they are thirsty again. Those with tractors would rather collect the water and give it some sort of

treatment before watering their livestock with it.

2.2.4. Roads

The roads also pose a big challenge, especially to those farmers who must use feeder roads to get to the markets. Roads are at their worst during the rainy seasons which coincides with the heightened agricultural activities of either input acquisition and/or output sales. This problem critically affects morning milk collection. Some farmers are left with their milk when the collection lorry/tractor cannot access their farms.

In comparison to other districts that this study have been conducted in so far, (Mwingi & Rachuonyo), Eldoret West District has relatively better feeder roads. But since the district receives more rain its roads are rendered impassable for a longer time and the problem is felt more since its a district that produces a lot of produce for which transportation is needed. Heavy rains erode the roads and carry away top soil that is deposited on some sections of the road causing heavy and impassable mud.

2.2.5. High Input Prices

Farmers are also challenged by high input prices, particularly for fertilizers. Fertilizer prices skyrocketed from less than Ksh. 2,000 per 50 kg bag in early 2007 to over Ksh. 6,000 per 50 kg bag in 2008. High input prices were partly to blame for the reduced yields of maize in 2008 compared to the previous year. The government has however initiated measures aimed at making inputs more affordable and accessible by farmers. As an initial step it has initiated bulk acquisition of the inputs aimed at availing the commodities to farmers at reasonable prices. When world fertilizer prices came down the government intervention ensured that prices at private input stockists reflected the fall.

2.3. Farmer challenges as identified by other stakeholders

Stakeholders were interviewed on their view on the challenges faced by farmers. Most of these 'other stakeholders' have been farmers at one stage or the other or are in constant touch with farmers. Table 12 captures the views of other

stakeholders on what afflicts the farmer. The major problem is listed first.

The views as expressed by other stakeholders were many and diverse but they seem to almost unanimously agree on the problems of high cost of credit, poor road infrastructure and water.

The stakeholders feel that in as much as there are a number of institutions advancing credit

Table 12. Farmers Challenges; The Stakeholders Views

Input/output Stockists	Faith based organizations	Seed companies	USAID/ AMPATH Partnership	CGA	NCPB
Expensive credit facilities	Expensive credit facilities	Expensive credit facilities	Lack of capital to acquire inputs	Exploitative markets, produce matures all at once	Indebtedness of the farmer, high costs of credit
Extension: Lack of / inadequacy/ incompetence	Low technological adoption, as a result of low capital base	Irregular pricing of fuel	Lack of market, especially for soy beans	Small scale farmers not serious with farming	Poor roads
Markets, poor profit margins	Extension officers few and ineffective	Poor roads	Poor roads	Government policies: input side liberalized, output side abt restricted	High costs of farm inputs
Poor road network	Unreliable weather patterns and frequent droughts	Dependency on rain fed agriculture	Pest and diseases	Farmers over dependence in agriculture	Government failure to pay wheat farmers for the last 2 months
Water	Water problems	Lack of stability in input prices	Lack of proper storage facilities	Poor infrastructure	Over dependency on three enterprises
Deforestation	Political instabilities	Incapacitated government personnel	Lack of clean water for cattle and irrigation	Time wastages at NCPB stores and accompanying stringent measures	Poor storage facilities
	AIDS pandemic		Disappearing water catchment areas	Delayance of credit applied for.	Water problems

in the district, the interest rates charged are too high for the farmers. They also note that the procedures involved in getting these loans are very elaborate, and often the credit is disbursed later than when the farmer needed it. Interest rates ranged from 13 to 20 percent. The transaction and hidden costs that accompany these credits is an issue. Faulu¹¹ Kenya is said to insist on land title deeds when most farmers in the region do not have any. Equity also has stringent rules with its "Kilimo biashara" loans. They insist that you must have an operating account with them and the bank statement is strictly looked into in order to qualify for any loan. Farmers who do not have accounts with them are disadvantaged. Small and Medium Enterprise Programme (SMEP) and Faulu Kenya had been applauded for new innovations through which they are disbursing some of their loans to farmers. Farmers form groups and open a joint account with them that must be operational and have money in it. The individual farmers from the group are then advanced loans against the group security under a Structured Supervised Credit scheme.

The Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) is present in Eldoret. Farmers complain of AFC's elaborate procedures but the assistant branch manager, Mr Amayo Singa¹², said that all they ask for is a land title deed. He said they may need some few days to verify two or three things on it, (title deed) but that's all they ask for. AFC charges 10% per annum interests on its loans and gives farmers 6-12 months grace period (Cereals and Dairy farmers get 12 months while poultry gets six months). 'From December 2008 to February 2009, we have disbursed over Ksh. 125 million and we can project that we shall deny farmers loans to the tune of Ksh. 500 million this year, because the farmers come in large numbers for our loans and we do not have these monies to meet the high demand', he says. In the 5 months preceding the interview the dairy sector had received Ksh 12 million. AFC

disburses loans to both small and large scale farmers.

Poor feeder roads is a major concern to all agricultural stakeholders and the matter had been presented to the stakeholders' forum as well as at the District Agricultural Committee meeting. There are three types of roads in the district; national roads, which are directly under the Ministry of Roads, minor/feeder roads which are under the Ministry of Public Works and rural access roads which are under the county council. In the last DAC meeting, the DC agreed to take up the poor roads' issue with the ministry who were absent at that meeting. The stakeholders' forum chair, Mr Mapesa¹³ is also working out arrangements with the county council. The stakeholders had also sent a letter to the ministry.

Water for domestic use and irrigation was also mentioned across the different stakeholder groups. During the rainy seasons when the district is struggling with other problems, they at least enjoy the abundance of water. The problem of water mainly occurs during prolonged absence of rains and the worst affected are the cattle farmers for their cattle go without water in some instances or they have to be given the dirty unfit-for-animal consumption water from River Sosiani, or the farmer has to incur additional costs of purifying and treating the water.

The water problem has little impact on crop farmers as agriculture in the district is largely dependent on rain. "Farmers should organise themselves and come up with their own dams, because as Ministry of Water, Department of Irrigation, we are quite incapacitated. One staff in the whole district and two pick-up trucks in the whole province, one in Turkana and the other in Nanyuki, is almost insignificant and so we can do very little", says Mr Tanui¹⁴, the Eldoret West District Irrigation Officer. He is quick to add, 'whenever there is any disaster in the country, like Budalangi floods, or Ukambani famine, our

department budgets are the first to be re-allocated to mitigate such problems, leaving us sitting idle in our offices". He advises that the farmers should have their boreholes dug during drought seasons so that they can be having water all the year round, drought or no drought.

2.4. The agony of the farm input stockists'

Farm input stockists commonly referred to as the agrovets play a very indispensable part in the value chain of agricultural production. In 2007 there was an unprecedented hike in world fertilizer prices. Kenya was hit hard as it consumes 400 000 to 500 000 tons a year. At the time of price hikes and uncertain supply, there were lots of exploitative businesses practices in the fertilizer sector. A cartel of unscrupulous importers coalesced and exploited the situation, charging whatever they wished. DAP that initially sold for Ksh. 1,750 rose to Ksh. 6,200 within a span of 8 months much to the chagrin of farmers. The government felt they have to move in as a matter of urgency.

Government intervention came in form of a fertilizer subsidy. The government imported fertilizer and distributed it to farmers through NCPB outlets at subsidised rates to the delight of most farmers who felt that they were being exploited and that agricultural production and food security in the country was at risk.

