

**COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF KIRINYAGA AND THE CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE KIRINYAGA.
“LONG” RAINS SEASON MARCH APRIL MAY (MAM) ADVISORY.**

Introduction.

The County Government of Kirinyaga in conjunction with the County Directorate of Meteorological Services and Agriculture Sector Development Support Program hereby presents the March April May (MAM) season advisory.

This advisory is based on the proceedings of a workshop on participatory scenario planning (PSP) held on 7th march 2016 where county downscaled weather forecasts from the Kenya Meteorological Service and that of the traditional forecasters were shared with participants and collated.

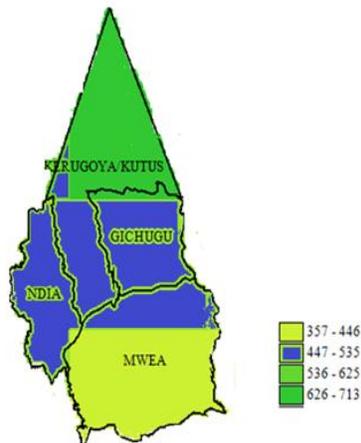
From these forecasts experts and stakeholders from various fields and disciplines developed advisories to broadly cover the season.

Downscaled weather forecast for Kirinyaga County.

There was harmony from the forecast of Kenya Meteorological Services and traditional weather forecasters that the expected scenario for March to May 2016 is that of a near normal rainfall in the highlands and upper middle altitude zones i.e. Kabare, Baragwi, Njukiini, Ngariama, Karumandi, Mukure, Kiine, Mutira, Kanyekini, Kerugoya, Inoi and in the lower zones of the county namely; Thiba, Wamumu, Nyangati, Murinduko, Gathigiriri, Rukanga and Tebere.

Expected onset and cessation dates

Rainfall onset is expected from the 4th week of March and the first week of April 2016. The rains will continue and cease in the 3rd to 4th week of May 2016. However the rains will be poorly distributed over the season.



CLIMATE SMART PRACTICES IN SELECTED SECTORS

Using this information experts and stakeholders from various disciplines in the county developed the following advisory to guide the community in the county on what they need to do in order to take advantage of the season and to take precautions to avoid being caught up in risky situations. The advisory covers the areas of crop, livestock management and veterinary, health, water resources, health, and the environment.

a. Crop management

The weather forecast provides an opportunity for our farmers.

i) Water Efficient technologies such as;

- Runoff harvesting
- Roof catchment water harvesting.
- Crop mulching
- Adopt minimum tillage farming e.g use of herbicides.
- Improved and water efficient irrigation methods e.g drip irrigation system

ii) Crop diversification –plant different annual or biannual crops on the same farm in different plots

iii) Appropriate crop varieties for lower zone include: Maize; Duma 43, DH 04, DH 01, DH 02, Dekalb. Beans; Mwitmania and Mwezi moja. Other crops include Cowpeas, green gram, pigeon peas and Dolicos. In the middle zones farmers are advised to plant the following maize varieties H513, H514, H515, Duma 43, Pioneer 3253, TC banana, indigenous vegetables, sorghum, millet, cassava, sweet potatoes and yams.

iv) Crop insurance

v) Conserve riparian reserve

vi) Repair soil/water conservation structures

vii) Contour cropping

viii) Improved pre and post-harvest methods.

b) . Rice Production

For efficient use of water in the rice fields (scheme and non scheme areas), farmers are advised to adopt the following

- i) There is need to prepare land early. This calls for deployment of more rotavators.*
- ii) Adoption of water rice saving culture (WRSC) methods e.g(Alternative wetting drying & wetting)*
- iii) Planting rice in line (rows of 25 by 25 cm FOR manual weeding or 30cm by 15cm for Rotary weeded fields. Plant upland rice varieties (e.g NERICA 1,2,4 & 11)in valley bottoms where it is warmer.*

c) Livestock Health and Management

- i) Diseases and parasites associated with reduced rainfall mainly respiratory caused by airborne situations may be on the increase.*
- ii) Control of fleas some parasite which breed more in warm conditions especially*
- iii) Animal feed rationing and water storage*
- iv) Normal deworming and vaccination should continue*
- v) Farmers are advised to report any cases observed to the relevant authorities.*
- vi) Adopt improved feeding strategies (e.g. homemade rations, cut 'n carry, hydroponic fodder production)*
- vii) Conserve fodder midseason. This can be done through ensiling. This will allow for regeneration of the crop.*
- viii)Plan for bio gas installation.*
- ix) Follow schedules for deworming and spraying against ticks and other parasites. (Parasite control)*
- x) Consider taking livestock insurance as a long term measure against risks that livestock may face.*
- xi) Plant appropriate fodder crops & shrubs e.g. French cameroon, Sudan grass, Maasai grass, Calliandra, and Leucena, Kakamega, Bana grass and Rhodes.*

e) Forestry Sector (KFS)

Experts in the forestry sector advise the following.

- i) Advance hardening off of seedlings i.e. 2-3 weeks before the onset of the rains.*
- ii) Raise seedlings that can tolerate drought. For the correct seeds consult your nearest forest services office.*
- iii) Early land preparation for tree planting*
- iv) To be fire alert & vigilant especially if you are near forested areas for 6 months*
- v) Timely planting of trees after the soil attain the correct moisture content*

g)Water Resource Sector (WRMA)

In this sector water users are advised to

- i) Use water efficient irrigation technologies such as drip irrigation. In future they should plan for closed pipe water delivery systems.*
- ii) Anticipate water rationing, should the situation demand.*
- iii) Store water from roof catchment for domestic and livestock use.*
- iv) Construction of water -conservation structures such as water pans in the lower zones.*
- v) Restrict water use for domestic purposes only during dry spells*
- vi) On farm activities e.g. terracing to increase water infiltration*
- vii) Improved water and land management practice to reduce run off to reduce water pollution*

h) Health Sector.

We care for your continued health in the season and advise the following.

- i) Due to anticipated suppressed rains and increased heat intensity community to avoid working out door for long hours due to heat intensity especially lower and middle zones of Kirinyaga*
- ii) Treat water by boiling or using chlorine tablets*
- iii) Stock health facilities with drugs due to water borne related diseases*
- iv) Hygienic handling of food and water to avoid dust which can cause Cholera outbreaks*

i). Environment Sector.

The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) urges the following:

- i) Residents in the county to ensure proper management of waste disposal to avoid plastic paper bags and dust being blown about. This leads to the degradation of the environment.*
- ii) Wild life alertness for communities bordering forests due wildlife migration*
- iii) Recharge of ground water to mitigate against low water levels in reservoirs, lakes, and ponds*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the following offices

- 1. Nearest Sub County Agricultural Offices @ Kerugoya, Baricho, Kianyaga, Ngurubani or Kandongu*
- 2. ASDSP Kerugoya 0721650412 @ the Veterinary premises*
- 3. County Meteorological Officer 0723232256 @ the Directory of Housing, Kerugoya*