KENYA FORESTRY NEWSLETTER

KENYA FORESTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

and

FOREST DEPARTMENT

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EDITORIAL

Recent forestry meetings at global and regional levels have challenged the role of forestry research in forestry development. In particular the role of forestry research in terms of generating tangible benefits to local communities has not been distinctively visible. Debates on initiatives like the National Forest Programs and Conventions on Biodiverstiy profile areas where research has an important role.

Beyond research but integral to the research process, concern on weak linkages with and between research is often re-voiced.

In this issue, contributions from the field capture beyond horizon scope of diffusion, of two tree species in Western Kenya. These are *Eucalyptus* and *Moringa stenopatela*. The authors highlight the importance the two species have gained in supporting livelihoods of inhabitants of the Lake Victoria region.

Briefs on recent in-country training, regional and global meetings spotlight initiatives on capacity building in research proposal writing, networks for sharing and exchange of information between scientists as well as global conventions and debates on forest resource management.

The commentary pages reveal concerns from readers as usual – but is an exciting section.

Enjoy Reading....

Cover Photo: *Acacia senegal* in flower.
(Photo by Norman Gachathi, KEFRI)

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EDITORS NOTE

The Editor invites contributions from readers. Topics on agricultural, environmental, forestry and related themes are welcome. Views and opinions are also invited to help enrich and improve future publications. Articles can be sent to the address below. Short, concise, one to two page, single-spaced articles are preferred. Pictures, photographs or graphic illustrations spice up articles and if available should be submitted with the articles.

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EUCALYPTUS HARDWOOD THE FAMOUS SPECIES OF THE LAKE REGION (NYANZA)

Eucalyptus hardwood has gained a lot of importance in the lake region of Nyanza Province. In major towns like Homa Bay and Migori it is the dominant popular hardwood species being used in the lucrative furniture industry but has not gained a lot of popularity in the construction industry. Cypress timber on the other hand dominates the construction industry. The cypress timber supply is mainly from the government forest estate in Kericho, Londiani and Molo.

The most interesting phenomenon of the Eucalyptus hardwood supply is that 100% is sourced from individual farms in the Greater Kisii District. The supply and marketing is not dictated by the Government Forest regulation but mainly controlled by the market forces.

The case of Eucalyptus supply from Kisii to popular markets in Nyanza, could be a very good illustration that we can save our forests by mainly promoting farm forestry in areas where there is heavy, destructive exploitation of popular wood species. Furniture made from Eucalyptus hardwood is superior to that of Camphor and Meru Oak. Therefore, what is required is the marketing and promotion of the use of alternative species like Eucalyptus in regions where camphor and other hardwood have been heavily exploited. The way forward is for the Forest Department, KEFRI and other stake holders in timber marketing to hold *jua kali* exhibitions to popularize and promote the use of alternative hard woods like the Eucalyptus in the major towns like Nairobi and Mombasa which are key markets for hardwoods harvested from government forests.

If the hardwood furniture industry in Nyanza can be sustained by farm forestry, the practice can be promoted in other regions.

A. K. Kinyanjui
DFO, Homa Bay

MORINGA TREE PROJECT CAPTURES WIDE ATTENTION IN HOMA BAY

The Moringa tree research and promotion project which is now in its second year of operation has been received with a lot of enthusiasium in Homa Bay District, Nyanza Province.

Moringa which is one of the few tree species which was never given attention by researchers and farmers in Africa has now been given the attention deserved. While the modern as well as the traditional farmers have always been very careful in tree and crop selection, it is still common to find that some species are not given attention.

The Youth Empowered Programme, an NGO based in Homa Bay, is promoting the research and production activities of the Moringa species mainly because:

- leaves of the tree are a good source of nutritious vegetables, rich in vitamins A,B and D as well as in iron and calcium,
- tender seeds are a source of food and have been eaten widely by Asian communities for generations,
- dry seeds are a source of cooking and industrial oil which is in very high demand, and
- after oil extraction, powder form seeds has the potential to give the same benefits derived from chlorine used in domestic water treatment and sanitation.