Mr Andrew Tanui¹⁵ of Cheben & Sons agrovets lamented 'We were merely working for the fertilizer moguls in this country, our profit margins were smaller than before, and breaking down the cartel was the best thing the Agriculture minister has ever done. Its better for us to sell at low prices and get justifiable profits than to sell at high rates, keep away some of our customers in the process, get very small and unjustified profits while the bulk of the money goes to some few hands in the country.'

The agro-vets knew that if the farmer can get fertilizers, they'll certainly use it in their farms

and eventually go back to the agro-vets for other inputs like seeds and chemicals. That would have kept them in business. Most agro-vets therefore took the government's move to subsidize fertilizers positively as prices were already too high and only the government could salvage the situation.

A few agro-vets and input manufacturers, however, held the view that it is not the work of the government to provide inputs - subsidised or not - but to provide a conducive environment for the manufacture and subsequent distribution of the same. In a nutshell the government should stick to its regulatory role. 'Ours is a government which is used to slumbering and reacting instead of acting. They came with un-targeted subsidized maize flour through the same distribution channels and the flour did not reach many Kenyans, later they came with subsidized and un-targeted maize grains and this too never saw much of the light, this fertilizer thing is also just a matter of time', says an agro-vet who wished to remain anonymous.

Through the NCPB the government is now stocking, fertilizers, seeds from the Kenya Seed Company and agrochemicals. This has not gone down well with many stakeholders in the district - agro-vets, seed manufacturing companies as well as their chemical counterparts. Their sentiments are laid out below:

- The government is being inconsiderate and wants to create mass unemployment. 'Why should they (Government) be involved in the business even after the fertiliser prices have gone down to where they were before,' asks Mr. Elisha Kios¹⁶, the agrovets of Talam General stores in Soy Division. The agro-vets feel that the government should stick to its regulatory work and leave the commercial aspects to the other agricultural stakeholders
- The government has even gone further to stock seeds from only one seed company ignoring the others a move the other seed

companies and agro-vets feel is unfair. "The government gave us licence to market our seeds but it does not give us a level playing ground. Why stock seeds from one company in almost all the NCPB outlets and leave others driving us and the agro-vets out of business?" ponders Mr James Osore¹⁷, the commercial farmers' representative of PANNAR seed. The agro-vets and other stakeholders also point out a case of NAAIAP where the IDPs and other vulnerable people in the society were given free inputs bought by the government. All the seeds were procured from the Kenya Seed Company and Mr Osore says they were not even consulted as to whether they wanted to participate in the exercise.

- The government's intentions of making NCPB a one-stop-shop for the farmer has not gone down well with other stakeholders. 'With the NCPB stocking from fertilizer to seeds and chemicals, what is left for us to sell to the farmers,' asks Mr Andrew Tanui¹⁸ of Cheben and Sons agro-vets, Maili-nne centre. 'We make most sales at the onset of the season like now but as you can see, you've been with me here for the last half an hour and no customer has showed up, reason being that they get everything from the NCPB. Now tell me, when are we going to do business and what future is there for us,' asks Mr Mwangi¹⁹ of Farmcare agro-vets.
- The agro-vets have faulted the distribution channels of these government subsidised fertilizers. Seeds and chemicals are not subsidized and this is purely a business between the Kenya Seed Company and the NCPB. The NCPB takes the profits accrued from the sales of seeds and chemicals. For a farmer to get the government subsidised fertilizer, an application is made to the Ministry of Agriculture Location Extension Officer (LEO). The LEO certifies that the

farmer has the number of quoted acres and deserves this number of bags of fertilizer. The application is then taken to either the district or the division, depending on proximity, for the final authentication. Once signed, the farmer goes to the NCPB to pay for and collect the fertilizer. It is this elaborate procedure and its vulnerability to corruption that the agro-vets are crying foul of. Indeed one of the NCPB's managers in the north rift is reported seeing corruption going on in the distribution channel. He faults the Ministry of Agriculture for signing untrue application forms for fertilizer. 'Ours is to receive the signed application and money and disburse the fertilizer, but we can see the fertilizer going to the wrong hands. We have raised this issue with the ministry concerned,' he said. The agro-vets say that they understand the farmers so well and their tendency is to wait till the last minute (when rains start) to come and scramble for inputs. At that stage, they feel the NCPB's lean personnel will not be able to handle the flood of customers and most farmers will be time-barred.

Apart from the agro-vets' problems with the Government's interventions, some two albeit general problems afflicting both input and output stockists are worth mentioning here;

- Since Eldoret West is a very high potential area for agriculture, there are many stakeholders coming in with various kinds of technologies. In the absence of proper regulation, the end result is a very confused farmer who knows not what to do. Every stakeholder says something different from the other, and summarises with the words 'ours is the best', the same four words which will be used by another dealer. The agro-vets have rough time trying to convince the farmer that his is what has been tested and has stood the test of time, when the farmer comes in with the closed mentality that what

he was told is the best. This problem also afflicts input buyers because they use chemicals to store the inputs with and every manufacturer says theirs is the best. 'We have a big problem with the weevil, commonly known as 'osama', many people from various companies have cheated us that this is the best for osama, or that is not good, use this and what had been portrayed to be the best has most of the times turned out to be worse or just below the expectations', says Mrs Chepkwony²⁰ of Eldoret Municipal market.

The district is very busy in terms agricultural activities, with a lot of meetings, seminars, conferences, and barazas. Many agro-vets concurred that the excessive meetings have been to the detriment of their businesses. They are calling for the Ministry of Agriculture to play a proper coordination role, so that some of these meetings can be lumped together to avoid duplication and wastage of time. The Ministries themselves were reported to have the same problem with Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Livestock Development calling for meetings on the same day, at the same time with the same farmers and agro-vets.

3. The Ministry Of Agriculture In Eldoret West

3.1 Performance Of The Ministry Over Time

Kenya has witnessed the emergence and disappearance of various ministries in the agricultural sector but the name - Ministry of Agriculture - has stood the test of time even as the roles and portfolios within it have evolved over time. MoA has given birth to various ministries along the way and for us to understand how the sector has performed over time, what happened at what stage, and how farmers and farming in general has evolved, special attention was given to understanding the evolution of the ministry over time. This section delves into the evolution

of the agricultural sector in the district through interactions with four focus groups. Each group consisted of 4-7 farmers with at least two of the farmers being old or very old who could give a historical perspective from the pre-independence era through to the present day.

Discussions were interesting and at times highly politicised in some groups. Most of the past era was dominated by the rule of retired President Moi, who is a tribe's mate to the Eldoret West people. Those who liked him (Moi) gave his era a clean bill-of-health, agriculturally. Eventually the groups were able to settle down and agree on the issues. Tactful facilitation was key to the process. Each group set their own time periods with the starting point depending on how far back group members could recall.

The table below details how the agricultural sector has evolved over time. Time periods and responses have been presented as given by the various groups' participants.

Performance of the sector has been characterised by ups and downs. It was very interesting to note how the moods of the farmers kept changing from one period of intense activities and booming agriculture to one of slump – particularly the 1990's when agriculture performed at the worst level in the history of the country. Group members remembered the slump periods better than the good times.

The Guaranteed Minimum return - GMR – scheme must have been one of the best things President Kenyatta gave to farmers. Most of the farmers agreed that it was a timely move and since then, farmers have known the importance of credit in any business especially those, like farming, with the high risks and uncertainties. Apart from the 1990's when every corner of the country felt the pinch of mismanagement of government resources and eventual collapse of key institutions, the larger Uasin Gishu district has been performing well in agriculture over the years. We were left with the impression that with appropriate government involvement, well

Table 13: Evolution of Agriculture in the District.

