

Sugarcane Farming Success Stories in the Nyando Sugar Belt

Introduction:

Sugar Research Institute (SRI) is one of the 16 research institutes that constitutes Kenya and Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO). The institute implements KALRO's mission of promoting, streamlining, coordinating and regulating research in crops, livestock, genetic resources and biotechnology in Kenya. It has a mandate to conduct sugar research through application of science, technology and innovation to catalyze sustainable growth and development in the sugar crops value chain.

To date, the Institute has released over 21 improved sugarcane varieties and accompanying package of good management practices. Some of these technologies have been adopted in all the sugarcane-growing zones in Kenya. These technologies and management practices have significantly improved the livelihood and socio-economic status of farmers who have adopted the same.

KALRO-SRI in collaboration with Standard Media group organized for a documentary coverage of some notable success stories in Nyando Sugar belt. SRI Institute Director, **Dr. Betty Mulianga** who steered the activity gave an overview of the institute's mandate, research programmes and achievements. She outlined that despite the challenges in the sugar industry, some farmers had immensely benefited from the adoption of the institute's technologies and innovations.

Two successful farmers were identified to narrate their achievements in sugarcane farming as summarized below:



SRI, Institute Director (right) giving an overview of the Institute to the journalists, while in one of the Camulus's sugarcane field (KEN 83-737)

Success stories:

Camulus Ogola, who hails from Kajulu village, Kadero sub-location in Kisumu East Sub-county, has been a sugarcane farmer for over 30 years having started with one (1) acre to fifteen (15) acres of improved sugarcane varieties (KEN 83-737). He mentioned that sugarcane farming and capacity building organized by SRI had improved his living standards, which enabled him support his children to acquire high level of education and built a permanent house from a mud house, among other benefits.



Camulus at one of his farms displaying KEN 83-737, 7th ratoon



Camulus's house before embarking on sugarcane farming



Camulus permanent house established through successful sugarcane farming proceeds.



Johnny preparing animal feed from cane tops

Johnny Amarjeet Singh Brah of Asian origin, who hails from Nyangeta village, Muhoroni west sub-location in Muhoroni Sub-county, indicated that, his family had been in sugarcane farming business for the last 100 years, him being the third generation. Since the inception of SRI, they have adopted improved varieties and new sugarcane production technologies from the institute, which increased their sugarcane yields. He further revealed that the best management practice in sugarcane farming has seen him diversify to other farming activities e.g dairy farming, value addition by use cane tops to feed the cattle, milk production that enabled him venture into bakery business. This tremendously improved the economic status of the farm.



Johnny feeding the calves with cane tops

Conclusion:

It is evident that adoption of improved sugarcane varieties, best management practices, enterprise diversification and value addition improves farmers' livelihood and socio economic condition.