According to Mr. Ongong Michael, the principal co-ordinator of the project, so far 1,000,000 seedlings have been planted in Homa Bay and in two neighboring districts, Suba and Rachuonyo. Although agroforestry has not been a popular practice for the communities around, it was surprising that the rural families targeted became very positive and are accepting and utilizing the products of the Moringa tree.

The medicinal properties of the tree make it very popular and there is demand given that most people now resort to natural medicine. According to Mr. Odula a renown environmentalist in the region, the tree marks the beginning of proper understanding of the value of our natural resources.

At the same time religious organizations in Homa Bay have also started building positive attitudes towards the environment. This was explained by Mr. Ongong as one of the reasons for the local people accepting the tree. While more research needs to be done and all useful trees promoted, Mr. Ongong who is also the chairperson of all NGOs, and CBOs in Homa Bay has appealed to local research bodies to develop closer contacts with the rural farmers.

He further praised the co-operation and collaboration of the District Forest Officer, Mr. A. K. Kinyanjui who has helped create an enabling environment for the project.

The principal researcher, Mr. Ongong showing a ***Moringa stenopatela*** *planted at the Homa Bay Nature park. The tree is less than 6 months old.*

For more information on the Moringa Project contact: District Forest Office or P.O. Box 839, Homa Bay.

Faith Muga,
Youth Empowerment Program,
Homa Bay.

IN THE NAME OF MOTHER MORINGA

No sooner had I entered the office than Charlie handed over a note to me from my friend Othuon who was summoning me to his office. This was a rare occurrence for the Vet Doctor to behave in this way. In the Disrict Officer's office my long time friend Naphtali was already seated. Daktari responded to my greetings with a low growl of laughter exposing his ritually missing lower six teeth (RMLS).

"We have called you here to break good news", Naphtali said smiling. "Has the Lord come back without my knowledge?" I interjected. The hefty laughter that followed typical of Naphtali who is known to punctuate his own exaggerations with loud prolonged bouts of laughter. "It is Moringa news", Daktari said ignoring my Biblical remark".

Earlier in the third quarter of the year 2000 the Poverty Eradication Commission team had visited Bondo District on a fact finding mission about development strategies of community-based organizations. The Moringa Group in Usigu Division was the one visited and the group as a result, had submitted a proposal to the commission through the District Development Commity (DDC) in line with the District Poverty Eradication strategy Paper 2000. Through the proposal the group asked for funds to promote the planting of *Moringa oleifera* as an oil crop with the potential to raise living standards of the community. Another element of request in the proposal was the provision of funds to purchase an oil pressing machine to enable the farmers extract and market oil from Moringa.

Being the District Forester and an official of the local environmental NGO, the theme of the early morning meeting was to brief me on the Moringa promotion strategies in the district. Dr. Othuon and Naphtali, Usibokwa Chairman and Secretary respectively, had reasons to believe the capability of the forest office in carrying out Moringa extension services having been members of the district integrated environmental conservation team.

The good news was that the Group had received a cheque of Kshs. 50,000 as per their request which came as a micro-credit to facilitate Moringa Project activities of the Group. The money had come through the District Development Committee (DDC). The DDC is the supervisory agent. Bondo Biashara, a micro-credit institution is the managing agent of the loan. The loan will be repaid at 10% interest. During the meeting, it was agreed to involve the District Social Development officer, Provincial Administration and other satekeholders to launch the Moringa Planting Campaign.

Currently, several tree nurseries both government and private raise Moringa seedlings. Kochola Development Group (KODGI), a local NGO has 1000 plus Moringa seedlings in its tree nusery. Farmers also took to planting the crop during the recent short rains. Two years ago, KODGI assisted in planting Moringa at Barkowino Primary School as an income generating activity.

"Moringa is the mother" and in her name insist on visting a Moringa establishement whenever you are in Bondo.My two friends will be at hand to recieve you the Moringa way.