Time periods	Maili Nne	Sugoi	Sirikwa	Chepsaita
1954-1963	Complete absence of fertilizers All crops mentioned and livestock were doing so well Low population, low consumption rates			
1964-1976	Fertilizers introduced Guaranteed Minimum return (GMR) scheme introduced, loans for ploughing, fertilizers and seeds Extension agents very strong, farmers taken to FTC for trainings, tractors for cheap hire readily available and agric production soared.	GMR schemes introduced. Crop assessed at harvest. Insurance against crop failure encouraged even the lazy farmers. Extension officers present, even white ones. Crops as well as livestock did well, plenty of food for the country and for export.	GMR available to farmers but we did not like it. Farms were very big, 10 acres and above. Tractors, fertilizers available, ox-ploughs were very minimal. We could not see any agricultural extension officers, we only knew division officer under the presidents office.	Kenyatta gave out our land to outsiders, Tapsagoi and Ngenyilel settlement scheme. MoA personnel not seen, planting without or with only manure, fertilizers not yet seen. No hybrid seeds. Guaranteed minimum insurance scheme availed to farmers and the sector did well.
1977- mid 78	Extension efforts dwindled-retirements without keen-ness in replacements. Production sunk a little-bit. GMR loans stopped. Kenyatta popularised his slogan of 'nyakua', meaning, grab. Coffee bought from Uganda and sold to KPCU at lower rates accruing huge profits, this being the biggest scandal in Kenyatta regime	GMR scheme ceased because farmers abused it (expecting to be insured but putting less interest in the farms). Societies sprung up, lending to farmers. Production stagnated, if not going down for sometimes due to absence of minimum guaranteed return. Livestock continued with its upward trend and KCC was doing very good.	One extension officer present. He did well in visiting farms and advising people on good husbandry. Production for milk and cereals very high	GMR loans erased due to mismanagement, but the sector moved on with some small societies taking the role of crediting farmers. Extension officers used to train us and visit afterwards.

Time periods	Mali Nne	Sugoi	Sirikwa	Chepsaita
Late 78-88	Moi took over power. Brought AFC, to provide loans to farmers, we bought tractors. 10% increment in MoA personnel. Food production went up again	AFC came in to light to help farmers who were getting disillusioned with their core business. Moi took over power after Kenyatta's death. Livestock, esp dairy did so well, Moi introduced free milk feeding programme to all primary schools in the country.	Moi took over and brought us some goodies. Loan facilities, tractors, fertilizers and extension agents. Marketing of milk and cereals made better by the KCC and NCPB. Agricultural sector was very vibrant. AFC did well with farmers.	Moi took over power and the sector moved well in the initial stages. Agriculture personnel worked so hard, production of milk and cereals went very high and NCPB used to have collection points even in the villages.
1989-2002	General economy fell, major marketing agencies and cooperative societies went under. KFA fell, then KGGCU came. We got stranded with our milk and production of crops and livestock took a nose-dive. Food available but marketable surplus significantly dropped. Extension flopped, agriculture and Veterinary people disappeared. Moi said he had money for only three Ministries, education, defence and health. This was an era of Kenya's economic meltdown.	To transport maize, one had to get a permit from Maize and Produce Board. Farmers failed to service loans from the societies and societies could not pay the government, eventually they all went under. Most if not all government parastatals aimed at helping the farmer went under, and the one of KCC hit us hard. Extension services almost went under as well, their presence unfelt and the sector took a steep down fall largely because of; a) lack of credit, b) lack of extension, c) lack of gov't commitment. Serious market failures	Loan defaulters brought down AFC. KCC as well as KMC went down. The whole agricultural sector came to its knees. Moi came to issue title deeds and declared Soy to be a division headquarters. We started seeing a number of extension agents. Farm yard manure taught and incorporated vastly.	Moi messed the economy, all major agricultural companies/parastatals went under. The farmers was left to stand alone, no credit, no marketing agencies like KCC and no much presence of extension work. Most of us lost hope and got in to other business.

Time periods	Maili Nne	Sugoi	Sirikwa	Chepsaita
2003-2007	NARC government took over. Many parastatals revived, notably KCC, KMC & Kenya Seed Company. Extension services low but picked up. Agriculture on an upward trend after a long slump, but fertilizer rates went over the roofs	End of Nyayo era, NARC took over power. NARC introduced flexible credit scheme, kshs 11,000 for an acre put to use, interest at 10%pa. KCC revived and our milk marketing woes solved. Forming a society became so difficult due to mistrust as a result of their previous meltdown/ embezzlement	The effects of 1990's felt even in this era. Most farmers had drastically reduced their farming efforts i.e. dairy cows reduced as well as acreage under crops. New gov't took over, MoA and MoLD officers really worked in this area, they became like our brothers and sisters. Acreage under crops increased and with the New KCC coming in to the picture, Dairy production went on a high gear. The sector breathed a sigh of relief once again	Farmers still less enthusiastic with farming. NARC did well and revived most of what went down, KCC, AFC and KMC. This motivated us and we went back to farms. Extension officers were side by side with us and that too gave us more strength. The sector went back to the old good days.
2008 to present	Coalition Gov't took over. Food production nose-dived again due to many reasons; PEV, high costs of fertilizers, too much rains. Gov't subsidised fertilizer and NCPB took over roles played by the private sector	Very rocky start to the grand coalition government. Post election violence, high cost of fertilizers, heavy rains, ensured that we harvested very little. Prices of our produce went high but we got no much profit as the cost of producing was also very high. The gov't subsidised fert, a good move because the agrovets have been exploiting us for long time.	Fragmentation of the sector ministries. Agriculture doing well, fertilizer prices prohibitive in 07 and most part of 08. Farmers got the highest prices ever for their maize and wheat produce. Milk prices did not change and extension services vibrant. All we need is rain or less dependency on it and we are home and dry.	Coalition gov't good in planning but poor in implementation. Some positives in the sector; subsidising fert, prices, good purchase prices ever of maize and wheat. Extension officers present but not very effective, just resting in the offices in the name of demand driven approach.

Sirikwa group was sourced through MoA, Soy Division, and the rest were independently sourced.

organised extension and research, and with affordable fertilizer and other inputs, the up scaling of irrigation facilities and eventual adoption of horticultural crops, Eldoret West will have the capacity to significantly contribute to the country's food basket.

3.2. Interactions Of The Ministry with Other Key Stakeholders

Eldoret West enjoys a robust clustering of stakeholders who at any given time are almost all engaged in one activity or the other. Surprisingly though this district, unlike others we've studied before, has very limited NGO presence. This may be as a result of the strong stakeholders forum that deals effectively with the problems and issues farmers may have in their farming activities. Farmers feel that it is a blessing that they have a large family of stakeholders that looks into their activities along the value chain. However, they lament of the lack of coordination which they feel should come from the Ministry of Agriculture. This chapter looks in to how MoA coordinates with other players in the sector in terms of planning, capacity building and implementation.

The table below indicates different stakeholders in the district and how MoA interacts with them.

MoA enjoys a large number of stakeholders in the district that, when properly coordinated, can bring a noticeable change over time. The stakeholders are so many that some farmers feel that soon MoA will have delegated all its duties to the others to do and assume only the coordination role. This suggestion did not go down well with many in the district who felt that whatever happens in the future, MoA must always perform its duties as stipulated and must always lead from the front.

