



Future  
Agricultures

# The Role and Performance of Ministry of Agriculture in Nyeri South District

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## 1. Introduction

Agriculture is the backbone of Kenya's economy with many urban, and most rural folk deriving their livelihoods directly or indirectly from agriculture. The performance of the sector is therefore reflected in the performance of the whole economy. Growth in the agricultural sector translates directly to the improvement in living standards of many farm families. Nyeri South District has a vibrant agricultural sector that provides the main source of livelihood for over 82% of its residents<sup>1</sup>. Three commodities with varied histories - tea, coffee and dairy - are the main agricultural enterprises. Effective realization of the agricultural sector's goals in the district depends on reviving these commodities in a sustainable manner. For this to be achieved however, the structure, capacity and coordination capabilities of the agricultural sector ministries must be up to the task.

This study focuses on the roles, performance, financial and human capacity of Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in Nyeri South District of Kenya's Central Province. Particular attention is given to how the ministry interacts with other agricultural stakeholders in the district. The objectives of this study are to generate evidence on 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 in the sector in the district, and to be demand-driven and responsive to the needs of stakeholders.

The study was conducted during November and December 2009. Qualitative methods were used in data collection mainly through interviews guided by an interview checklist. Officials of agricultural sector ministries were interviewed, including the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Livestock Production and Veterinary Production departments of the Ministry of Livestock Development. 4 farmer groups, 8

individual farmers, 4 farm input stockists, 3 credit institutions and 5 out-put buyers were also interviewed. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were targeted for the survey, but surprisingly there are hardly any NGOs active within the agriculture sector in the district. One exception is Africa Harvest, which is slowly making an entrance in to Nyeri South district with the introduction of tissue culture bananas. A list of persons and institutions interviewed is in the Appendix. The findings of the work were presented back to local stakeholders for validation and additional discussion at a workshop held in the CDF Hall in Othaya on 05/20/2010.

This paper is organized as follows; chapter 2 presents the agricultural activities and opportunities in the district. Section 3 describes the opportunities for agriculture in Nyeri South district while section 4 describes the agricultural challenges. Section 5 describes roles/duties of MoA at the district level. It also gives challenges experienced by farmers as perceived by different stakeholders. In section 6, the study looks at how the ministry has performed over time and at the performance of the sector over the same periods and also discusses MoA's interface with other stakeholders in the district. It also highlights limitations of MoA. Section 7 discusses infrastructure in the district while section 8 talks about the fragmentations of Ministry of agriculture. Section 9 briefly highlights the budget process and finally section 10 gives conclusions from the study and draws policy implications.

## 2. Agricultural Activities in the District

Nyeri South covers a total area of 184.2 km<sup>2</sup> with 98.9 km<sup>2</sup> being arable and 85.3 km<sup>2</sup> categorised as non-arable. As such, it is a very small district: the furthest person who wants to access services at the district headquarters travels only 14 km.

Prior to the recent creation of additional districts in Kenya, Nyeri South was a division of the larger Nyeri district, that also included Othaya, Tetu, Mukuruweini, Kieni East, Kieni West and Municipality divisions (all also given the administrative status of district in August 2009). At the time of the 1999 census, Nyeri South division had a total of 88,291 inhabitants, of whom 42,170 were males and 46,121 females. Assuming 2.5% p.a. population growth since 1999, the population in 2009 would be around 113,000 and the population density over 600 persons per km<sup>2</sup>.

Agriculture is the mainstay of people in Nyeri South. In terms of livestock, the dairy sector leads with nearly every homestead having at least one or two exotic dairy cattle. A few farmers keep poultry and rabbits. Coffee and tea are the major cash crops in the district. The Lower Highland agro-ecological zone consists of 52.4km<sup>2</sup> and is mainly for tea and dairy sub-sectors. Upper Midland 1, which is approximately 22.8km<sup>2</sup>, grows both tea and coffee, while Upper Midland 2 of approximately 12.3km<sup>2</sup> is the main coffee zone (Table 1). However, recent poor performance of the coffee subsector has prompted farmers to try horticultural farming in this area.

Land in the district has been fragmented into very small units due to high population pressure. On average, each household owns about 0.64 ha<sup>2</sup>. Mr Kibui, a farmer in the district, reported that land is a highly priced factor of production in the district, but that this is not the main constraint to accessing more. Rather, there is no

one willing to sell land anymore. On the very rare occasions that one would be selling, the price drives away many prospective buyers<sup>3</sup>.

The tea sub-sector in the district has an organised and stable market – unlike coffee. Tea cooperative societies are well managed and leaf collection centres are well distributed within the proximity of farmers. Payments are timely and transparent. The key disadvantage farmers give with this crop is that it cannot be intercropped with other crops especially where land fragmentation is very extreme.

Coffee on the other hand has been in decline for some time. Farmers cite political interferences and marketing problems as the major hindrance to the crop's advancement. A coffee farmer from Gatugu location stated that; "The problem with coffee and its management is that most of the members of the coffee cooperative societies are politicians and not real farmers"<sup>4</sup>. Coffee marketing is never transparent and coffee is collected from farmers without advance knowledge of the returns it will generate. Even when the beans are sold at the auction, the cooperatives do not send a representative to witness the proceedings. Farmers are, therefore, left to collect whatever amount the societies give them. The major advantage of coffee production is that it can be intercropped with other crops. Many farmers have intercropped coffee with horticultural crops.

Nyeri South has a very vibrant dairy subsector with every homestead owning a dairy cow(s). Milk marketing infrastructure is well developed with a high percentage of morning milk

delivered to Othaya Dairy Cooperative society that acts as a link between farmers and milk processors like New Kenya Cooperative Creameries (New KCC) and Brookside among others. Othaya Dairy Cooperative society buys milk at Ksh.27 per litre and sells at an average of Ksh.29.50 with the margin used in running the society. The society is making profits and is also able to finance their farm input department which gives farmers inputs on the basis of the amount of milk supplied. Othaya Dairy discourages farmers from selling their produce direct to Brookside, New KCC or any other brokers because of the past history of mismanagement and fraud cases that led to the closure of KCC in the 1990s and the resulting loss of farmers' cash. The negative history of KCC has helped Othaya Dairy earn confidence among farmers who now feel that the society is their own. There is almost 100% allegiance to the society.

### 3. Agricultural opportunities in the district.

Dairy goats, piggery, rabbits, horticulture and green houses are the new emerging agricultural opportunities in the district. Land fragmentation has conditioned people of Nyeri South to restrict their extensive farming and concentrate on highly productive and intensive farming methods to put minimum land to maximum use.

Dairy goats are becoming more common, but keeping goats for milk is still a fairly new activity. The agricultural officers still have to do a lot of sensitization to bring more farmers on board and also to create a market for the product. Piggery is slowly catching up, according to Mr Maina, the deputy District Livestock Production Officer<sup>5</sup>. Farmers have learnt how to manage pigs and the market is readily available within the locality and from sausage manufacturing companies in Thika.

Rabbits are also an upcoming source of food in the district and those that have tasted the meat attest to its palatable taste. While we were conducting the study, there was a field day organised by Ministry of Livestock on rabbit meat eating. Attendance was good and everyone had a chance to taste the rabbit meat. The number of rabbit keeping farmers in the district is growing and will continue even more as the market is already growing faster than production.

### 4. Agricultural challenges in the district

Agriculture in Nyeri South experiences a number of challenges. Different stakeholders noted somewhat similar problems but in different priorities. Table 2 below shows the problems as they were articulated by different farmer groups. Karima and Gaturuturu groups were recommended for interview by MoA staff while the other two were independently sourced by the researchers. Karima group is a mixed farming group, Kiaguthu is mainly tea and coffee while Othaya dairy is purely dairy, Gaturuturu is largely dairy but with horticulture as well.