Mr. John Ojwang, DFO Bondo

MASENO NEMATODE ADVISORY SERVICE

Maseno Regional Research Centre has embarked on nematode advisory services for a wide range of organisations, institutions and individual farmers. Anyone suspecting a nematode problem on their farm should contact the centre.

What are Nematodes?

Nematodes are tiny worms and are invisible to the naked eye. They are very abundant in the soil. Most nematodes are beneficial and assist in the biological process in the soil. Some however, feed on plant roots and may cause considerable damage to crops. Damage by plant-parasitic nematodes can occur on any plant and in any soil.

Crop Symptoms

Signs of nematode attack are not very obvious and are often attributed to poor soil fertility, drought or some other deficiency. If one or more of the following symptoms are associated with poorly growing plants, it is advisable to collect a sample of soil and roots to determine whether or not plant nematodes are the cause. The symptoms are:yellowing of the leaves,wilting of the leaves, dieback of branch, galling of the root, "bearding" of the roots (i.e. overproduction of fine rootlets), and necrosis of the roots (i.e. black spots or rotting of roots).

How to Collect Samples?

- Plants that are dead should be avoided. Living plants showing moderate to severe symptoms should be selected. **Do not pull** plants from the soil. Carefully remove roots from the soil with a hoe or *panga*. Collect at least from 5 plants from a selected area.
- Take soil from different spots in the field you want to sample (at least 5 spots). If field is very large, collect more than one sample. Collect a hand-full of soil for each spot from the top 20 - 30 cm soil with a *panga*. If the topsoil is dry, scrape off the top 1 cm layer before sampling and discard.
- Bulk soil from the different spots together in one plastic bag, together with sampled roots and close in a cool place (bury in the ground).
- Soil samples should preferably be taken when soil is neither too wet, nor too dry.
- For trees and other perennial crops, collect soil in neither too wet, nor too dry plants showing poor growth.

Fill all requested information as precisely as possible on the ***Nematode problem information sheet.***

For more information, write to:

Maseno Regional Research Centre, Box 25199, Kisumu

Milton Esitubi and Joseph Machua

Maseno Forestry Research Centre

GROUNDING RESEARCH PROPOSAL WRITING SKILLS: RECENT EVENTS

A good research proposal is a basic requirement for productive and effective research. Yet, one of the main deterrents to the successful access to research grants by African Scientists has been noted to be weak research proposals.

In 1999 the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) in partnership with the International Foundation for Science and the African Academy of Sciences initiated a remedial action founded on the Training of Trainers (TOT) approach.

Participant receiving her certificate

Some selected scientists were trained in "Systematic Approach in Developing and Writing Scientific Research Proposals". The Kenya Forestry Research Institute sent one scientist to the course. The institute has therefore created a capacity to conduct courses in research proposal writing. To begin with Dr. Alice Kaudia of KEFRI and Dr. James Kahindi of Department of Botany, University of Nairobi, delivered a one-day seminar in August, 2000. Between 29th January and 2nd February 2001, the Botany Department, University of Nairobi and KEFRI in collaboration, conducted a five-day course.

Similar courses are planned in the future.

For details contact:

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Dr. Alice A. Kaudia, KEFRI

THE NETWORK FOR NATURAL GUMS AND RESINS IN AFRICA (NGARA)

Background

Natural gums and resins are among dryland resources in Sub-Saharan Africa that contribute to improved livelihoods of local communities in terms of food security, income generation and foreign exchange earnings. These resources also contribute to the amelioration of the environment. The increasing health consciousness among consumers internationally also favours increased use of gums and resins.

The development of these resources and commodities is key to sustainable management and development of the drylands which, due to harsh environmental conditions, have fewer options. However, irregularity of supply of these commodities accompanied by widely fluctuating prices and variable product quality has resulted in unfavourable long-term effects on the demand producing countries and partners to take advantage of available opportunities and address the constraints.

