


FAO in Kenya

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FAO launches a USD 1.5m IKEA Foundation funded project



Harvest from groundnut trails in Turkana. ©FAO/Francis Ekiru.

29/04/2021 Nairobi-Kenya: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) today launched the Refugee Agricultural Value Chains for Economic Self Reliance (RAVES) project that will be implemented in Turkana County. The four year project funded by the IKEA Foundation, identified the groundnut value chain as a potential crop for sustainable income generation as well as nutrition security for both the host and refugee community.

“Agriculture is undoubtedly the key driver in transforming the lives and livelihoods of refugee and host communities in Turkana County. We are honored to begin this initiative to create a viable agribusiness initiative that is demand driven,” said FAO Representative to Kenya Carla Mucavi during the virtual launch.

The project will be implemented in close collaboration with Turkana County Government, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), INSTA Products Ltd, World Food Programme (WFP), Egerton University, and International Finance Corporation.

“It is exciting for us that private sector players like INSTA Products are involved in this project, and that the project is evidence based. We care about supporting entire communities to build sustainable lives, and this integrated approach ensures this,” said Annemieke de Jong from IKEA Foundation.

Why groundnuts

The first seed trials conducted in partnership with Egerton University in early 2020 revealed that Turkana is excellent for groundnut production because it is virgin farm lands, with the nuts being Aflatoxin free (0.0 ppb), as well as a protein content of 30%.

The ongoing second seeds trials show that it is currently possible to produce two tonnes of groundnuts per hectare. In addition to this, groundnuts are relatively drought tolerant, have a longer shelf life than fresh vegetables and are in high demand.

INSTA Products is involved through a private sector partnership, manufacturing ready-to-eat therapeutic foods. INSTA Products Ltd alone has an annual demand of 6000 tonnes of groundnuts. “We make a product that is for severely malnourished children.

Therefore the obligation is on us to provide the best quality product. Our laboratories have shown that these are good quality groundnuts, with 0.0 ppb aflatoxin levels and a 30% protein level. We are very happy to be working collectively on this initiative,” said Dhiren Chandaria of INSTA Products.

The project targets refugee and host communities within the irrigation schemes

The project will be implemented in Turkana West with a focus on Kalobeyei refugee settlement plus Lomidat area as well as the Nanyee, Kangalita and Nadoto Irrigation schemes. A total of 9000 direct beneficiaries are expected to be impacted with this project, with a gross farmer income of USD 2.5 million by year four.The target is to produce 12,000 tonnes of groundnuts per year by the end of the project period.

Working within the Covid-19 restrictions

Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19 restriction, farmer mobilization has begun. The design of a 50,000 cubic meters water pan to support groundnut production in Kalobeyei has commenced, and WFP is finalizing the construction of two water pans in the same area for irrigation.

FAO is also working with Turkana County Government to develop a groundnut production and marketing strategy. Already, 15000 tonnes of groundnut seed has been purchased to kick start the commercial production.

For more information

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