The activities of faith based organizations are a clear example of how the roles of Ministry of Agriculture are being performed by others. The Catholic and Anglican churches are doing

extension services in the district and mainly cover areas where government extension officers are few or have the history of being ineffective. AMPATH, CGA and KENFAP also help farmers in various ways, in terms of marketing, input acquisition, credit and general extension services. Agro-vets also play an important role. We observed that the agro-vets in the district are more qualified, aggressive and out-going than the ones met while studying Rachuonyo and Mwingi districts. There were no reported cases of agro-vets dispensing wrong drugs or of them misleading the farmers. The only problem reported was that of each supplier insisting their products were the best while the agro-vets knew otherwise. Agro-vets try to minimise such confusion by only actively promoting what they have tested or seen working well in the area.

Ministry of Agriculture does coordination of the district activities through various platforms. Apart from organising joint field days, trainings and capacity building, two other bodies offer avenues for discussing, planning and coordinating matters related to agriculture in the district. The two bodies are discussed below;

1) Forum for Agricultural Stakeholders

This body brings together all the agricultural stakeholders in the district. It discusses agricultural matters and has the DAO, and other agricultural sector ministries as members. The Forum for Agricultural Stakeholders in Eldoret West district is the equivalent of the District Stakeholders Forum in Rachuonyo and Mwingi. Unlike other districts in Eldoret West district, it is called the Forum for Agricultural stakeholders. The word district is conspicuously absent as it is also active at the divisional level. This forum has 4 scheduled meetings in a year for both district and division though the number of meetings may increase according to the emergence of urgent issues necessitating quick

Table 14. Ministry of Agriculture Interface with Other Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Interface with MoA	Nature of interaction
Government Ministries and Parastatals		
Ministry of Livestock Development	NALEP/SIDA activities. Activities: capacity building in the focal areas. Monitoring and evaluation done jointly. General implementation of the NALEP/SIDA done jointly. NMK Programme, facilitated by MoA but jointly trains farmers. Field days organized and facilitated jointly Meet at the stakeholders forum as well as in the DAC	Vehicles, motorbikes and technical expertise shared across board. NALEP coordinator is the MoA's M&E officer and serves MoLD as well.
Ministry of Fisheries Development	Implementation of NALEP activities. Capacity building with farmers. Demonstrations where there are crops and fish ponds.	Joint budgeting for the programme. Sharing of resources and information. Sharing technical expertise.
Ministry of Cooperative Development	Implementation of NALEP/SIDA activities. Stakeholders' forum meetings and DAC. Field days and Demonstrations. Organising farmers in to groups for the sake of collective bargaining and marketing	Sharing of resources like vehicles and technical expertise. Joint meetings for dealing with the marketing problems of the farmer and sharing work experiences from different parts of the district
Ministry of Water, Department of Irrigation	Joint field exhibitions where farmers are trained in water harvesting technologies and how to start and operate small irrigation schemes. Mostly MoA provide vehicles and personnel because there is only one Irrigation person in the district. Meetings at the Stakeholders Forum and DAC	Sharing vehicles (very rare occasions), stationeries and human labour.
B) Parastatals		
Horticultural Crop Development Authority	Joint trainings where farmers are trained on agronomy. Liaising for the market and marketing option acquisition	Sharing of ideas, experiences, and personnel
National Cereals and Produce Board	Joint trainings on required quality of produce accepted at the NCPB. Joint distribution of government subsidised fertilizer. Field days, Stakeholders forum and DAC.	Sharing ideas, stationeries, personnel and vehicles on rear occasions

C) Non Governmental Organisations		
AMPATH	Joint trainings on child headed families. Identification of vulnerable lot and MoA distributes inputs to them	Sharing vehicles and personnel
Agro-vets	Joint trainings to farmers on good crop husbandry, new technologies and on new products getting in to the market. Meeting at the stakeholders forum and joint field days	Sharing ideas, vehicles, and personnel.
Cereal Growers Association (CGA)	With MoA crops officer, CGA does joint trainings on cereal growing. Joint efforts on getting market for the farmers and post harvest handling trainings. Lobbying thru' MoA for reduction of high costed farm inputs, i.e fertilizer	Sharing information, stationary and personnel
Kenya National Federation of Agricultural Producers (KENFAP)	Joint field days, meetings at the stakeholders forum and DAC levels	Sharing information
D) Faith Based Organizations		
Catholic Relief Services(CRS) Catholic church	Joint provision of extension services, provision of inputs to vulnerable persons and joint efforts at eliminating hunger in the district.	Sharing information, facilitation of MoA personnel with lunches and sharing of vehicles.
Christian Community Services (CCS), Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK)	Joint provision of extension services, joint capacity buildings and provision of free farm inputs to the poorest persons in the community.	Sharing of information, vehicles and facilitation of MoA personnel

redress. Sometimes, however, even the 4 times are not met due to financial constraints at the MoA that facilitates it. The forum is registered and has an operational bank account. According to Mr Chelule²¹, the Turbo Division stakeholders' forum chair, the body discusses amongst others;

- Farm inputs, their acquisition and subsidisation by the government or just the reduction in their prices
- Education of farmers
- Market issues – less so than in the past as markets are liberalized
- The issues to be included in the next budget

- New emerging agricultural activities
- The general and pertinent issues surrounding farmers and farming including credit and its cost implications
- And how the body can self sustain itself when and if the government withdraws its funding.

'What are discussed in the forum are largely implemented particularly those that are within the stakeholders jurisdiction', says Mr Mapesa²², the Forum for Agriculture Stakeholders chair at the district level. One of the issues that they could not solve within the forum but that the relevant forces are working on is that farmers cannot pay the AFC loans in time to avoid

accumulating interests on their loans just because the NCPB does not pay farmers their dues in time. This matter drew heated debate in the forum and at the time of this study, NCPB was increasingly putting its house in order and was paying maize farmers in under 24 hours. “We have streamlined our operations and we are currently paying our maize farmers in under 24 hours, and if a farmer delivers his/her produce in the morning, he or she is able to walk away with the cheque as from 3pm the same day”, says Mr Jonah Marindich²³, the NCPB North Rift regional Manager. This being a clear indication how strong and effective this forum is in addressing the farmers’ issues articulately and persistently until a matter is exhaustively or almost exhaustively solved.

The forum needs to work even harder to ensure that the same is applied to the wheat farmers who the NCPB owes over 5 million shillings for wheat delivered in the previous two months. These farmers are unable to service their AFC loans because the NCPB cannot pay them promptly. “The government should act with speed to pay all farmers within 24 hours to increase their loan repayment”, says Mr Marindich.

According to Mr Mapesa and Mr Chelule²⁴, the forum suffers from :

- **Funds:** The forum lacks adequate funds to run itself efficiently and effectively. Every member gets Ksh. 100, (\$1.50) per sitting to cover lunch and transport. Lack of funds act as a disincentive and most members don’t attend regularly.
- **Problems on Youth Fund:** The forum has been trying – unsuccessfully- to get a share of the youth fund to cater for the youths who have persistently shown interest in agriculture. The matter has been presented to the DAC, and the DC and DAO are pursuing

it with the MoA and the relevant authority concerned.

- **Qualification:** The forum lacks those who are properly trained in agriculture and can handle some of the problems the farmers face. “We are not trained in agriculture, but only elected through NALEP, and this poses a major obstacle in handling some of the technical issues in the forum”, says Mr Chelule.

The ASF is a very strong well constituted and organized body in the district. In such a high potential agricultural district, only a very competent forum would be able to sort out farmer problems and chart a proper and all inclusive development agenda for all the stakeholders in the district. The forum follows up to every issue discussed to ensure that what was discussed and passed is implemented. One of the cases they pointed out to illustrate this was when farmers had difficulties servicing their loans simply because the NCPB was slow in paying farmers their dues after delivering cereals to them. ASF also enjoys strong support from the Ministry of Agriculture which supports them financially and even logistically with a vehicle in times of need.