Various initiatives have been undertaken since the mid nineties on how the plant gums and resins sector could be developed to enhance food security, rural development and poverty alleviation in sub-Sahara Africa. One such initiative was the organization of an inaugural workshop for producing countries and partners held in October, 1997 in Nairobi, Kenya during which issues on the conservation, management and utilization of plant gums, resins and essential oils were discussed and concrete recommendations made. A key recommendation of that workshop was the creation of a regional network to enable countries develop their own system of sustainable production, and improved marketing of their products to international standards. A follow-up workshop was held in May, 2000 in Nairobi, Kenya where the **Network for Natural Gums and Resins in Africa (NGARA)** was established.

Mission of the Network

The network is to assist in formulating a coordinated strategy for African producing countries and partners in the sustainable development of their natural gum and resin for improving rural livelihoods and environmental conservation.

Goal of the Network

To position African producer countries and partners as major global players in the production, processing and marketing of gums and resins.

Objectives of NGARA

- To promote exchange of information on production, marketing, processing and quality control among producer countries as well as with partners.
- To facilitate access to technological development and training.
- To support relevant research in the key areas of the sector.
- To promote the links between primary producers, processors and end users.

Activities of NGARA

- Creation of relevant Databases, Information Dissemination and promotional activities.
- Training and Capacity Building.
- Research and Technology Development.

Membership and Mode of Operation

NGARA was initially established with a membership of 10 countries from sub-Sahara Africa producing plant gums and resins who participated in the Nairobi Workshop of May, 2000. However, membership is by application from countries in sub-Sahara Africa producing the commodities and organizations involved in the development of the resources and/or commodities. The network has a steering committee comprising; representatives from 3 focal points (West and Central Africa, Eastern Africa and Southern Africa), experts on marketing and quality control and international observers (represented by FAO and AIDGUM).

Each member country is represented by a national coordinator. The day to day activities are handled by a regional Secretariat based at Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), Nairobi, Kenya.

For more information, please contact:

The Secretariat, NGARA,
KEFRI, P. O. Box 20412, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 254 154 32353 Fax: 254 154 32844
Email: kefri@africaonline.co.ke OR kefri@arcc.or.ke

Sheila Shefo Mbiru, KEFRI

NGONG HOUSEHOLD ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION PROJECT: SUMMARY OF PAST AND PRESENT ACTIVITES

Introduction

Energy activities in Ngong started in June 1998 after the media (newspaper and television) reported that women in Ngong suburban area were using waste plastics as a source of cooking energy. Knowing the dangers involved in inhaling hydrocarbon smoke that mainly contain carbon monoxide, hydrogen chloride and fuel gas among other emissions from plastic combustion, the Gender Research Group (GRG) of Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) decided to assess the fuel energy status in Ngong.

About 90% of the households in Ngong face an acute fuel energy crisis and risk the health of their family members through the use of plastics. It is against this background that the GRG in collaboration with Winrock International decided to carry out a study/ intervention programme aimed at establishing fuel energy status in Ngong. Other organizations involved in the project include Ministry of Local government, Office of the President, Ministry of Culture and Social services, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, and the Kenya Planters Co-operative Union (KPCU).

This is a project of the African Women Leaders in Agriculture and Environment (AWLAE) program of Winrock International and implemented by the Gender Research Group (GRG) of KEFRI. The promotions were done by Kenya Energy and Environmental Organisation (KENGO), Women in Development and Environment (WIDEN), and GRG. The kiln developed by the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) was adopted. The construction of the kiln was a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Energy and the Jamhuri Energy Center, with technical advice from ITDG.

Methodology

Participatory Rapid/Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools such as open ended discussions, semi-structured questionnaires, historical analysis, general observation were used to gather as much information as possible during the initial survey.

Later demonstrations on the most appropriate stoves such as the *Kuni Mbili* produced by KENGO, the *Maendeleo* Liner and the Fireless cooker produced by WIDEN were done. The participants expressed the need to gain skills in making the stoves for domestic use and for sale. Training activities started in June 1999 and extended to the year 2000.

Current project activities

The current project activites in the second phase are:

- Extending the project to other sub-urban slums and some rural areas to assess its impacts;
- Promotion of clean energy technologies and health education ;
- Calculate actual energy savings through research with at least 50 households in different regions;
- Start a tree nursery at Ngong site; and
- Monitoring the project's impact in the different sites.

