

Board begins sale of subsidised fertiliser

By NATION Correspondent

The National Cereals and Produce Board will today start selling subsidised fertiliser to farmers at various centres in the Meru region.

Agriculture assistant minister Kareke Mbiuki said a bag of DAP fertiliser would be sold at Sh2,000, down from the current Sh2,500, while CAN would retail at Sh1,400 in a move meant to lower the cost of producing food. He said the satellite centres will also buy a 90-kilogramme bag of maize at Sh2,300.

Speaking at Chogoria Girls High school during a free medical camp, Mr Mbiuki said the move was aimed at reducing transport costs to the main depots located in Meru and Maua towns.

He urged residents to ensure they dried their maize to the required moisture content before taking it to depots to avoid being turned back.

"We want to reduce the cost of production of food to eradicate famine and poverty. I am confident that after another year, this country will be self sufficient," he said.

Firms' revival to dominate investment meeting

By NATION Correspondent

Revival of collapsed industries is likely to dominate the Central Kenya investment conference that starts this morning at a Thika hotel.

The meeting which has been organised by the Kenya Investment Authority is mainly for professionals who will be tasked to come up with a map for potential investments to stimulate economic growth

of the region. "In our past forums, we did not have full participation of professionals. We want to come up with a development agenda by identifying key investments for the region," says Ms Susan Njoba of KenInvest.

Among the collapsed industries is Pana Foods which was based in Naivasha, Uplands Bacon Factory, Kenya National Pencil in Nyahururu and textile factories among them the

Nanyuki-based Mount Kenya Textile and several others in Thika.

Facilitators include former administrator Joseph Kaguthi, Kimathi University College principal Ndirangu Kioni and businessman Wachira Nguru.

Mr Kaguthi said a summit bringing together local leaders, potential investors and other stakeholders will be held mid this year for presentation of the blueprint.

He said collapsed industries have been identified as the missing link in stimulating the region's economic growth. The challenge, Mr Kaguthi said, has been bringing on board various players.

"We want to squeeze our professionals out of the cocons they have retreated to and urge them to come up with a map for potential investments for the region," said Mr Kaguthi.

FOREIGN MARKETS

Kenya lined up for slice of Sh3bn deal

Cash to boost safety levels in exported fruits and vegetables

By KABURU MUGAMBI

Kenya will benefit from Sh3.2 billion (32.5 million euros) released by the European Commission to train African, Caribbean and Pacific farmers on food safety as hygiene concerns take centre stage.

This is the second phase of the Pest Initiative Programme (PIP), whose objective is to support exporters from ACP countries to comply with the European Union's sanitary standards for fresh fruits and vegetables.

The initial phase supported 85 beneficiaries in Kenya including export companies, smallholder support organisations, service providers and public sector bodies.

Mr Pietro Nardi from the European Commission delegation said in spite of the success of the first phase, challenges are still ahead.

He said the growing concern of European consumers towards environmental and ethical issues translates into constant upgrading of rules and regulations related to distribution of fresh products.

The initial phase supported 85 beneficiaries in Kenya alone

"Phase II of the PIP will, therefore, support ACP producers comply with this constantly changing environment," said Mr Nardi during the launch of the programme's second phase in Nairobi on Thursday.

The initiative will run for five years with the objective of reducing rural poverty through promotion of fruits and vegetables trade, he said.

It will focus on promoting healthy fresh products distribution in Europe and also in local markets, and to maintain zero residual pesticides.

Horticulture continues to grow steadily and remains

71.6

Billions of shillings in income from horticulture last year

the leading foreign exchange earner bringing into the country Sh71.6 billion last year.

Agriculture secretary Wilson Songa said the industry faces many challenges and constraints such as interception of products due to pests and pesticide residue.

"The new thematic areas for PIP Phase II will be a focus on new challenges facing the horticulture industry such as food safety, ethical trade, fair trade, and the environment," said Mr Songa.

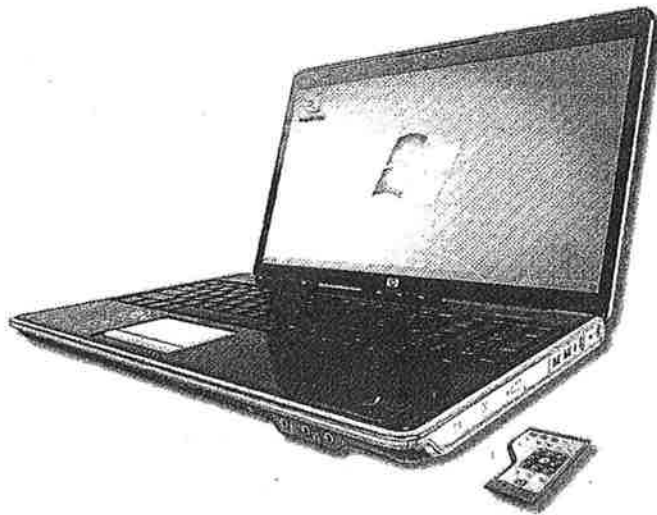
"I would request that the new phase include interventions aimed at supporting Kenya attend standards setting meetings," he said.

Mr Nardi said there are new official regulations, but on top of this suppliers must meet ever increasing demands from their buyers.

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