The forum draws its membership largely outside the ministries, i.e. farmers, input stockiest, NGO’s, and CBO’s unlike the District Agricultural Committee, DAC, which has its members drawn largely from the agricultural sector ministries plus a few farmer representatives. ASF plans and prioritizes their issues and presents to the DAC for proper planning and coordination in the district. ASF also organizes what is called a Stakeholder Field Day which is almost equivalent of farmer field day from the Ministry’s side. The forum brings together all those who have stake in the agricultural field, organises them and ensures that issues affecting the sector get the commensurate redress.

2) District Agricultural Committee, DAC

This is a gazetted policy body within the district which offers a cohesive platform for various stakeholders to air their agricultural views as well as to plan, coordinate and collaborate in implementing agricultural activities within the district. Eldoret West has the district level and location level DAC. Sub-DAC is the term given to the location level and it is headed by the DO, (Divisional officer, from the Office of the President). The DAC members are:

- District Commissioner (Chair)
- DAO (Secretary)
- District Livestock Production Officer (Member)
- District Veterinary Officer
- District Cooperative Officer
- All the sub-DAC officials
- All the divisional extension officers
- All farmer group representatives
- Any other person/officer or group the committee may deem relevant from time to time.

DAC looks at policy issues right from the grassroots level and feeds the information upward to the national level where policies are formulated. DAC also acts as a platform where different ministries meet to plan and organise their activities. DAC is seen as the forum for addressing stakeholder problems emanating from the ASF. At the time of this study, the DAC was looking into the matter of poor feeder roads. It was the onset of a cropping season and Eldoret expected heavy rains. The roads are known to be a menace during such wet seasons and this matter had been discussed and left in the hands of the DC to take it up with the Municipal Council of Eldoret, Ministry of Works and Ministry of Roads. “We are very optimistic that the roads will be graded before the rains start”, said DAO Mrs Grace Kirui²⁵.

3.3. Emerging Role of The Ministry In the District

This section looks at the roles the sector ministries, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, play in achieving the sector mission. Performance of the sector is, in part, a reflection on how well the roles and duties of the Ministries are carried out and whether those roles are the right ones. Stakeholders interviewed feel that the roles undertaken by Ministry of Agriculture are in line with its policy objectives of creation of employment, raising household incomes and ensuring food and nutritional security.

At the district level, the district Subject Matter Specialists (SMS) together with their division counterparts set their own objectives in line with the national objectives of the ministry. Work-plans are prepared by the District SMS’ after receiving the same from the relevant officer in the division. The SMS’ present their work plan to the DAO who may add or remove activities in the plan. Once everything is agreed the DAO presents the work-plan at the Provincial level to the provincial Monitoring and Evaluation officer and his team, discuss and agree upon it. Most of the times, their work-plans are slashed down, the ceilings (although not final) are disseminated to them.

The Ministry at the district level feels that they carry out their duties according to the national service charter, however they say that much of the work they do as extension agents are never pre-planned. What they sign for in the performance contract is just a small fraction of what they actually do on the ground.

Eldoret West district enjoys strong presence of MoA personnel across the district, and extension provision, largely seen as information dissemination is adequately administered, unlike other sector ministries which have very lean personnel and vehicles. Stakeholders feel the biggest role MoA needs to concentrate on is the role of planning and coordination. The presence of hardworking farmers and other

stakeholders calls for proper planning and coordination otherwise their complaints will still reign the air.

Most of the stakeholders interviewed feel that MoA needs to do more for agriculture to regain its lost glory of the 1990's. Stakeholders feel that MoA needs to change its policies of recruitment and bring more people to the ground than the offices. Mr Chelagat²⁶, a former area councillor and a farmer from Soy division wants more officers posted on the grounds unlike it is now. He believes that Nairobi/Kilimo house has more employees than any other place yet no form of farming happens there. Farmers feel that as it is now, too many officers are in the offices, some of whom have become irrelevant over-time and should either be dispensed with or redeployed in other capacities. In a nutshell, there exists discrepancies between the roles/duties written on the service charter and the actual duties performed by the Ministry at the district.

3.4. Strengths and Weaknesses of The Ministry of Agriculture.

Like any other Ministry, MoA also suffers from a number of limitations in its efforts to deliver on its mandate. Overtime some of the constraints are being sorted out with other stakeholders and the private sector assuming some of the roles that were initially the work of the Ministry. MoA being the parent Ministry to all agricultural sector ministries is taken to be the chief coordinator of the sector and as such its limitations adversely affects the whole sector. The ministry receives more funding than any other sector ministry and has the largest number of personnel at all levels from the headquarters down to the locational level. It has been employing, albeit in very small numbers, and has large bargaining power with any donor money coming into the country for the agricultural sector, a fact that does not go down well with the other sector ministries. "Ministry of Agriculture should change its name to that of Crops Development,

to allow a level playing ground to all", said Mr Langat²⁷, the District Livestock Production Officer.

MoA runs three donor funded projects and the GOK funded Njaa Marufuku in the district:

- NALEP/SIDA, MoA runs the Swedish supported National Agriculture, Livestock Extension Programme. NALEP has the focal approach system and focuses in a location for a year before moving to another. So far 18 locations have been attended to since its inception in the district.
- IFAD funds livestock, agriculture and fisheries development. It largely does capacity building and provides extension services.
- Commercialization of small holder dairy programme
- Njaa Marufuku Kenya