Conclusion

The project has been successful in many ways:

- Bringing together stakeholders in the energy sector;
- Raising awareness on the importance of clean household energy conservation as well as environmental conservation;
- The stoves have made a big difference by drastically cutting costs on household energy bills and also ensuring safe and economical use of cooking energy;
- The participants have been the major agents of technology extension especially through women group meetings and other communal groupings;
- Promoting and training the participants in other appropriate technologies such as the multi-story and the *Mandalla* kitchen gardens. This has reduced vegetable bills and improved the households' nutritional status. Surplus vegetablesare also sold
- A successful tree nursery was established at Nkaimurunya and is being managed by the participants.

Although the project has focused on stoves that use firewood, it is hoped that other energy saving devices will be promoted. Opportunities do exist for solar energy stoves, water heaters and biogas production.

For more information contact:
GRG - Ngong Energy Project, KEFRI
P.O.Box 20412, Nairobi, Kenya.
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Jane Njuguna, KEFRI

NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES: INSIGHTS FROM THE SECOND TRAINING WORKSHOP, KAMPALA, UGANDA

Global Debates

Forests are a valuable natural resource for perpetuation of the human race. There are indications of change in global climatic conditions exhibited by floods, increases in environmental temperatures, and irregular rainfall patterns. These indicators, against a backdrop of previous concerns on tropical deforestation associated with population increase, agricultural expansion and industrial development have prompted proactive international dialogue and the devising of remedial strategies.

As a follow up to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) conference, a number of international conventions and processes have been initiated by international agencies and African governments to generate frameworks for sustainable forest management. In 1995, the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) noted that deforestation of tropical forests continues at a very high rate. Consequently, an International Panel on Forests(IPF) was formed to facilitate global debates and criteria of strategies for sustainable forests management. Between 1995 and 1997, IPF held four meetings. Through these meetings, priority international, regional and national level issues were identified. Since 1997, IPF was changed to International Forum on Forests (IFF) as a policy dialogue forum under the Economic and Social Commission of the United Nations (ECOSOC). The recommendations of the IFF 4th meeting in January 2000 in New York were that ECOSOC should:

- Promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and strengthen long-term political commitment to this end;
- Promote the implementation of internationally agreed actions on forests at national, regional, and global levels;
- Provide a coherent and participatory framework for policy implementation, coordination and development and that these ideas can be achieved through international efforts on providing a forum for continued policy devel opment and enhancing cooperation as well as policy and programme coordination

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) was formed in 2000 as an intergovernmental body through which progressive policy dialogue and fostering sustainable forest management (SFM) can be advocated. One of the main outputs of IFF has been the creation of National Forest Programmes (NFP). As a concept, NFP has been defined by IPF as a general term "for a wide range of approaches to sustainable forest management and land use to be implemented in the context of each country's socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental conditions". Hence NFP is a policy framework for SFM.

A critical challenge for progress of NFP implementation in Africa is the apparent shortage or in some instances, lack of funds. Yet at the international level, the thinking is that operationlization of NFP's and hence SFM must be self-financing. At the same time, it is noted that proper-valuation of forest products and services and the reflection of such values in the national accounting system has not been done. As a result, policy makers and practitioners have not appreciated the value of forests, a factor largely associated with limited budgetary allocation to forestry research and development.

Limited human resource capacity in the implementation of NFP's in the context of contemporary forestry practices embracing community participation and collaborative inter-sectoral partnerships has been recognized. Hence, one of the key activities of the NFP process has been capacity building to ensure continue updating of forest policy makers and practitioners on international dialogue and advocacy processes and the experiences with joint forest management and collaborative forest management.