Its evident from the table that farmers face similar problems all across the district. Some problems are mentioned across the board and need special attention. Unlike other districts studied so far, Nyeri South district does not have many problems related to diseases that were only mentioned by one group. The cold weather in the district provides an uncondusive environment for disease pathogens to multiply. In a district where disease outbreak especially in livestock are almost unheard of, you might expect the government Veterinary Department to be very lean. Nyeri South displays the reverse with the Veterinary Department outweighing all others in terms of personnel numbers.

**Table 1: Major agro-ecological zones in Nyeri South**

Agro-ecological Zone	Area	Major Crops Grown
Lower Highland	52.4 km <sup>2</sup>	Tea & Dairy
Upper Midland 1	22.8 km <sup>2</sup>	Tea & Coffee
Upper Midland 2	12.3 km <sup>2</sup>	Main coffee zone

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Nyeri South District

**Table 2: Agricultural challenges facing farmers in Nyeri district**

Karima Group	Kiaguthu group	Othaya Dairy	Gaturuturu Dairy Farmer group
Lack of capital	Negative attitude of youth towards agriculture	Un-enlightened farmers	Lack of capital
Low soil fertility	Over-reliance on rain-fed agriculture	Pressure on land/fragmentations	Diseases and pests
Poor governance in the coffee subsector	Lack of capital	Poor services from the breeders	Reliance on rain-fed agriculture
High costs of inputs	Poor marketing infrastructure esp for coffee	Poor extension services from the government	Poor extension services from the government
Poor extension services/coverage	Weak cooperative societies	High costs of credit	High costs of inputs
Youths negative attitude towards agriculture	Land fragmentations/exhausted soils	Exhausted soils	Heavy soil erosions
Over-reliance on rain-fed agriculture	Poor feeder roads		Low soil fertility

**Lack of/high cost of capital**

Lack of capital was noted by all the groups interviewed as a constraint in agriculture. All farming enterprises require some capital, for example to start dairy farming one needs to have money to buy the cow(s), land for keeping and probably growing feeds etc. There are a number of savings and credit cooperative organizations (SACCOs) in the district that are lending to farmers. Unlike in much of Sub-Saharan Africa (and indeed many parts of Kenya), banks are also actively seeking to do business with the farming fraternity. Equity Bank, Othaya branch, has a number of packages for farmers in the district including different unsecured loans for tea, coffee, horticulture and dairy farmers (see Box 1 for details).

Nevertheless, Table 2 shows that farmers still see access to capital as a problem<sup>6</sup>. For some respondents the problem is not access to credit but the high costs of obtaining credit. As shown in Box 1 Equity Bank charges interest of 15% or less on loans to smallholders and argues that

this rate is very low. (Indeed, it is subsidised). However, as has been observed in other districts, some farmers feel that even these rates are high. They are of the opinion that the rates should be reduced to about 10%. The lenders' response is that this is not possible because they will not make reasonable profits.

Other respondents argue that the problem is not so much the interest rate as the conditions that are attached to loans that make access to capital difficult. Thus, to borrow from Equity you need to have an existing account: you cannot turn up for the first time and obtain a loan on that day. Moreover, even though the Farm Input Loan product allows balloon repayment of principal, regular repayments of interest begin as soon as the loan is taken, which some farmers find difficult<sup>7</sup>.

Meanwhile, Taifa SACCO, Wananchi, Equity and other institutions report good levels of business even with existing interest rates and loan conditions. Attempts to get the clients figures were thwarted as each outfit feels that these

figures could be used against them or for the benefits of their competitors.

**Land fragmentation and soil fertility**

Land is a big problem not only for Nyeri South, but for the entire Central province. Land has been fragmented into very small portions. Houses occupy the largest percentage of these portions of land, leaving very little space for agricultural activities. On average a household in the district owns 0.64 hectares of land. The DAO Mr Mwangi said that time is long gone when the larger Nyeri was known as a high potential area. "What we are left with is rain, but land and soil fertility is gone" he says<sup>8</sup>.

Farmers are so frustrated with the seriously declining fertility that cases of tea or coffee fertilizers used in maize fields are rampant. Closely related to declining soil fertility is the shrinking farm sizes. Small farm size with very low fertility means facing potential food insecurity. "The case of land fragmentation is already out of hand, what we can do is to conserve our little soils that remains", says Mr Kingori, the Crops officer<sup>9</sup>. The government through MoA and Ministry of Forestry had ordered the immediate cutting of eucalyptus trees that are known to seep a lot of water and deplete land fertility. The district heeded the government call and agricultural officers are optimistic that the district is in the right direction in conserving soil fertility.

The government through the NAAIP programme has also distributed free CAN fertilizers to the residents of the district. Farm yard manure is inadequate as most families keep very few but high producing livestock. The quantity of milk is increasing but the number of cows is decreasing. The reason, according to Mr Samuel Gichuki, the secretary manager Othaya Dairy FCS is that most families are selling out their low milk producing cows for high milk producing

ones. This in the long run means that the availability of farm yard manure will be very scarce. Mr Gichuki says that they are yet to collect data on the decreasing number of cows but application for re-stocking has gone down even as their milk figures steadily surges<sup>10</sup>.

**Youth and Agriculture**

Youth all over Kenya have shown the tendency of shying away from agriculture. Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) have shown that the average age of the farming fraternity is 58. Youths of Nyeri South shun agriculture and indulge in other activities. To maintain their high standard of living - i.e. nice dressing, good diet and alcohol drinking - they are accused of engaging in robbery and other unlawful ways of acquiring money. A farmer under anonymity said: "At my age of 56, I work hard in the farm to feed my three sons, who, ironically, have never set a foot into this farm to assist me in farm work. My sons do not want anything to do with agriculture, be it crops or livestock; however, they will always complain whenever there is no food. All they want are white collar jobs and we all know that these jobs are not there"<sup>11</sup>.

The government recently launched "Kazi Kwa Vijana" program but this did not do well in this district as most of the youths do not want to engage themselves in difficult manual labour. Delayed payment by the government led to withdrawal of the youth that had joined the programme. Some even demonstrated with placards reading, "kazi kwa vijana, pesa kwa wazee", (work opportunities to the youth, money to the old men). Youth attitudes towards agriculture is a big issue in the district but some parents say that they are part of the problem. They educate their children to focus on office jobs and not to toil and die poor like their parents.

## Box 1. Equity Bank, Othaya Branch

Equity bank in Nyeri South district offers short, medium and long term loan to farmers of tea, coffee, dairy and horticulture.

### 1 month, temporary over-draft

Offers crop advance of between Kshs 200 to 5,000 and charges 10%

### Farm input loan

Up to 12 months

Amount up to Kshs 100,000

Unsecured loan, flexible payments to suit product cycle

Interest @ 15%

### Commercial agriculture

Up to 36 months

Secured loan, title deeds, shares, vehicle logbooks etc

Amount over Kshs 100,000

Interest 18% on reducing balance

## 4.1. Other stakeholders views on farmers challenges

Other stakeholders interviewed also had a take on what they know or feel affects farmers and farming activities in the district. While some of their problems correspond with what the farmers themselves mentioned, some are a bit different and need mentioning and detailing. These problems include;

- **Farmers ignorance and low technology uptake**

“Information is power”, these were the words of Mr Mwangi, the DAO<sup>12</sup>. Farmers in the district are accused of not attending trainings whenever they are called. Ironically, they would rather turn up in large numbers during political rallies rather than agricultural gatherings. Stakeholders also feel that the few farmers who attend these training have very low capacity to absorb and uptake technology. This has been attributed to the fact that the larger percentages of those involved in agriculture are very old.