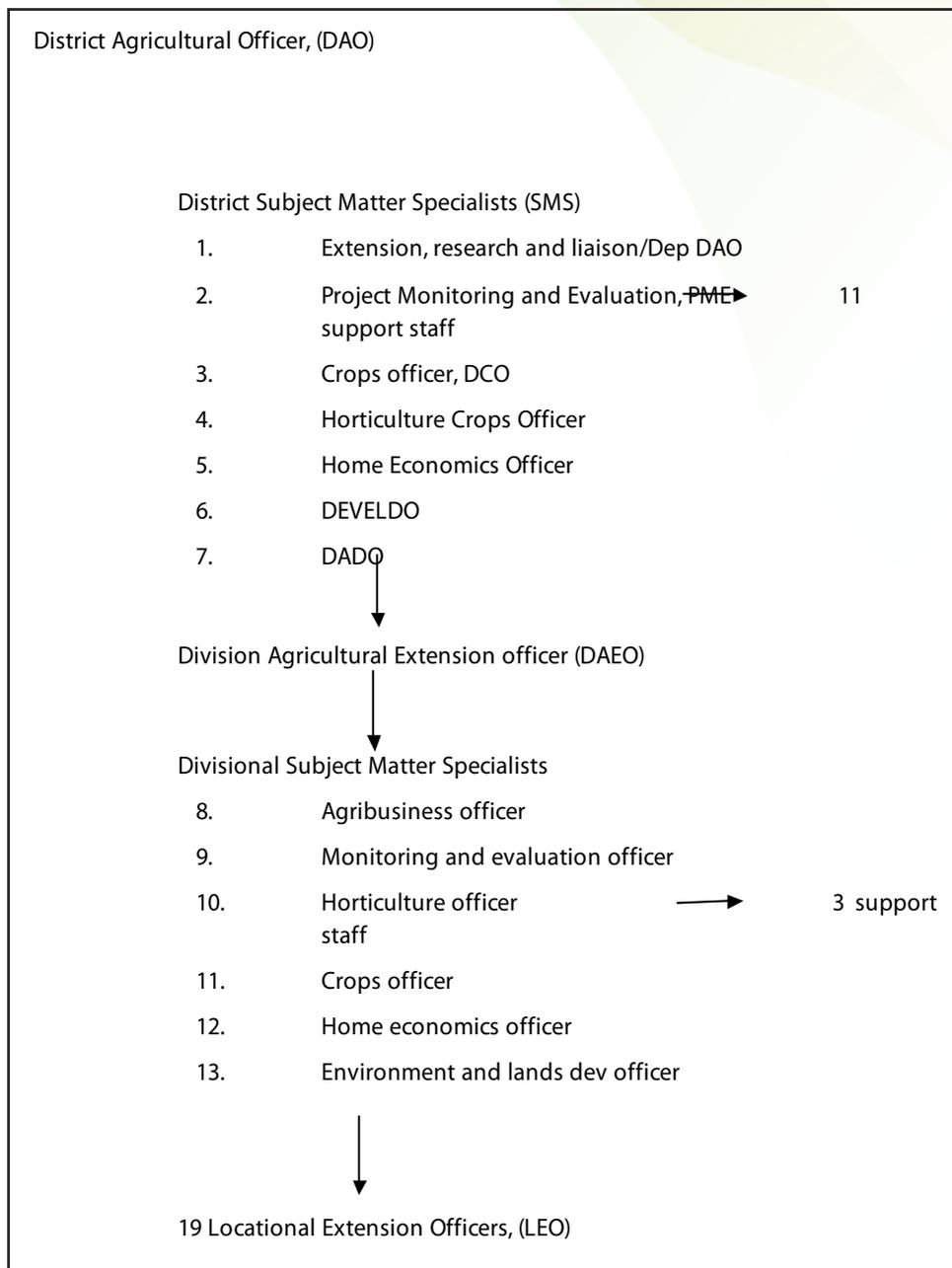
3.4.1. Human Capacity

MoA in Eldoret West district has 43 technical staff and 14 support staff. According to the DAO, Mrs Grace Kirui²⁸, there used to be over 200 technical staff in the larger Uasin Gishu district until 2006 when a major staff re-distribution (popularly referred to as tsunami) took place and the larger district lost 54 of its technical staff. 7 subject matter specialists (excluding DAO) are based at the district while the rest are spread in the two divisions of Turbo and Soy.

Figure 15 illustrates the organizational structure of Ministry of Agriculture in Eldoret West District.

Eldoret West is well staffed. It may be a very high potential area, agriculture-wise, that may require additional staff but at least all the divisions and the locations are manned. The fact that of its 17 locations two are manned by four LEO's is an indication of a well staffed district. Most of the implementation work in the district is done well because the personnel are available at both the division and location level. Most stakeholders feel that MoA staffs in the district are adequate given the vibrant stakeholders

Fig 15. The organisational structure of MoA in Eldoret West district



forum and the demand driven approach where a farmer in need of a service demands for it.

Concern is expressed about the coordination and planning aspects. Asked who they feel should be spearheading the coordination and planning concerns, Mr Marogos Sambai²⁹ a farmer from Sugoi location said that this must be led by the government and specifically the Ministry of Agriculture as they have enough personnel, the will and the incentive to do so. Mr Sambai is a medium class farmer by Eldoret West standards. He says that in the old days they used to see one extension officer after a very long time and their farming used to do better, so to him it's not even about the number of staff, but about how the system is coordinated and effected so that every stakeholder knows what is lacking and who can fill the gap.

Another school of thought feels that the number of staff is few but could be effective if their bosses feel so. The agro-vets feel that the staff numbers are adequate for the Ministry of Agriculture; they only have to be properly equipped with motorbikes and vehicles to be more effective. 'Eldoret West receives a lot of rainfall, it becomes so wet and it can rain for two and a half days non-stop. This means that an officer with or without motorbike cannot go out to work. Even with a vehicle and these poor roads, who wants to be stuck in mud', asks Dr. Kiptanui³⁰ of Baitany agro-vets. This implies that a cross sectoral approach needs to be adopted to improve the state of the roads in the district to enable extension officers reach the farmers and for the produce to reach the market.

Apart from the personnel that appear to be adequate, the two divisions of Eldoret West have other problems to cope with. Both divisions have just one vehicle each, both of which are in class B i.e. prone to break down regularly and they spend much of their time in the garages being repaired rather than doing government duties. Each division has two motorbikes from the NALEP programme that are in good

condition. But two motorbikes cannot meet the needs of 6 to 9 officers in the division. NALEP does not allow their motorbikes to have a passenger.

Turbo division enjoys a very modern spacious and well aired office complex with modern telephone facilities, electricity and a well tarmacked road. Soy division is a different story with dilapidated wooden offices with all the officers cramped in one room. One big table occupies the centre and every officer finds a small space to it. Neither division has a computer and all records are just in papers. Soy is the more productive division with large maize, wheat and dairy farms as shown in Table 1.

3.4.2. Location Extension Officer's Work Itinerary

The Location Extension Officer (LEO) in Eldoret West is what other regions call Frontline Extension Worker (FEW). They are the last in line as per the provision of extension services are concerned and are found at the locational levels. According to Mr Boinnet³¹, the DAEO Turbo, his staff is currently expected to visit 300 farmers in a month against the initial expectation of 100 per month which he says was practical. All the divisions and district Subject Matter Specialists plus other development partners depend on the LEO's for implementation of various programmes. It is against this background that we felt the need to analyse how this officer allocates his/her time to different duties within the week.

The LEOs have a timetable which they try to adhere to the whole week unless other things come up and deviates their attention. Normally such deviations have to be ratified by the DAEO. Each LEO submits his/her report detailing how he/she performed over the week to their respective DAEO's. For Sally Busienei and Paul Tera³² of Tapsagoi and Kaptebee locations respectively, their schedules are almost similar. Their week plan goes as below;

Monday

Visit farmers in at least two villages. The intention of such visits are to fulfil the demand driven approach, farmers who have demanded the service either through barazas and or phone calls or have made requests through the offices are attended to on this day. On an average day 3 farmers who demand services are attended to. On their way to visit these farmers they also attend to up to another 5 impromptu farm visits.

Tuesday

Put up information desk in Turbo market. The LEOs erect a make-shift information desk to disseminate information to farmers especially on market prices (recommended) as well as taking their request for attention like farm visits. On average they attend to 10 farmers, 8 of whom may need follow up farm visits.

Wednesday

The morning is used for visiting farmers groups in two different but adjacent villages. These may either be routine or scheduled rostered visits. In each farmer group, the LEO attends to between 8 and 15 farmers. The afternoon is spent at the area chief's office. Having been informed of the day, farmers come to the meeting knowing that the LEO will be there at that time to attend to their needs. There is a book at the chiefs office in which farmers write their problems and leave contacts so that when the LEO comes on this day he/she can attend to or sit down with the chief and organise for a baraza. During peak farming seasons, 12 or more farmers could be attended to.

Thursday

The issues raised on Tuesday's information desk and Wednesday at the Chiefs' office are addressed. It is usually a very busy day for the LEO's being that these farmers to be attended to may all be coming from different villages wide apart. 'If there is a day we need a motorbike seriously, it is this day', says Sally Busienei.

Friday

This day is used partly in the field and partly in the office. The morning part is used for visiting the other two villages either on routine or rostered basis. These villages must be different from the ones visited on Monday. Any issue that needs further consultation is suspended till the next Monday with the LEO having an opportunity of discussing with the colleagues and/or the DAEO. The afternoon is used for compiling reports that are submitted to the respective SMSs or DAEO.