Initiatives in Africa

Since 1998, the African Academy of Sciences (AAS), in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and funding from the European Union has been spearheading the capacity building component of the NFP process in Africa. In 2000 the AAS convened two international workshops on NFP. The second workshop was held in Kampala Uganda between 13th – 17th November 2000. The workshop was attended by 42 participants from five Eastern African countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Sudan and Ethiopia) and representatives from UNEP, UNDP, FAO, non-governmental

organizations and the private sector. The workshop sessions covered: perspectives from global dialogue on SFM, national level planning and implementation against a background of international dialogues on implementation of NFP at district level, and industrial perspectives including valuing of forest resources and marketing. Case experiences on community level participatory forest management elicited the practical constraints and opportunities for successful application of concepts like joint forest management/ collaborative forest management (CFM).

Country Experiences

In Kenya, between 1990 and 1994, necessary initiatives to foster NFP were undertaken. A forest sector master plan and a draft forest policy were drafted by 1994. Recently, in 1999/2000, revision of the forest legislation to support the policy has been drafted. It is anticipated that these background preparations coupled with necessary socio-political support, sustainable forest management can be realised in Kenya. Uganda has had two years of experience with CFM. However it is notable that the process of setting-up on operational framework which can accommodate the diverse interests and needs of communities while conforming with existing conventional forest management practice, policy and legislation is a practical challenge.

A presentation by the Forest Sector Coordination secretariat (FSCS) of Uganda illustrated the difference between international forest sector priorities and national priorities. In the case of Uganda, only 50% of the 150 proposals identified by IFF to have important bearing on forestry development were found to be relevant to the situation in Uganda. This experience underscores the need for forestry professionals to be up to date with international dialogues and advocacy for SFM so as to have an informed capacity to identify international proposals of relevance to national needs and priorities.

In the case of Tanzania, the different concepts are applied depending on the type of forests. In the case of gazetted forest and forest reserves, JFM is the concept. In areas where the government does not control the forest resource, community based forest management (CBFM) administered by village environment and natural research management committees applies.

Generally, the experiences of the NFP process in Africa so far suggest a need for strategic convergence of ideas and issues so as to ensure appropriate framework for NFP operationlization with scope for stable and sustainable management of forest resources. The several processes which are currently going on in most African countries like revision of forest policy and forest act, advocacy for community participation in forest management, privatization of forest management against a background of a shrinking human resource capital, capacity and resource base present a confounding scenario.

At this stage, what can be recommended is a critical analysis of the advantages of the different options for SFM so as to strike a balance between national, community and international needs.

Alice A Kaudia[1] , E. K. Ambune[2], J. K. Macharia[2], and D. K. Mbugua[2]

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: Its significance and the potential role of KEFRI

Background

The Convention on Biological Diversity is the first global agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. It recognizes - for the first time - that the conservation of biological diversity is a common concern of human kind and is an integral part of the development process. The convention covers all ecosystems, species, and genetic resources. It links traditional conservation efforts to the economic goal of using biological resources sustainably. It sets principles for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources notably those destined for commercial use. It also covers the rapidly expanding field of biotechnology, addressing technology development and transfer, benefits sharing and biosafety. Importantly, the convention is legally binding. Countries that sign it are obliged to inplement its provisions.

The Convention reminds decision-makers that natural resources are not infinite and sets out a new philosophy for the 21st century; that of sustainable use. It recognizes that all ecosystems, species and genes must be used for the benefit of humans. However, this should be done in a way and at rate that does not lead

to the long-term decline of biological diversity. The Convention further acknowledges that substantial investments are required to conserve biological diversity. It argues, however, that conservation will bring us significant environmental, economic and social benefits in return.

Under the Convention, governments undertake to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity. Thus are required to develop national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and to integrate these into broader national plans for environment and development. Other treaty commitments which KEFRI should now focus its attention include:

- Identifying and monitoring the important components of biological diversity particularly trees and shrubs that need to be conserved and used sustainably e.g. rare and endangered species particularly those with potential commercial value.
- Establishing protected areas like conservation stands , botanical gardens in towns, and around rural markets and schools to conserve indigenous trees and shrubs while promoting environmentally sound development and assisting local communities in tree planting activities.
- Rehabilitating and restoring degraded ecosystems and promoting the recovery of threatened species in collaboration with local residents. The Bamburi Baobab farm at the Kenya North coast is a goodcase study. Perhaps greater emphasis should be on the Arid and Semi-arid areas (ASALs) where a majority of species are more threatened.
- Respecting, preserving and maintaining traditional knowledge by involving indigenous people and local communities. In Kenya, this is illustrated by the Loita Forest as a biological and cultural heritage.