- **High costs of inputs**

Stakeholders are feeling that the costs of inputs have gone up quite steeply. They point out the case of acaricide. The government has provided cattle dips, but it is the role of farmers to sustain them with acaricide. A dip requires acaricide worth Ksh 30,000 (US\$400) to be adequately charged and forty cattle charged at Ksh 15 to be sustainable. These conditions are difficult to meet and Dr Ngugi of the Veterinary Department says that these government dips will largely remain idle<sup>13</sup>. Other costs include labour which is aggravated by the fact that the youths are not interested in agriculture. High input costs for chemicals together with low returns have also driven farmers away from coffee productions.

- **Cooperative mismanagements**

The strength of farmers anywhere in the world lies in pulling resources together and working in an organized manner. Cooperative societies offer such outfits where farmers can bulk purchase inputs for the benefits of large discounts and can sell their produce

and enjoy collective bargaining. The recent past has witnessed the collapse of many farmer support organizations including cooperative societies and Nyeri South is no such exception. Being a district that is active agriculturally, the springing up of these societies would be seen as helpful but different stakeholders dissented in the way these societies have been managed. Financial embezzlement, misappropriation, political interference and a weak Cooperative Act has ensured that farmers fight for their woes individually as opposed to collective actions through a cooperative. Stakeholders interviewed feel that the government should move with speed and review the Cooperative Act so that those that are acting in the negative interest of farmers in a cooperative society be brought to book. As it is now, an official in the cooperative can embezzle money and get away with it.

- **Lack of information on drugs and chemicals**

Farm input stockists feel that the government extension agents should do more in terms of training farmers on new/emerging technologies and drugs. Many farmers come to buy inputs like drugs and still insist on products that have been withdrawn from the market. Convincing them to buy something new and efficient becomes a problem as they come with fixed mind since “that is what the agriculture personnel recommend”.

- **Delayed supply of inputs**

Farm input stockists also experience the problem of delayed delivery of products from their suppliers. “It hurts our business when we turn down our customers due to product unavailability because the supplier is not prompt with deliveries”, says an agrovet<sup>14</sup>.

- **Seasonality of agricultural produce**

Farm output buyers have the problem of one product flooding the market in one season and becoming unavailable during other times. This is the nature of agricultural produce. Better and secure storage facilities are part of the problem. The cost of transport they say is becoming prohibitive for them to trade in other produce that involves transporting from wide apart surplus to deficit areas. Maize for example is produced mainly in North Rift and requires transport to Nyeri South. With the small profit margins of maize, they say the whole affair becomes unprofitable until such time as maize becomes available from Eastern province.

- Output buyers in the district have been totally neglected by the MoA in respect to meetings and stakeholder fora. Output buyers claim that none of their number has been invited by any agricultural sector ministries to attend a meeting.

## 5. Roles of Ministry of Agriculture within the District.

The Ministry of Agriculture has specific duties to perform at the district level. This section therefore looks at the duties and roles of the Ministry of Agriculture in Nyeri South. A district level study is the best place to get insights into how the ministry interacts and cooperates with other stakeholders at field level.

Nyeri South operates according to both the national and district service charters for MoA, the latter drawing its contents mostly from the former. Different officers interviewed noted that the roles being performed by MoA at the district level are in line with the policy objectives of the sector, which is to raise household incomes, create employment and ensure food and nutritional security. From interviews held with MoA officers, we learnt that district activities are set according to predetermined documents (the Strategic Plan). However, this would limit the ministry's flexibility to respond to problems

expressed by farmers on the ground if at all these objectives were to be the only issues attended to by the ministry's personnel.

On the ground the ministry personnel admit that they perform much more than what is in their objectives and performance contracts. A look at the performance contract of Mr Jackson M Mwangi, the locational extension officer of Chinga South location reveals that he performed above the mark. He attributes this to the flexibility that they have to adapt on the ground as farmers come in with different problems and issues

### 5.1. The Ministry's Own View

The district service charter contains the core responsibilities being undertaken by Ministry of Agriculture in Nyeri South district. According to the district officials, the services stipulated in the document are largely drawn from the national service charter and as such represent the aspirations of the national charter. A number of interesting observations can be made regarding the district service charter.

- Extension services dominate the MoA's perception of its day-to-day activities. Most of the services mentioned in the charter (12 out of 23) are extension-based. By contrast, farmers wanted to see the Ministry perform a wider set of functions than simply provision of information. For example, regulation of input quality is an important issue (see below). They would also want the Ministry to play a central role in the output market as cases of farmers defrauded of their outputs keep arising, especially in the milk market.
- One of the biggest problems mentioned by different agricultural stakeholders is that of low soil fertility. In the service charter, it is the duty of the district agricultural personnel to provide information on appropriate land

improvement approaches. Stakeholders believe that this has not been done adequately and is an important reason why the district produces below its potential.

Almost all stakeholders interviewed lament the discrepancies between the roles as written in the service charter and the real duties performed by the Ministry of Agriculture on the ground. Farmers said it is through their own hard and honest work that they raise their household income, ensure food and nutritional security and through farming create employment. The ministry officials are on the other hand doing negligible roles. Some farmers said that they could be better off with private service providers. The private service providers only exists in the livestock fraternity and serving mainly the dairy sector. These agents are hard to come by as they serve a wide geographical area but farmers who have dealt with them have their cell phone numbers and call whenever they so need their services.

### 5.2. Other stakeholders' and farmers' views

Other stakeholders had their own views on what they see MoA do and what they feel should be their role on the ground. These stakeholders included the financial/credit institutions like Equity and Taifa SACCO, the input stockists, output buyers and farmers. At the focus group discussions, farmers argued that the effectiveness with which MoA delivers its services is still low and needs to be enhanced. They appreciate that the current extension approach of demonstrations, field days and barazas allows MoA to meet many people with few resources. However, they believe that individual attention on farm is much better. Focus group respondents argued that, during the pre and post colonial era, the agricultural sector used to perform better because the visits were farm to farm, individual

to individual. Meanwhile, the move to demand-led field visits has yet to gain widespread acceptance.

The following are some points from farmers worth noting;

- Farmers learn well from fellow farmers. As the agriculture personnel are very lean, farmers feel that some of them should be picked, offered short training and be used to teach others. This they believe will sort out the alarming staff:farmer ratio. This is an idea which MoA needs to work on and adopt. The horticulture subsector is partly growing in the district due to this farmer to farmer training.
- Farmers have realized that the Veterinary Department of the Ministry of Livestock has more staff than other ministries, yet they have not witnessed any disease outbreak or any situation that warrants such a large number of staff, who, they feel, should be re-distributed.
- Fragmentation of agricultural sector ministries has not enhanced provision of extension services; instead it has brought mixed messages that have sometimes been confusing to the farmers. An example occurred when the district was part of larger Nyeri and the Ministry of Cooperatives urged farmers to form groups for the purposes of collective bargaining in selling their merchandise like milk, coffee and tea. Ministry of Agriculture was reported to have told the farmers to sell individually until the mess in cooperative set-ups are adequately attended to. A statement from Mr. Patrick of Githunguri Kanyangi Horticultural group can attest to this. He says MoA teaches how to grow coffee, tea, napier grass etc and yet distances itself from the collective marketing woes. Meetings are called by different ministries and the same issues regarding the same crop are discussed resulting in different angles. At the end a farmer does not know

the advice to follow. For effective dispensation of the ministries roles in the district, there is need for some of these ministries to be merged - or at least better coordinated - since the farmer is their ultimate client<sup>15</sup>.