It's important to note that some of the duties are not in the weeks' itinerary because they need some medium- term planning. Field days, Demonstrations, Barazas, Stakeholders forum, engagement with other development partners etc are conspicuously missing. But these as we were told may be done fortnightly with field days bringing together about 40-50 farmers. The number may increase to about 70 or more if there are freebies. Demonstrations pull about the same number, averaging 50 while barazas, if well publicised gathers about 30 farmers. The stakeholders forum at the divisional level brings together about 30-40 farmers.

On average these LEOs meet and attend to about 250 to 300 farmers in a month, contrary to Mr Boinnet's earlier assertions. Average for Monday is 8, Tuesday 10, Wednesday 28, Thursday 11 (half the sum of Tues and Wed) and then Friday is 4 (being half day, we divide into two what is achieved on Monday) and the result is 61 farmers in a week, we multiply that with 4 weeks and we get 244. We also gathered that in a slump month, at least two of the unscheduled activities takes place. If for example there is a field day and a baraza, the LEO gets a chance to interact with over 70 farmers and that gives us a total of 314 farmers.

Contrast this with the Ministry of Livestock. "Our staffs are so few and therefore we reach very few farmers", says Mr Levy Liona³³, the Turbo Divisional Livestock Extension Officer,

from the Ministry of Livestock Development. He said his staff, including him, manage to see only about 50 farmers a month with 8 to 10 farmers attended to every week. He estimates that about half of their time is taken with routine visits; roughly a quarter is spent responding to “demands” for assistance from individual farmers, farmer groups and institutions. The remainder of the time they are grounded.

In Soy division, the situation is a little different. Looking at a week as a whole, Mrs Priscillah Mutai³⁴, an LEO in Sirikwa location, allocates 20% of her time to demanded services. These services are given more priority than any other. These demands could be coming from an individual farmer or farmer groups or an institution. 40% of her time is consumed in barazas while 20% is taken up by field days. Routine visits take 10% and the other 10% is consumed by other duties in the office or lack of facilitation forces them to be idle.

3.4.3. Trends In Workload

According to Mrs Sally Busienei³⁵, (LEO Tapsagoi location, Turbo division), the number of farmers they are expected to see has been on the rise ever since she got employed with the ministry in 1997. During those days, she says, performance contracts were not there and even if your boss gave out some targets, they were not monitored to the letter. “When I got this job, I used to see not more than 10 farmers per month. The demand driven approach was yet to be introduced and unless we went out to look for these farmers, no one demanded our services”, says Sally who has worked with MoA for over 10 years. “From 10 farmers or less in 1997 and slightly over 10 years later I am expected to see 300 farmers, with no proper incentives, it’s not easy”, she laments. She attributes these increasing trends to the emerging challenges. She says in those days when she started working with the ministry, the in thing was just maize and dairy. Now everyone wants to try everything and

diversification is taking centre stage and as a result more and more farmers are seeking professional help from the ministry. Even that aside, she says, the population has grown and the number of MoA personnel are not increasing and that increases the work load.

Her counterpart Mr Tera³⁶, interviewed separately said that in 1998 (a year after Sally had started working), when he was employed he could only attend to 150 farmers in a year, that translates to just under 13 farmers per month. He recalls that in 2005 he was attending to 100 farmers per month and the number grew to 150 in early 2006. ‘The target ballooned in late 2006 when the performance contract became operational but the good thing too was that we were added some motorbikes’, says he. He is now expected to meet and attend to 300 farmers per month though he says sometimes he falls short with at most 70 farmers.

Mr Levy Liona³⁷, the Turbo divisional livestock extension officer differs with his counterparts and believes that the increase in work is very justifiable and not so hard to achieve, especially if and when the government puts in some little efforts in bettering terms of service. He says in the 1990’s there were few barazas, very minimal field days and demonstrations, no stakeholders’ forum. Today these platforms offer one of the best chances for an officer to meet and address many farmers at once allowing performance oriented LEOs to meet their targets.

Mr Liona’s sentiments are echoed by Mr Peter Chirchir³⁸, a LEO in Segero location of Soy division who feels that the era of walking aimlessly in the farms looking for farmers ended with the adoption of the demand driven approach. He believes that his colleagues should be able to do a better job with this approach; however he says that the farmers need to know of their right to demand for a service at the office. ‘Unless the farmers adopt this approach fully, any officer will assume that his clients are fine and stay in the office. Sensitization of the farmers and

proper government facilitation will see this sector grow to new heights', Mr Chirchir explained. Mr Chirchir spends 20% of his time attending to individual farmers with 3 quarters of it being routine and just a quarter being demanded, 10% of his time goes to groups and trainings gets a similar percentage. He spends 15% of his time in a week in the NALEP's focal area, 33% in chief's barazas and the last 12% doing office work or grounded due to lack of facilitation. The routine visits are diminishing and instead demanded visits are taking over. The LEO's are quite excited with this approach as they say that when a service is demanded for, you attend to someone who already has an interest in something unlike routine visits that you talk to a farmer on horticulture yet he is only interested in cereals.

3.5. Budgeting and Financial Constraints

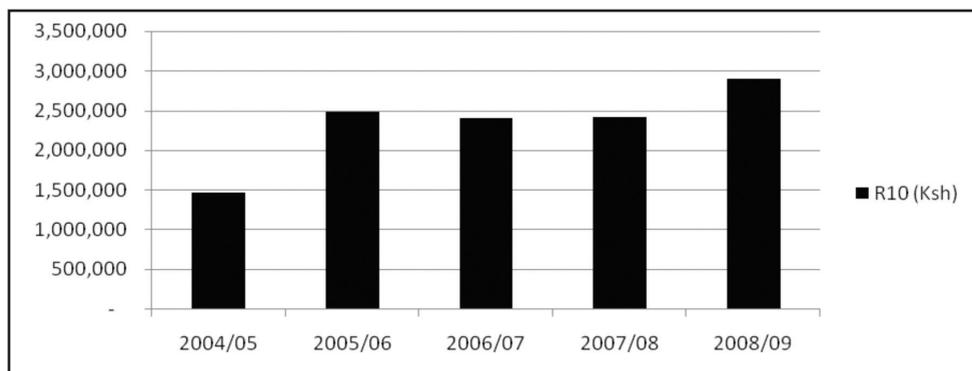
Budgeting is always done during the second quarter of the financial year (Oct-Dec). The process is guided by a circular from the headquarters which gives guidelines and imposes a ceiling on the budget. This affects the district's planned activities since they are forced to drop some of them in order to fit within the set limit.

The budgeting process is programme based and prioritization of activities to be funded is guided by considerations including: the ministry's objectives as spelt out in the strategic plan and performance contracts; activities demanded from the field; development needs and prevailing conditions of the district.

The budgeting process takes place at both the divisional and district levels. At the divisions, DAEO and SMSs identify the needs, prioritize and come up with the budget in collaboration with the LEO's particularly in identifying the urgent needs on the ground. The DAO also sits with her team of technical Subject Matter Specialists, SMS to come up with the district budget. The division and district budgets are then consolidated and presented to the District Agricultural Committee and the Stakeholders Forum for their input. The involvement of the DAC and SF in the preparation and prioritization of the budget is very minimal and their contribution during the presentation may not significantly impact on the overall budget.