According to the Loita Masai the forest also serves as a living pharmacy; a respiratory for medicinal drugs that have disappeared in the wake of wanton destruction elsewhere. KEFRI scientists should therefore enlist such communities as research partners and include specific activities, complete with workplans and budgets to ensure their co-operation and benefits sharing of the research undertaking and preventing the introduction, controlling, and eradicating of alien species that could threaten ecosystem, habitats or species, for example genetically modified plants (GMO). KEFRI should form strong linkages with other institutions like Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) to ensure an inter-institutional approach to tackling such problems. The importation of alien species (GMO's, terminators seeds) and their products is currently a subject of intense international and national debate and requires a scientific intervention to provide guidelines.

During the recent Conference of Parties meeting in Nairobi, Kenya was the first country to sign the CBD's Biosafety Protocol. It is now the responsibility of the relevant institutions to come together and work out mechanisms of its implementation. The protocol requires that those exporting genetically modified products must provide detailed information to the importing country prior to shipment of such products. This is to ensure that the importing country has the opportunity to asses the potential risks and decide on a case-to-case basis whether to import or not.

The biosafety Protocol has come about primarily because of the efforts of the developing countries to protect their environment and their peoples' health from the potential risks of genetic engineering. Most of these countries do not have strong national regulation to prevent dumping of genetically engineered products coming in as food imports, aid or seed. These countries can now invoke theAdvanced Information Agreement (AIA) procedures of the Biosafe Protocol to know what is in the incoming foods, seeds. Perhaps this is the opportunity where the extensively equipped laboratories in KEFRI can be optimized.

William Omondi, KEFRI

COMMENTARY

Forestry Research and Management

I got a copy of your Newsletter No. 3 of May 2000 and I am very thankful. In the letter you pointed out all plans and strategies you have to improve Forestry Research and Forest Management in Kenya to safeguard global environment. It is clearly seen that there are researchers and implementers under Forestry Department. Do both have the same strength, financially and in terms of resources to meet the planned requirements?

You left out a vital tool in the planning. Training of the personnel. What depth of training or the scope of training should the personnel receive? They train at different institutions all over the world. Forestry management differs from one country to another. Most countries especially developed ones have mechanized all operations . So, the personnel from those countries have in their minds plans fixed on mechanical tools for implementation of many operations, which differ from manual implementation in time, cost and success. The two personnel (professionals and technicians) do not match well in implementation for the foresaid Forestry Research and Forestry Management. Most of the professionals have got interest in the work but most of the technicians do not. Some of them do their work for the sake of money. This causes problems as they are the front line for any meaningful success. Most work failures arise from that riftpoint.

What plans do you have in place to contain the situation for success because our country is poor, all operations are done manually and the two cadres of personnel do not match well. The institution of forestry is by now badly organized in terms of resources, while KEFRI is equipped for the work. If you do not have any I suggest you do a research on it in order to meet your plans.

J.M. Kyengo
Kibwezi Forest Station, P.O.Box 261, Kibwezi

Many thanks for your challenging observations. KEFRI and FD are now forging closer links. In time, research, development and implementation will hopefully, march in the same stride.

Editor

Extension Agents Dilemma

The land holdings of most of the farmers in a newly established development area were too small and too badly fragmented to provide them with a decent livelihood. It was therefore decided to make available to them some additional land, on condition that they all agreed to give up their scattered plots for relocation into larger individual, compact holdings.