- Provision of extension in terms of information alone does not help much. "Our youth may want to try their hand in agriculture but because capital acquisition is a problem, they may seem to be uninterested. The government should give much more priority to farmer support structures like AFC so that our youths, after realizing there is no other way out, can borrow from the institution and start something in agriculture", says Mzee John Muge of Kiaguthu sub-location<sup>16</sup>.

### Adulterated/fake inputs

Adulterated agricultural inputs was a very thorny issue in the focus group discussions. Stakeholders feel that it is the duty of MoA to protect them from the sub-standard inputs. Cases were pointed out of fake fertilizers, livestock drugs, pesticides - and even fake money. The case of fake money affects the general public as once the money is released into the market it goes to national circulation. The government was criticised for privatising breeding services, as farmers claim that there are more fake private breeders than good ones. "Our milk and calf production may be low not because we are incompetent, but because the government have decided for us to be so, for how can the government allow such malpractices to thrive in the full glare of their officials?", asks a farmer<sup>17</sup>. To help the sector thrive, stakeholders want the government to rein in with full force and regulate the sector. Without this regulatory aspect from the government, the sector shall continue to suffer heavily from the fake/substandard inputs, consequently lowering the farmers' living standards, negating the prospects of job creation and contributing to food insecurity.

### Coffee marketing messes

Coffee is one of the major cash crops of Nyeri South. Statistics to show how much it earns for the district were not available but, according to the DAO, the amount is high and would have been much higher had the crop been given the attention it deserves.

Coffee production and marketing in the district suffers from a number of problems. Coffee management, as the farmers say, is not carried out in a transparent manner. Coffee marketing is an exercise done in secrecy such that the farmers themselves have no idea what their coffee delivered in the factories will eventually fetch. When the beans are being auctioned, not even one farmer or one member of the factory is present. Farmers wait for whatever money the broker brings back. More often than not farmers get their advance payment ahead of the January school fee paying period and this only amounts to half the total amount. The bonus payments take between three to eight months or at times a full year. This long duration before payments, not so transparent way of coffee marketing, and increasing costs of production has led many farmers to uproot or neglect their coffee trees. Some farmers now wish that the government, rather than cooperatives, would come in and sell coffee on their behalf. "The issue of chancing with the farmers' hard earned produce and waiting for almost a year to be given uncertain amount must be history if the coffee industry is to thrive. Let the government come in and sell coffee on our behalf", says a farmer from Kiaguthu Coffee Factory<sup>18</sup>. The perception is that the government has no hand in the coffee messes. These farmers think that the messes are the responsibility of the cooperative management, but it is clear it goes beyond that and filters into the government system.

## 6. Performance of Ministry of Agriculture Over Time.

It is important to understand how the agricultural sector has evolved over time. The following section looks at past performance of Ministry of Agriculture in Nyeri South to relate it to the sector's performance from the pre-independence era to the present day. The information reported in this section was provided by farmers and other stakeholders like retired chiefs, agrovets and senior citizens with a long history of agricultural practices in the district. For farmers' views, focus group discussions were employed. The focus groups consisted of 5 to 7 respondents of varying ages with at least two in every focus group being older people with clear memories of how the agricultural sector has transformed over time. The discussions were interesting, with farmers deliberating amongst themselves before taking common stands on opinions that were then expressed and recorded.

Participants were asked to differentiate periods in the recent history of agriculture in Nyeri South, according to how agriculture in the district was faring and the roles played by the Ministry of Agriculture in supporting this. The periods quoted were dependent on how far back respondents could remember. Every group therefore came up with the earliest time they could remember, but time intervals were agreed upon before starting discussions. It was agreed before the discussions that the time intervals be roughly 10 years. Table 3 below indicates the periods and subsequent responses given.

From the focus group discussions, it is evident that the agricultural sector has evolved over time. The pre-independence era was marked with abundant availability of land and anyone was entitled to any piece at any time. The population was still very low, soil fertility quite high and the climatic conditions were favourable. It

is also the era that coffee was introduced and land demarcation started. With land given titles, people started moving slowly to their respective pieces and the sector started its march to serious agriculture. The pre-independence era, however, came with insecurity issues arising from the Mau-Mau uprising, to which the colonialists responded by forcing people into concentration camps in order to contain the rebellion. Nevertheless, they were allowed to work on their farms by day and the agricultural sector still performed well. Food was available but growing of cash crops was still restricted and only politically correct Africans were allowed to grow them. Extension services were available. There were specialised extension agents for coffee, tea and livestock. The pre independence era also marked the emergence of Farmers Training Centres and the 4K clubs<sup>19</sup>.

The post independence era was marked with major agricultural upheavals. Immediately after independence, calm returned to the district and agricultural development continued. The agricultural sector was "liberalised", in the sense that anybody could now grow anything, but some conditions were still in place. For example, you could grow coffee on condition that you did not intercrop it with any other crop. The natives were not allowed to own pure exotic dairy cows, but to continually cross breed their indigenous cows to a pedigree level. The instructions from the extension officers were still law and anybody going to the contrary was penalised. The district still enjoyed the benefits of extension officers as they still used to visit and train but land availability started dwindling. President Kenyatta called on people to buy land as nothing comes for free. There was a hot scramble for land in the Rift Valley.

The 1980s marked the start of the sector's downfall. The reducing numbers of extension personnel was felt as well as their lack of morale

to perform. The dairy sector was liberalised and breeding privatised, posing hurdles to farmers in getting timely services. The 1990s marked the worst interval in the agricultural transformation in the district. Most farmer support structures suffered political interference that ensured their collapse. Farmers were no longer allowed to elect their leaders; instead the government started appointing them. Extension services were crippled as there were retirements without replacements.

The period from 2000 to the present is marked with a sigh of relief to most farmers, save for those growing coffee. The revival of vital farmer support structures like Kenya Cooperative Creameries (New KCC), Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC), Kenya Farmers' Association (KFA) and others have not only helped farmers but also restored hope in the sector. The emergence of credit institutions as well as strong farmer organizations have also helped and as a result the agricultural sector is booming in the district. But on the sad side, coffee is still inundated in huge production and marketing woes made worse by political interference. "One of the major challenges in the coffee subsector is that its organization is full of politicians rather than farmers", one of the coffee farmers told us<sup>20</sup>. The elections in coffee societies are almost always marred with violence and disenfranchisement of the voters. The politicians in the subsector are resource endowed and are able to mount a dirty campaign and win. "Until these malpractices and politics are divorced from the subsector, coffee will gradually extinct itself from the district", one farmer lamented<sup>21</sup>.

### 6.1. Ministry of Agriculture's Interface with other stakeholders

In order for the Ministry to achieve its goal, especially with its lean personnel, the need to collaborate well and effectively with other players in

