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## West Pokot farmers get fertiliser boost in food security drive

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A farmer sprinkles fertiliser on his land. Photo/FILE NATION MEDIA GROUP

By BARNABAS BII, bbii@ke.nationmedia.com  
Posted Sunday, September 29 2013 at 19:28

**IN SUMMARY**

- KVDA also sets aside 25,000ha for sugarcane farming scheme to cost up to Sh10 billion.

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Farmers at an irrigation scheme in West Pokot County have benefited from farm inputs to boost crop production as alternative source of income to livestock rearing.

The 225 farmers at Wei Wei irrigation scheme have received 200 bags of fertiliser from Mea Limited in an initiative by the county to attain food security in famine prone region caused by recurrent drought.

Besides the Mea Ltd donation, the farmers were also given three tonnes of maize seed by Kenya Seed Company.

Governor Simon Kachapin and Senator John Lonyang'apuo launched the drive to revive the scheme



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the drive to revive the scheme, which has been idle for two years.

“The initiative is aimed at tackling financial constraints facing the farmers that has affected their crop production,” said Mr Kachapin on phone.

Some farmers in the scheme have not planted crops for the last two years due to wrangles pitting their association against the Kerio Valley Development Authority (KVDA), the initiators of the programme.

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Prof Lonyang'apuo disclosed plans by agricultural research institutions to analyse soil and determine the type of fertiliser suitable for crops in the area.

“High soil acidity level caused by application of common type of fertiliser has resulted in low crop productivity,” said Prof Lonyang'apuo.

According to Wei Wei Farmers Association acting manager Mark Meut, members earned more than Sh40 million last harvest season. The farmers cultivate crops like maize, sorghum, bananas, fruits and vegetables that have improved their livelihoods.

Mr Meut said that more than 100,000 farmers in West Pokot and Turkana counties have invested in furrow and drip irrigation system following the return of relative peace in a region that has witnessed protracted cattle rustling and banditry activities.

“The project has proved successful by providing food security and sustainable income generation to communities that have experienced recurrent starvation,” said Daniel Daimo, association's technical assistant manager.

KVDA project manager John Kwatemoi said that the authority spent about Sh300,000 last season to repair water drainage system damaged by floods and replace worn-out pipes.

“Farmers are to be trained on modern farming techniques and carry out soil analysis to determine type of fertiliser to apply to their crops,” he said.

KVDA managing director said that David Kimosop, West Pokot and Turkana counties are set to benefit from a multi-billion sugarcane project valued at between Sh8 billion and Sh10 billion.

“More than 25,000 hectares of land will be planted with sugarcane under drip irrigation as part of downstream development plans of the Turkwel hydropower project,” said Mr Kimosop.