

Economically viable Alternative Livelihoods for tobacco farmers – Kenya's Experience

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Tobacco Farming Zones in Kenya



Tobacco farming status in Kenya

- Tobacco is grown in South Nyanza, Eastern and Western Kenya zones
- Number of tobacco farmers has increased from 500 in 1971 to 35,000 in 1990s and 55,000 in 2011!.
- The land under tobacco has also continued to grow rapidly at the expense of traditional food crops and livestock activities
- Three tobacco companies operate in the country
- **Major threat:** Expansion from medium to high potential agricultural areas due to the collapse of cotton, sisal, pyrethrum and coffee industries
- TI is very present in Kenya, manufacturing hub for the region and beyond



Policy on Tobacco Farming

- Party to FCTC since 2004 – (Article 17 & 18)
- The Tobacco Control Act requires the MoA to support alternative livelihoods for tobacco farmers. However existing policies only encourage crop diversification.
- Government provides a subsidy for fertilizers in order to increase food production and security in the County. Non-contracted tobacco farmers access this subsidy
- The government encourages farmers to preserve at least 10% of their land as woodlots to guard against destruction of trees while cultivating tobacco.

Diversification efforts

- Driven by non GoK organizations
- The Kenya Anti-tobacco Growing Association (KATOGA) is progressively building momentum for crop substitution with fruits, soya beans, pineapples
- Bamboo project (IDRC –S.E University College).

Bamboo Project

- South Eastern University college with support from IDRC; Partners -INBAR, Maseno Univ.
- Regions covered – Southern Region (Nyanza)
- So far land covered by bamboo diversification project by 241 farmers

Soya bean; soya Vs Maize



High yielding climbing beans



Sweet Potatoes



Conducted Bamboo Production and Processing Trainings / capacity building on:-

- **Land preparation**
- **Planting,**
- **Farm management,**
- **Propagation,**
- **Harvesting,**
- **Treatment,**
- **Processing into products**
- **Marketing**
- **Cooperative management**
- **Provision of manuals**
- **Field trips**



bamboo yields

- Has over 1500 uses so far recorded in the world.
- Matures in about 3-5 years, harvested 80-120 years with very little capital investments.
- High annual yields of about 20-40 tons per hectare
- Less demand for wood fuel.
- Environmental conservation e.g. purification of air and polluted water bodies.
- Bio-remediation and improves soil fertility -decomposing leaves and sheaths.
- Fewer associated risks for crop
- Less labour intensive



Formation of Bamboo Cooperative Societies

Major Role: Marketing of bamboo products from former tobacco farmers

- 1. Migori Bamboo Farmers Coop Society Ltd.**
- 2. Kuria Bamboo Farmers Coop Society Ltd.**
- 3. Homa Bay Bamboo Farmers Coop Society Ltd.**
- 4. Suba Bamboo Farmers Coop Society Ltd.**



Results from Bamboo Project

- Low annual yields associated with insufficient returns of Ksh 15,000 (USD 185\$)/acre/) per annum
- bamboo farming estimated at Ksh 83,910 (USD 1,000\$/acre) per annum
- Bamboo profits are 4-10 times higher than those of tobacco



Soya Beans

- High yielding i.e up to 2000kg/acre x2 = KSh120, 000 per annum (**Usd 1,500**)
- Early Maturity of between 3 to 4 months of production.
- Minimum labour of planting, weeding, harvesting and threshing
- Soil rehabilitation
- It is direct source of food to the family, with high protein level.
- Availability of varied market – more buyers locally and beyond the regions
- Negotiable selling price at the market unlike tobacco whose price is determined by the tobacco industry
- Safe crop while in the farm as well as in storage

KATOGA

- Kenya Anti-tobacco Growing Association
- Established in 1999, NGO, former tobacco growers who changed to anti-tobacco growing association
- Southern region of Nyanza Province (Migori, Kuria, Suba, Rongo and Nyatike Districts); Western Province (Teso and Malakisi Districts); Eastern Province (Embu and Meru Districts)
- **Diversification**
 - Soya beans, Passion, Pineapple, high yielding climbing beans, potatoes
 - works on farmers mobilization, training on production, value addition and utilization of soya beans
 - Marketing through village collection and aggregation centres.
 - Issue inputs to soya beans farmers at subsidized rate through revolving fund base

Opportunities

- Kenya being a Party to the FCTC
- National Legislation requires the government to support alternative livelihood for tobacco farmers
- Willingness by the governments to develop policies that will ensure alternatives to tobacco production
- Many farmers are willing to abandon tobacco production and venture into other alternatives
- Fertile soil in the tobacco growing region which may require minimal fortification
- Favorable climate that favors other high economic returning crops
- Existing work for further support, research on alternative crops

Challenges/Gaps

- Increasing demand for diversification support but no incentives
- The market for alternative crops/ farm production; value addition
- small scale and not much farm is left for the encouraged 10% forest conservation
- Tempting presence of TI - inputs and a ready market
- Support - Knowledge/skill, extension workers
- Resources – inputs, transitional funds, co-op/sacco
- Tobacco industry interference

Recommendations

- Development of national and global guidelines for implementation of art 17 & 18
- Require official data from MoA on tobacco farming
- Policies for farmer-support mechanisms/ on the shifting process
- Studies on viable alternatives
- Transfer of value addition/ processing technologies for alternative crops

Conclusion

- TI controls tobacco farming – all stages
- Tobacco farmers are eager to diversify
- Afraid of lack of market for newly introduced crops
- Skills development is req for diversification
- Transitional funds to support diversification
- Extension workers to support diversification

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