**Table 3: History of Agricultural activities in Nyeri South district**

Periods	Githunguri group	Kiaguthu group	Chinga group	Gatugi Group
1943-1953	Colonial government threw blacks in concentration camps to contain during mau mau, this hampered proper growth of agric sector. Farms were large and fertile. With no demarcation, farms were used at will. Serious drought that brought hunger in 1944/45	Farms were very big, livestock kept under free range and people ploughed farms alternately. There was no need for manure use as lands were very fertile.		There was draught all over the country in 1943, it was called njaa ya mihogo. Sugar came in 1944. There were no ploughing, just straight planting and weeding thereafter. Plenty of rainfall, no seeing the sun in months of June & July. Small population plenty of land. Plenty of agricultural products
1954-1962	Land demarcation started, land still fertile but instructors advised on fertilizer use. Extension was exemplary with regular farm visits. Agriculture for subsistence use only. Cash crop growing restricted to whites and some few politically correct blacks	Restricted farming, land demarcation and seriousness of farming began. Insecurity heightened because of mau mau. Extension services were very good - white managers and black instructors.	Introduction of FTC's, and 4 K's club. Extension workers present and active. Extension workers specialised, i.e. for tea is different for coffee	Emergency period, concentration camps. Demarcation of land started, title deeds came. Fertilizer use after mau mau. People moved from centre to allocated lands and serious farming started. Coffee introduced, only farmers in the good books of colonial gov't were allowed to grow it. Grade cows and tea introduced too but under similar conditions as coffee. Introduction of agricultural officers, both black and white. The whole sector did well.
1963-1970	Independence came and detainees released. White extension officer left divisions and moved to district levels. Everyone allowed to venture in to cash crop farming and dairy sector. Extension very good, but the number of white extension officers started dwindling	Independence celebrations. Extension very ok. All crops did well, and Kenyans started a bit of cash crop farming. Milk production increased due to foreign influence (Swedish government) Coffee intercropping was not allowed.	Peace after independence. Coffee and tea allowed to be grown by any one willing. Government of Sweden helped people to upgrade their cows at Kshs 1 for an insemination. Extension services very ok.	After independence, peace came. Tea, coffee allowed to be grown by anyone plus dairy. Coffee did well, we were paid 4 times in a year. Societies sprung up. Extension very good. Gradual upgrading of local cows to pedigree sponsored by Swedish gov't. Intercropping not allowed in coffee.

1971-1980	Land became hot cake when Kenyatta said "get what you can". Fragmentation of land ensued. Extension services ok with instructors visiting farms and ordering what to be done. Moi regime started and some few sectors started ailing	Various centres sprung up, education of black extensionists started. Moi took over power and marked the start of the regions woes. One very good specie of Irish potatoes introduced - it does well and people liked it, (name could not be recalled)	Extension was ok. Agricultural food production was good and population grew sharply. Cash crops were doing quite well.	Land fragmentations started, but agric produce still very good. Population grew alarmingly due to much availability of food. Land buying companies sprung up when Kenyatta said that nothing is for free. Tea/coffee and dairy continued doing well, wonderful extension
1981-1990	Extension personnel's number reduced. There was laxity of services as white officers started diminishing. Agric sector was stagnating instead of an upward trend. Coffee subsector did well. Maize for subsistence was grown. Milk production dwindled because of troubles at KCC	Harambee spirit engulfed the era. Coffee did very well in terms of production figures. Food was not a problem. Agricultural sector was vibrant. Dairy sector liberalised causing many farmers to encounter difficulties in acquiring vital inputs	Era marked the start of bad governance. Most farmer institutions started ailing. Extension personnel started reducing. Signs of bad thing to come could be seen. Dairy sector liberalised, and public breeding was privatised	Extension personnel started dwindling, retirements without replacements, production went down and corruption started. Things were not good but not very bad
1991-2000	Political interferences marred farmer support institutions. The farmer elected bodies were substituted with gov't appointments. The start of coffee woes started by the politicians refusing to pay 19 million kgs of coffee. Extension services came to its knees. The sector was collapsing.	Coffee payments went to its peak, production increased as well. Subsistence farming slowly gave way to commercial farming. Pressure on land became a reality. Extension grew weaker both in numbers of personnel and services offered. The collapse of farmer support structures marked the era. Notably the collapse of KCC injured the dairy subsector in the district.	Coffee did well but Moi refused to pay 19 million kgs of coffee. Tea was constantly doing well. Milk prices were deregulated. Private processors came in to play and bought milk directly from farmers, this further injured KCC. Extension services grew weaker and the absence of white officers were conspicuous.	Agricultural sector went really down, 19 million kgs of coffee were not paid and those who demonstrated were beaten. Moi never paid for the free primary school milk scheme and KCC went under and this destabilised dairy sector badly. Farmer support structures went down due to gross mismanagements and political interferences.



2001 - present	Coffee doing badly/demoralised farmers. Dairy sector doing very well, revival of KCC being the major reason. Roads greatly improved. Horticultural sector improving. Extension officers are very few and greatly over-whelmed.	Coffee subsector nose-dived, farmers uprooted or neglected their coffee trees because of poor returns due to poor marketing and political patronage. Horticultural farming emerged as a result. Extension to its poorest. Tea doing well, but upscaling in terms of acreage discouraged. Agricultural land in near extinction as human population exerts pressure on land. New administration resurrected the flopped agricultural farmers support structures like New KCC, AFC, KFA etc.	NARC/Coalition government doing much to the sector but failed in coffee. Few extension officers and great pressure on land. Improved infrastructure, roads & communication. Exemplary tea and dairy subsectors but the opposite situation in the coffee subsector. Very little impact from extension officers (fewer numbers). Emergence of high value/fast yielding crops to compete with high pressure on land.	Revival of the sector through new administration. Dairy sector revived, healthy competition btw New KCC and Brookside. Tea subsector also vibrant but coffee still in messes. Emerging enterprises due to land fragmentations, dairy goats, fish ponds, poultry and horticulture.
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**Notes:** FTC = Farmer Training Centre; KCC = Kenyan Cooperative Creameries; AFC = Agricultural Finance Corporation; KFA = Kenya Farmers' Association; NARC = National Rainbow Coalition

the field cannot be over-emphasized. Table 4 summarises the Ministry's interaction with other stakeholders in the district.

In terms of stakeholder interaction Nyeri South district is lagging behind especially when a comparison is done with the other districts this study has been conducted in. On the other hand the district can be vindicated on the grounds that it is still a young district and will establish itself with time. There is no interaction between MoA and the Ministry of Fisheries or Ministry of Cooperatives because these two ministries have no personnel on the ground. The Ministry of Cooperatives is said to have one employee in the district but throughout this study he was never there. An MoA employee who has been serving in the area for the last two years said he has seen his cooperative counterpart only twice. Other ministries are also yet to establish themselves in the new district.

MoA enjoys better interaction with the Ministry of Livestock. The Ministry of Agriculture

has a vehicle but no driver while the Ministry of Livestock has a driver and no vehicle. The two Ministries share these two resources. One area in which the mutual interaction hasn't worked well is in the sharing of water and electricity bills. One ministry blames the other in delaying payments and they have decided to have separate bills on these two items. The MoA has managed to reconnect their water line but electricity has remained elusive for the last two years.

Besides the limited interaction amongst the Ministries, there is also no interaction with the NGO world. This is because non-governmental organizations are scarcely present in the district. Christian Children Fund (CCF) is an NGO that supports children from poor families by paying their education fee, while Africa Harvest based in Nyeri town has an agricultural focus but operates rather intermittently in the district. Attempts to meet them proved futile.

Interaction with farm input stockists seems to be there but still very weak. Most farm input stockists interviewed admit having met agricultural extension officers or of being invited to field days but most say they don't get as much interaction as they would have wished. Their main problem is that most farmers trust agricultural personnel more than them, yet they feel the agriculture personnel have no up-to-date knowledge on the new drugs or technologies in the market. It is very hard to convince a farmer to purchase a new and very effective drug instead of the product that the agriculture personnel recommended. This, they say, can be eliminated with constant and sustained interaction between them and the MoA personnel.

Output buyers are the most disenfranchised and say they have never been called for any meeting with MoA. The only time they get to meet an MoA employee is when the agri-business officer is collecting cereal prices for compilation. In our interviews with them they reported few major problems other than at times having to source their commodities from far and wide and at times the transportation costs are quite high. There is no harassment from Othaya County Council who have provided well built, well managed and clean stalls in the market.