The extensions agents in that area had the job of introducing the plan, which he did at a meeting of the divisional development committee, in which the farmers were represented. He pointed out to the members of the committee that if farmers accepted the plan they would benefit in many ways:

(i) they would have more land;
(ii) they would no longer have to waste time in going from one small plot to another;
(iii) they would find a compact farm easier to drain and fence;
(iv) they would also make good use of tractors.

The extension agent then called a meeting of all the farmers. Although he took great pains to explain the advantages of the plans very carefully, no one showed any enthusiasm for it. As a follow up, therefore, he asked several of the most influential farmers to see him individually in his office in the hope that, if only he could convince them, they in turn would help to convince others but he failed with them also. They said they had farmed their existing lands for years and they intended to continue farming them. They knew exactly what they would produce. As for the new scheme, who knew what land he would get, or what kind of soil?

In the end, the agent had to abandon the scheme. Was it bound to fail, or might he have had a better chance of success if he had approached the problem in a different way.

Quick Quip

"A short speech is like a woman's skirt-cut. It should be short enough to be interesting and long enough to cover the whole subject."

B.K. Nguyo
Forest Extension Officer, Igembe South Division

Commentary

A short speech should be like a man's tie.....short enough to look exectutive and long enough to demonstrate personality

Editor

Faltering Forest Scenario

Sound management of an organization is said to be guided by competent policy and legislation. These criteria determine the direction and provides safe guards necessary for the survival of that organization.

What is the position of the Forest Department on these requirements. Efforts directed towards reforming forest policy and legislation are not in tandem with the demand and changing needs for forestry management in Kenya today.

We have been reminded that forest policy is the sum total of principles that should guide the actions of Kenyans towards the ends they wish to obtain from their forest, sustainably. Do we currently have such a workable policy or legislation in Kenya?

The truth is that, a comprehensive version of those two documents were drafted in 1994 through the Master Plan portfolio but today it is still in incubation. The old one (Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1968) is moribund and does not match the contemporary forestry scenario.

If you internalize the opportunity cost of this vacuum then you start to understand the current forest management panorama including the arbitrary and unprofessional assignment of natural forests within Mt. Kenya to the Kenya Wildlife Service authority whose management is supposedly designed and guided by totally different policy and legislation.

The forestry organisation should therefore categorically restate its position. We should remember it is suicidal to gamble with professions for short term selfish satisfaction.

Maurice O Abuto
District Forest Officer, Meru North District

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The 9th Symposium of the Natural Products Research Network for Eastern and Central Africa (NAPRECA)
August 27th-31st, 2001,
Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya.

For more details contact:
The Secreatariat, 9th NAPRECA Symposium, c/o Department of Chemistry, University of Nairobi, P.O.Box 30197, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 254 2 440436, Fax: 254 2 446138
Email: napreca-k@uonbi.ac.ke
Internat Home Page: http://www.uonbi.ac.ke/

2. 18th Weed Science Society for Eastern Africa
Nairobi
September 2001
Adoption of Weed Control as a Science and the Development of New Concepts in Weed management as tools for alleviating the weeding burden on farmers in developing countries.

For further details contact:
The Secreatariat, P.O.Box 14733, Nairobi
Tel: 254 2 444031/2 Fax: 254 2 443956
Email: cpp@net2000ke.com

3. 2nd Social Forestry Extension Regional Seminar for the Promotion of tree planting in Arid and Semi-Arid Areas
24th-27th September, 2001
KEFRI, Nairobi, Kenya

For details contact
KEFRI, SFTC
P.O.Box 20412, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 254 154 32891/2/3 or 32009
Fax: 254 154 32844 or 32009
Email: kefri@arcc.or.ke or sofem@arcc.or.ke

4. International conference on agricutural science and technology
7-9 November 2001. ICAST, Beijing, China.
For Details please visit the conference's Website:
www.agscience2001.org

5. *4th International Conference on Forest Vegetation Management: Technical, Environmental and Economic Challenges of Forest Vegetation Management.*
17-21, June, 2002. Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique, Nancy, France. For more details, Email ***Henri Frochot*** at ifvmc4@nancy.inra.fr
Or visit the Website at http://www.ifvmc.org