A budget team from the headquarters visits the regions and the budgets are presented, justified, negotiated and finally agreed. Usually the budget agreed on is subjected to cuts without

Fig 16. Larger Uasin Gishu 5 year recurrent budget allocation.



any consultation with the DAO or her budget team, negatively affecting district operations since they have to do without some of the activities already planned for. Printed estimates are sent to the district after approval from the headquarters and the budget team is given an opportunity to revise their budget based on the estimates.

Authority to Incur Expenditure (AIE) is sent quarterly. The first quarter always experiences major delays, delayed disbursement of funds and delayed implementation of activities. The district also experiences a deficit in the budget for the non-salary items such as fuel, stationery, and allowances etc.

Despite being a high potential area the district has very few International Agencies and NGOs and - by extension - projects. The ministry is not involved in budgeting for the projects but supports the planning process and facilitates implementation

Figure 16 represents five-year district recurrent budget allocation excluding salaries with the first three financial years being for the larger Uasin Gishu while the last two years are for Eldoret West.

There has been a dramatic increase in the recurrent budget allocation over the five year period, particularly given that 2004 - 07 figures depicted were for the larger district.

Compared to the recurrent budget for 2008/09 financial year, the district had higher development budget allocation amounting to Ksh. 4,869,452 from NALEP-SIDA. In the absence of any other donor funded development project, the district had a total of Ksh. 7,769,145 for development. The overall budget is in the range of Ksh 10 million or Ksh 167 per farm. Of this approximately Ksh 100 go to personnel costs. It will be interesting to see how these issues play out as Kenya goes through a constitutional review that envisions devolution of central

government services to regional governments.

4. Conclusions and Policy Issues

- Eldoret West is a district with very high agricultural potential. It has almost all of the factors of production at its disposal and plenty of land.
- The district has one of the best stakeholder forums in the country. It is well coordinated and very strong. The many stakeholders form a strong lobby for getting things done. There is still room to better harmonisation of views and messages among the stakeholders.
- Stakeholders feel that MoA has absconded its duty of offering extension and delegated the task to other stakeholders. They feel that even the coordination role that is deemed to come from MoA could be improved. There is need for MoA to work extra hard to ensure that all the stakeholders work together at all possible stages and that they work with the MoA personnel. Devolution in the constitutional review will mean a radical rethink of roles, accountability and funding of agricultural sector coordination and services in Kenya.
- Morale among lower level MoA personnel must be addressed as this is the work force tasked with implementing government policies and programmes, and being called upon to do much more. MoA personnel in the district – particularly diploma and certificate holders - feel that their employer does not care for them. Many have stagnated in one job group for over 10 years is a very demoralising thing to an employee. In addition the diploma holders feel cheated for they are now lumped in one job group with certificate holders.

- The district is part of the grain basket of the country. However, grain production, productivity and acreage are all lagging behind growing population and demand. High support prices and subsidized inputs have not reversed the trend. Improved extension, research and marketing systems may be part of the solution. However these need to be organised around a limited financial budget. Currently the district is short of financial resources and does not have enough transport vehicles and motorbikes for extension. Perhaps it is time to try new methods of extension other than the focus on face to face visits and group meetings.
- The community in the district have focussed on growing cereals - wheat and maize- and dairy cattle. The emergence of a big horticultural market in CANKEN should be a wakeup call for the farmers in the region to embrace diversification in their farming.
- Grain marketing issues have yet to be adequately addressed in this key surplus district. The National Cereal and Produce Board should improve its customer service and pay promptly to avoid a large gap between government support prices and the farm gate prices farmers actually receive.

End Notes

¹ Figures from the 2009 census have not been released yet.

² For ease of administering the vast province, the Provincial Director of Agriculture, Rift-Valley found it better to divide the province in 3 and cluster different but adjacent districts together, and choose one DAO, named as the Dean, to head each of the clusters.

³ Personal interview, Tapsagoi location, 9th March 2009

⁴ Figures not available

⁵ Personal interview, Eldoret town 9th March

2009

⁶ Personal interview, Eldoret International Airport – 27th March 2009

⁷ Focus group discussion, Turbo town – 24th March 2009

⁸ Personal interview, MoA Soy divisional offices – March 2009

⁹ Personal interview, MoA Turbo divisional offices – 24th March 2009

¹⁰ Telephone interview, Eldoret – March 2009

¹¹ Faulu Kenya recently (Feb 2009) launched a loan package tailored for the cereal growers charged at a flat rate of 14%.

¹² Personal interview, Eldoret town – March 2009

¹³ Personal Interview, Eldoret Town – 22nd March 2009

¹⁴ Personal interview, Eldoret town – 22nd March 2009

¹⁵ Personal Interview, Maili Nne – 24th March 2009

¹⁶ Personal Interview, Soy town, March 2009

¹⁷ Personal interview, Eldoret town – 27th March 2009

¹⁸ Personal interview, Maili Nne – 24th March 2009

¹⁹ Personal interview, Eldoret town – 27th March 2009

²⁰ Personal interview, Eldoret Municipal market, March 2009

²¹ Personal interview, Turbo town- 24th March 2009

²² Personal interview, Eldoret town – 22nd March 2009

²³ Personal interview, North Rift NCPB Headquarters – 26th March 2009

²⁴ Personal interviews, Eldoret West – March 2009

²⁵ Personal interview, Eldoret West headquarter offices, 6th March 2009

²⁶ Personal interview, MoA Soy Division offices – March 2009

²⁷ Personal interview, Eldoret West district HQs – 6th March 2009

²⁸ Personal interview, Eldoret West district HQs – 6th March 2009

²⁹ Focus Group discussion, Sugoi Village, March 2009

³⁰ Personal interview, Eldoret town – 22nd March 2009

³¹ Personal interview, MoA Turbo Divisional offices – 25th March 2009

³² Personal interviews, MoA Turbo Divisional offices – 25th March 2009

³³ Personal interview, MoLD Turbo Divisional offices – March 2009

³⁴ Personal interview, MoA Soy Divisional offices – March 2009

³⁵ Personal interview, MoA Turbo divisional offices – 25th March 2009

³⁶ Personal interview, MoA Turbo Divisional offices – 25th March 2009

³⁷ Personal interview, MoA Turbo Divisional offices – 24th March 2009

³⁸ Personal inter

Appendix:

List of respondents interviewed during the survey

Farmers	Farmer Groups	Farm input Stockists	Farm output buyers	NGO's	Government	Credit institutions
Andrew Sugut	Kabatic Centre Kwanza SHgroup	Baitany	CANKEN	AMPATH	Ministry of Agriculture	Faulu Kenya
Joel Maio	Kosman Self help group	Cheben and Sons	Kibet posho mills	NGOMA	Ministry of Livestock Development	AFC
Abraham Kirui	District Agriculture stakeholders forum	Eldoret Agricultural Store	NCPB	Christian Community services, CCS, Anglican Church, Eldoret	Ministry of Cooperative Development and Marketing	
Remy Sang	Cereal Growers Association, CGA	PANNAR Seeds	Mama Linda	Catholic Relief Services, CRS, Eldoret	Ministry of Fisheries Development	
David Rugut	Kabendui farmers cooperative society	Elisha Kios agrovot, Soy.	Grace Chebet	Kenya Maize Development Program	Ministry of Water & Irrigation	
Shadrack Kiplimo	Sisiobei SH group				HCDA	
Marogos Sambai	Nai-Tai women group					
Jonathan Koech	KENFAP					

This **Research Paper** was written by **Blessings Chinsinga** of the **Future Agricultures Consortium**. The series editor is David Hughes. Further information about this series of Working Papers at: www.future-agricultures.org

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