No one wants to talk about openly about insecurity. Traders close their stalls early enough to walk home. If one is not used to business closing as early as in Othaya, you are bound to

**Table 4: Interface of Ministry of Agriculture with other stakeholders**

Stakeholder	Interface with MoA	Nature of interface
Ministry of livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Stimulus Package (ESP) Sensitizing farmers about fish farming. Encouraging farmers to apply for the ESP money meant for fish farming in the district.</li> <li>NALEP</li> <li>Joint implementation of NALEP activities in various focal areas in the districts.</li> <li>Njaa Marufuku Kenya, (NMK). Train farmers on improved ways of fighting food insecurity. Both livestock and crop farmers benefit. The two ministries also disburse funds to groups. Crop group Kshs 120,000 and Livestock group Kshs 150,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing of resources like vehicles, motorbikes and budgeting together in case of joint field days</li> <li>Joint budget preparation. The two Ministries share personnel and expertise in the focal area</li> <li>Sharing of resources and expertise. Vehicles, drivers, workshop materials, motorbikes</li> </ul>
Ministry of forestry and Ministry of environment	Sensitizing farmers on the need to eliminate eucalyptus tree. The tree is said to absorb a lot of water thereby scuttling the growing of other trees or crops in the surrounding areas. Joint tree planting sessions.	Sharing resources and jointly planning for the workshops and field days.
Ministry of Gender and Youth	Joint training youths on the need and the prospects of engaging in agriculture as a business.	Sharing resources like vehicles and sharing the budget costs for workshops and seminars.

**Notes:** NALEP = National Agriculture and Livestock Extension Programme

go the night without food because even hotels are closed by 7.30 – 8pm. Much of the insecurity problems were attributed to lack of legal gainful employments to the youths.

## 6.2. District Agricultural Committee and District Agricultural Stakeholders forum

The District Agricultural Committee is a gazetted policy body within the district that offers a platform to farmers to air their views concerning the sector and allows the relevant government ministries to coordinate their agricultural activities within the district. This body had not been formed 7 months after the division was elevated to a district. The DAO admits that they are running late and it is his intention to strengthen what was there before, i.e the sub-DAC and the divisional stakeholders' forum, and elevate them to district status. At the moment coordination of agricultural activities can only be felt between two ministries, that of MoA and MoLD. The DAO having worked in different places within the country in the same capacity has his work cut-out. He knows what to do at any stage and he gives us a detailed over-view on how these bodies will be run under his jurisdiction. Discussions with him revealed that his District Agricultural Committee shall be composed of the following members;

- District Commissioner as the chairman
- District Agricultural Officer as the secretary
- District Livestock production Officer, member
- District Veterinary Officer, member
- District Cooperative Officer, member
- District Fisheries Officer, member
- All the Divisional Agricultural Extension Officers
- A farmer Representative from each division

The agricultural sector has many stakeholders but not all have a permanent place in this committee. NGOs (if any), input and output stockists, input and output manufacturers can be called from time to time whenever a relevant topic that requires their input comes onto the agenda.

District Agricultural Committee is a place where farmers and other stakeholders articulate their issues through their representatives. DAC responds directly to concerns raised by different stakeholders. In theory, more difficult issues are forwarded to the Provincial Agriculture Board (PAB) and, if necessary, to the higher level where concerns raised by players in the sector are looked into at policy level.

The District Agricultural Stakeholders Forum (DASF) is a body composed of;

- Input stockists
- Out-put buyers
- Non Governmental organisations
- Farmers
- Input and output manufacturers
- Credit institutions
- Office of the President, provincial administration.

Ministry officials will be present in these meetings but with no veto powers, they will attend in ex officio capacities. This body's main work will be to harmonise stakeholders' activities within the district. Whenever there is a disagreement between two industry players, this body will also act as the first option for arbitration. A farmer we talked to lamented his woes on the lack of DAC and DASF in the district. He together with some other farmers sold their milk to some little known company in Nairobi. Since the company was giving more money than New KCC and Brookside, they continued supplying the company in the second month. The company paid the first month but disappeared at the end of the second month with all their money. "Had

these bodies been in existence, effective and authoritative, we would have not lost that much", says the farmer<sup>22</sup>. It will be very interesting to see how the DAO manages to deal with these types of issues, particularly with the near absence of NGOs in the area. NGOs are observed to be the major driving force behind these forums in some other districts and their absence will be a stumbling block to the sector's much needed organization.

## 6.3. Limitations of Ministry of Agriculture.

Ministry of Agriculture in Nyeri South has a number of limitations. Officially the ministry's policy is that the budget is drawn up from bottom to top, so the district officials come up with their budget and forward it to the headquarters. In practice the headquarters cuts down the budgets without communication with the district agricultural office. This messes the districts projected output but since they are left with no choice, they simply abide. Financial issues aside, the ministry charged with coordinating the sector players is doing so with few staff. Staff are also less effective in the sense that they are demotivated due to low remuneration and allowances.

Nyeri South lacks a number of personnel, although the DAO is very optimistic that their lobbying to get more staff will be rewarded sooner rather than later. Figure 1 below gives an understanding of the missing gaps in terms of personnel within the district. At the district level, three subject matter specialists, (SMS) are yet to be deployed. This poses serious challenge in the district work-plans. The district has three divisions, Othaya Central, Othaya North and Othaya South. Both Othaya North and Othaya South have only one frontline extension officer and lack five divisional subject matter specialists. The Central Division has HOMECEC and DADO but misses the rest.

Overall, out of the minimum requirement (for this district) of 37 personnel, the district currently has 10 technical personnel and one support staff. They have a vehicle but no driver. They borrow a driver from their Livestock counterparts who have no vehicle. The DAO is in need of 23 more technical staff and three more support staff. A driver, procurement officer and a clerk will seal the support staff vacuum in the district.

On the other hand the Ministry of Livestock's Department of Veterinary Services have an overflowing staff complement in the area. This is despite the fact that the district is reported to be near disease-free with only few reports on mastitis and occasional vaccinations against anthrax, lumpy skin disease and black quarter. According to the veterinary head in the district, the work force is reduced to mere disease surveillance<sup>23</sup>. At the time of this study, some of the MoA locational jurisdictions were manned by animal health assistants from the Livestock Ministry. This is on mutual agreement between the two ministries.

