



Change of strategy ushers good times for Co-op

ORINDE FARMERS CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY - RACHUONYO

Focused leadership is taking Orinde Farmers Co-operative Society in Rachuonyo District places. Within a short time, the management committee has guided the society of 1,229 farmers to better times.

The current team led by Mr. Dishon O. Ondigo as Chairman has seen annual parchment almost triple from 43,000 kilos in the 2003/2004 season to 118,000kg. Other officials include Joshua O. Magunga as Vice-Chairman, Fredrick N. Angwenyi as Secretary, Joshua O. Okeyo as Treasurer with George O. Odera, Joshua M. Okombo, Helen A. Okello and Dorine A. Okechi as committee members.

The chairman said the key strategy has been to educate fellow farmers that coffee now pays and they should give the crop attention to truly benefit from it. "Seventy-five per cent of households around here grow coffee. We have been visiting and telling them not to neglect the crop. Payment per kilo is going up. We started with Sh.21 a kilo in 2004 and have never paid our members less than this amount. Currently we are paying Sh37.50 a kilo," he said during an interview at the society's factory in Oyugis, Rachuonyo District.

The passionate appeal to fellow farmers aside, Orinde is going through exciting time since 2009 when it sought financial assistance from the CoDF. The society obtained a loan of Sh.1.1 million from CoDF which went into taking care of the coffee farms.

Now, though, Orinde is eyeing another loan to help it install a modern primary processing machine and save on the losses they experience owing to using old equipment for pulping. "We hope to have a new machine by March 2011. We need Sh.2.3m for the pulping machine, new drying beds and new weighing machine among others."

The society's nursery has 43,000 seedlings which members will be given for free. The society therefore anticipates increased yields and hence the desire to have a quality pulping machine. It has already built a store that will hold deliveries from members as well as keep the crop safe from thieves who now know the value of coffee. Members have enjoyed the benefits of the first loan as production per tree shot up from an average of 1kg per tree in 2008 to the current 3kg.

Orinde FCS members have 331,693 coffee trees on 57.7 hectares and there is room for expansion.



Mr Rotino busy at his farm

Like any coffee farmer in Kenya, he has had his highs and lows with the crop. Meet him today, though, and observe the wistfulness in his eyes and the passion with which he discusses coffee and you will appreciate he enjoys a special relationship with this crop.

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Farmer's success sets good example for society

By EVANS ONGWAE

PETER ROTINO - WEST POKOT

Next year, Mr. Peter Rotino, 50, will mark two decades of coffee growing. To the Kapenguria farmer and primary school teacher, the future looks rosier than ever. Also, next year he will expand the land under which he has put coffee. With a broad smile, he announces: "I have coffee on 4.3 acres and I want to add another one acre."

Like any coffee farmer in Kenya, he has had his high and low moments. Meet him today, though, and observe the wistfulness in his eyes and the passion with which he discusses coffee and you will appreciate he enjoys a special relationship with this crop. Mr. Rotino would easily rank among the most optimistic farmers in the country. When you get to learn that he has been mobilizing, cajoling and urging other farmers around Kapenguria to take up coffee growing, you appreciate his zest even more.

Mr. Rotino has become something of a celebrity in his home area courtesy of his achievements in coffee farming. Farmers call and visit him for advice. Kotney, the coffee farmers' society which he belonged to still values his leadership. Even though he never takes his coffee to the society, having become a small estate farmer, members urged him to remain a member. He has managed to

convince new farmers to plant coffee.

Why is Mr. Rotino interested in seeing his neighbours join the coffee fray? "So that we produce enough coffee that we can process here as a group," he explained. Although he started growing coffee in 1991, Mr. Rotino abandoned his coffee when the commodity's price went down. However, when CoDF offered him a chance to get loans and improve his yield, he accepted.

CoDF officials explained to him that the loan was for pruning, fertilizer spraying equipment (knapsacks) and herbicides. The idea was to rehabilitate the coffee and Mr. Rotino happily declares: "CoDF brought my coffee back to life. The loan injection helped my production shoot up." The Fund gave him a Sh.200,000 loan during the 2007/2008 season.

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Members of Orinde FCS Management Committee

Turning point for coffee farmer

PETER GICHUKURU - KIRINYAGA

Peter Gichukuru has been in growing coffee since 1970 and today has 3,400 trees. However, he confesses that it is in the last three years that he has started reaping high yields from each tree. Even then, he acknowledges that he is yet to get maximum output from each tree. He is now working towards that.

When coffee prices tumbled, he did not pay much attention to the crop and would get yields of less than 5,000 kilos a year. These days he harvests more than 12,000kg. Then in 2008 he approached Kirinyaga Farmers Cooperative Society for a loan to rehabilitate with his coffee crop that was doing badly. That marked a turning point for the

elderly farmer. The cooperative linked him with the

CoDF which advanced him a loan of Sh.175,000. With this money, he bought fertilizer, fungicide and paid labourers who helped him prune and pick the coffee. He received a second loan of Sh.215,000.

He has since seen his yield increase from 4,000kg to 6,000kg last year. This year he expects more than double last year's production.

Mr. Gichukuru who also grows tea and sweet potatoes is still not satisfied with the amount of coffee beans he gets from each tree. He is determined to improve the yield from an average of 5kg per tree to the maximum of 15 to 20kg expected from the SL28 variety he

has on his farm.

He says the financial support from CoDF has taken him a step higher as he now earns more from the farm unlike in the past. The earnings from the farm have helped put his children through the parallel programmes in public universities.

Mr. Gichukuru is licensed by the Coffee Board of Kenya to process own coffee. He looks forward to completing the structure that he will use to process the coffee.

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