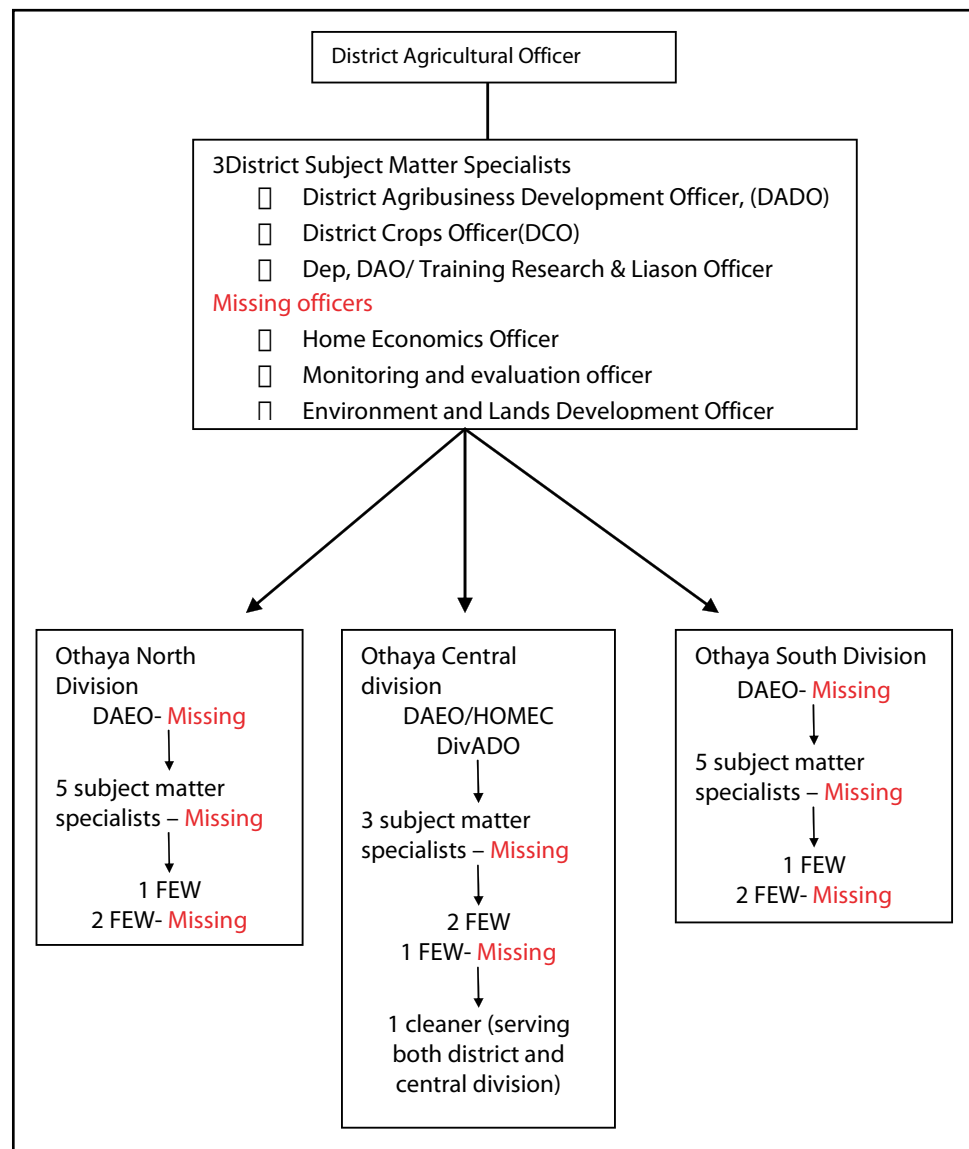
It is very interesting to see that, with only coffee woes in the sector, agriculture continues to perform better in the district even without the help of NGOs and with few agricultural personnel. The farmers' commitment to undertake farming as a business and the private<sup>24</sup> extension agents must be having a hand in this. Farmers understand that services must be demanded and paid for if at all one is to operate a gainful agricultural business.

## Targets and time allocations.

Every officer in the district has a performance contract to sign. It is from this document that an officer knows his targets. From this document coupled with personal interview, we sought to know how a frontline extension worker spends their time.

Mr Jackson is a FEW in charge of Chinga South location. Unlike his Rachuonyo<sup>25</sup> counterparts charged with a target of 741 farmers, his annual target is a mere 300 farmers. He meets his target by allocating his time as shown in Figure 2 below:

Figure 1. Organisational structure of Ministry of Agriculture in Nyeri South district



- Individual visits 40%
- Information desk 15%
- Barazas 5%
- Field days 10%
- Demos 20%
- Others 10%

Mr Jackson says he not only meets his target, he surpasses it. However, four FEWs each meeting 300 farmers per year represents very limited coverage for a district of perhaps 20,000 farm households. Even with the supposed full complement of nine FEWs in post, these targets would leave most farmers in the district unvisited each year.

### Staff morale and sector performance

Ministry officials, particularly the diploma holders deployed at the divisional level, are a very demoralised lot. Most of them have been serving in the same job group for over 10 years without the prospects of getting promotion. Worse still, a number have tried in vain to apply for the employer sponsored study leave. They feel that politics have overtaken ethics and for one to get these rare chances, corruption has to come into play. This greatly hinders career

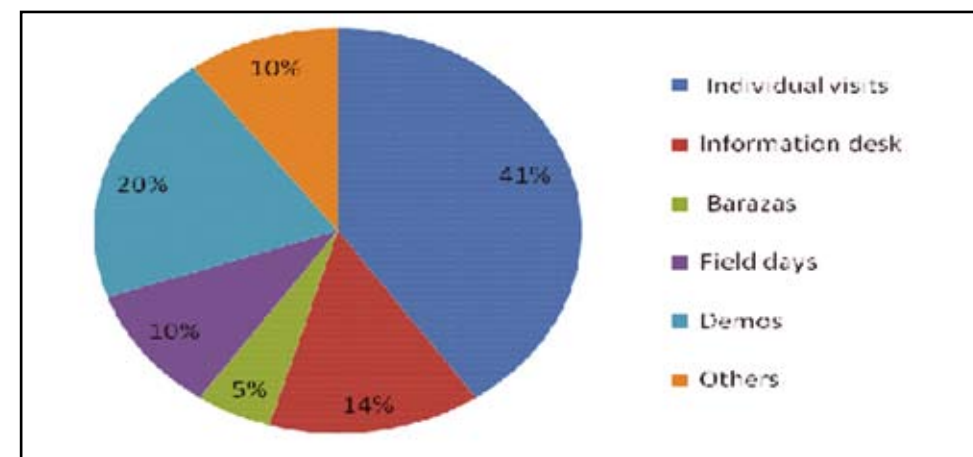
progression for deserving officers as chances are not pegged on an individual's hard work or impressive performance but on corrupt means. These diploma holders at the division are the officers who are charged with feeding the hierarchy with information, they assist FEWs with day to day extension and yet they are lowly paid, they work under poor schemes and above all get very slim or no allowances.

An officer is considered for transfer after a 3 year period but this is sometimes over-looked. The DAO has the powers to reshuffle his division and location personnel within the district. Likewise, on an advice from the DAO, the PDA may transfer and officer within the province.

### 7. Infrastructure

Nyeri South district is months old and lacks some of the most basic office requirements. Since the District Agriculture office lacks electricity, the use of computer cannot be sustained. We are told the office owns one computer but it is stored somewhere since there is no power. The office lacks a printer, photocopiers and enough office furniture. Furthermore the district office premises are the same ones used previously for

Figure 2. Time allocation of a FEW in Chinga South Location



divisional headquarters. The walls are good and strong but the iron sheets roofs are old and rusted. The offices are not enough as they are shared between district and central division. On the other hand, the district office has a functioning telephone land line and ever running piped water.

The office has one motorbike for NALEP activities which means that it is shared among the two ministries, MoA and MoLD. The motor vehicle in their possession is an old one which was initially used at the (former) district and later relegated to the divisions. Since the district was created some few months ago, it is yet to get a better vehicle and send the old one to the division. Many of the agricultural officers interviewed said that if they are given more resources they would definitely do the following in order;

- Employ more technical staff
- Solve transport issues by buying a vehicle and motorbikes
- Increase money on capacity building
- Reconnect electricity and purchase office equipment

The district has a very good road network; most roads are either tarmacked already or are being tarmacked at the time of this study. Market structures also are functioning well. The main products, tea and milk have no major problems in terms of marketing. The district has 18 coffee factories but as was said before, the coffee societies have more politicians than growers. This has messed this subsector to date.

## 8. Fragmentations of Ministry of Agriculture

In recent years the agriculture sector has witnessed repeated splitting of the ministry, seemingly at will or whenever a new administration ascends to power. Once upon a time the sector had one very big ministry, that of Agriculture, Livestock Development and Marketing. This ministry basically contained

agriculture in the sense of crops, all livestock including fish and the marketing part which should be understood as the present day cooperatives.

Meanwhile, the curriculum for extension agents is basically the same, irrespective of the ministry that they eventually enter, with very little specialization. This is the reason why an extension agent from the Veterinary Department in the Ministry of Livestock can effectively stand-in for an absentee agriculture colleague.

The DAO feels that these intermittent splits have not worked well for the farmer: "The farmer, whom all these ministries are working hard to serve, is getting more confused. He has to attend various stakeholders meetings, some called collectively, others called on individual basis"<sup>26</sup>. This is the same view held by many farmers. They feel that it is better for these ministries to be merged and made stronger. All their life they have known extension workers as 'watu wa agriculture' (agriculture people) and the larger percentage still go to agriculture people even with livestock issues. "If livestock people can attend to us on crops problems, why split them?" ponders a farmer from Gatugi location<sup>27</sup>.

Coffee is one of the country's major cash crops. Its production is seen as the business of MoA yet its marketing is under the Ministry of Cooperatives. This confuses the farmer. Tea as another cash crop has its own extension agents from Kenya Tea Development Agency. Since the authority does not have enough personnel, MoA agents carry out extension services to tea farmers. At times there is no proper synchronisation as the two agents are seen to advise differently. This further confuses the farmer and lowers production in due course.

The DAO feels that even some of the government agricultural parastatals should be merged to make them more effective and strong and thereby to help serve the farmers effectively. He pointed out the case of National Cereals and

Produce Board (NCPB) together with Agriculture Finance Corporation. His argument replicates those we gathered in Uasin Gishu. Farmers are charged more for the AFC loans because NCPB has delayed to pay for the produce they delivered to them. If the two are merged and well streamlined, farmers can be spared such agonies.

## 9. Budget preparation.

Nyeri South district has not had the chance to prepare a budget of their own. However, in the coming financial year, the district will have to come up with a budget for eventual funding from the relevant baskets especially from MoA headquarters in Nairobi. The DAO talked to us on how he intends to carry out his budget preparation process.

First the divisional workforce shall call a meeting of their own and discuss all that they want to be in their workplan. These must be accompanied with how much an activity costs. Once that is done and agreeable, the team shall come to the district level for a meeting with their colleagues at the district headquarters. They will present and defend their budget. From there the district personnel shall expand the budget to include their activities. At the end a meeting will again be called for all technical staff in the district for a final say before the budget is dispatched to the headquarters for funding.

## 10. Conclusions and Policy recommendations

Coffee is one of the major cash crops in the district. It is marred with marketing issues which are now affecting its production as well. Coffee societies have more politicians than real coffee growers and whenever an election is called for, they (politicians) are able to mount well-financed campaigns and eventually win. Stakeholders know that the government is somehow involved in this mess, but they are still asking the same government to be serious and help them out.

Those other farmers who have no more trust in the government have already cut back or uprooted their coffee trees and made charcoal out of them. There is urgent need for MoA and Ministry of Cooperatives to come in and help coffee farmers in the district and indeed nationwide.

At the time of the study the dairy subsector was also doing well<sup>28</sup>. This owed much to the strong market competition between New KCC and its private rivals. In addition, farmers are hard working and the climatic conditions of the district do not favour many diseases. There is a need to redeploy the many staff at the Veterinary Department to serve in less well staffed parts of the country or to be incorporated into the MoA system as they are doing now on an informal basis.

Areas like this district should be used as pilot areas to test new ideas like the demand-driven approach of extension. Because many of the farming families have good sources of money, they see no problem in demanding and paying for services, at least where dairy is concerned.

MoA in the district needs to launch and strengthen its stakeholder forum not only to weed out fake private purveyors of animal breeding services, which farmers are crying foul of, but also to help streamline, coordinate and harmonize stakeholder activities in the district. This will also alleviate the problem that exists between the input stockists and the MoA personnel, (outdated advice given to farmers by MoA personnel on inputs to buy).

Ministry of Agriculture should encourage a meaningful exit of demoralised coffee farmers to engage in horticulture as some farmers have already done. Horticulture seems to be a very big opportunity in the district. Previously horticultural crops used to come from neighbouring districts of Mathira and Mukurweini.

There is very minimal interaction of MoA with the output buyers and manufacturers. There is need to incorporate these stakeholders so that

the market of agricultural produce can be further enhanced and unscrupulous/fake output buyers like those of milk from Nairobi can be dealt with.

## End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Nyeri South District (interview)
- <sup>2</sup> Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Nyeri South District (interview plus charts in the district office)
- <sup>3</sup> Personal interview, Gatugu location – December 2009
- <sup>4</sup> Personal interview, Gatugu location – December 2009
- <sup>5</sup> Personal Interview, MoLD offices, Nyeri South District – December 2009
- <sup>6</sup> This was also a major topic of discussion at the feedback workshop in Othaya on 05/02/2010.
- <sup>7</sup> Equity's "Kilimo Biashara" product offers full balloon repayment, but is targeted towards cereals producers, so is of limited interest to farmers in Nyeri South.
- <sup>8</sup> Personal interview, MoA offices, Nyeri South district – December 2009
- <sup>9</sup> Personal Interview, MoA offices, Nyeri South District – December 2009
- <sup>10</sup> Personal Interview, Othaya town – December 2009
- <sup>11</sup> Personal Interview, Iriaini – December 2009
- <sup>12</sup> Personal Interview, MoA offices, Nyeri South District – November 2009
- <sup>13</sup> Personal Interview, MoLD offices, Veterinary Department Nyeri South District – December 2009
- <sup>14</sup> Group discussions, Githunguri Kanyange society – December 2009
- <sup>15</sup> Personal Interview, Githunguri Kanyange – December 2009
- <sup>16</sup> Personal interview, Kiaguthu sublocation – December 2009
- <sup>17</sup> Group discussion, Iriaini – December 2009
- <sup>18</sup> Personal interview, Kiaguthu Coffee factory – December 2009

<sup>19</sup> 4K's stands for "Kuungana, kufanya na kusaidia Kenya".

<sup>20</sup> Group discussion, Kiaguthu group – December 2009

<sup>21</sup> Group discussion, Kiaguthu Group – December 2009

<sup>22</sup> Group discussion, Chinga group - December 2009

<sup>23</sup> Personal interview, MoLD offices, Nyeri South District – December 2009

<sup>24</sup> Efforts to meet some of them did not bear any fruit as they are based in Nyeri town and are constantly on call. They give more priority to duty call than a call to be interviewed.

<sup>25</sup> It's worth noting that Rachuonyo has since been sub-divided in to two districts, Rachuonyo South and North districts. The larger Nyeri district out of sub-divisions produced four; Municipality, Tetu, Nyeri South and Mukurweini Districts.

<sup>26</sup> Personal interview, MoA offices, Nyeri South District – December 2009

<sup>27</sup> Personal Interview, Gatugu location – December 2009

<sup>28</sup> Field work took place prior to the 2009-10 crisis in KCC.

## Appendix:

The list of people interviewed during the survey

Individual Farmers	Farmer Groups	Farm Input Stockists	Farm Output Buyers	Credit Institutions	Government Bodies
Kibui Gichigi	Githunguri Kanyangi horticultural group	Joe Agencies	Jaribu traders	Equity Bank	Ministry of Agriculture
Jackson Maina	Kiaguthu coffee farmers Association	Eliziama Agrovet	Othaya Dairy	Taifa SACCO	Ministry of Livestock Development
John Muge	Chinga Tea farmers Association	Othaya Dairy farmers, farm input department	Kiaguthu Coffee factory	Wanaichi SACCO	
Githinji	Gatugi mixed farmers Association	Sharkvile Agrovet	Gaturuturu Dairy farmer group		
Ayub			Chinga Tea Factory		
Samuel Mahiayu					
Joseph Gichiama					
Mary Wanjeri					

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](http://www.future-agricultures.org)

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