

- Farmers are encouraged to use farmyard manure (FYM) and chemical fertilizers in consultation with agricultural extension officers, to improve soil fertility and increase crop yields. Planting and top-dressing with NPK and CAN, respectively, is recommended. They are also encouraged to diversify crops and farm enterprises to reduce risks.
- Rather than establish a new sorghum crop, farmers are encouraged to ratoon last season's crop, at a height of 1.5 cm above the ground
- Regular harvesting, baling and storage of grass/pasture for later use is strongly recommended

### Additional Information

Following a successful October-November-December (OND) 2019 season, farmers are advised to dry their grain to 13.5% moisture content before storing it to avoid infestation by aflatoxin-producing fungi. Further, they are advised to watch out for storage pests and take appropriate control measures. Finally, they are encouraged to use certified seeds from reputed sources.

### Important Note

The information provided here is general information based on the March-April-May (MAM) 2020 seasonal forecast issued by the Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD).

The information should be used in conjunction with the forecast updates issued by KMD and technical advice provided by the nearest agricultural extension office.

### This advisory is a collaborative effort of the following institutions



Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization



University of Embu



Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Development, Fisheries and Cooperatives



Kilimo Media International



Biovision Africa Trust



## WEATHER-BASED AGRO-ADVISORY FOR KITUI COUNTY

With financial support from

MARCH-APRIL-MAY 2020



## About this advisory

This advisory was developed on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020 by a team of subject matter specialists from Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), University of Embu (UoE), Biovision Africa Trust, Kilimo Media International (KIMI) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Livestock Development and Cooperatives with financial support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) through the project **“Scaling-up Pathways of Last Mile Climate Information Services for Community Resilience in Kenya and Uganda”**

The advisory is mainly aimed at supporting farm level decision making in Kitui County in planning agricultural activities for the March-April-May 2020 Rain Season. Application of this advisory to other areas will depend on similarities in soil and climatic conditions of such places with those of Kitui County.

### Performance of the Oct-Dec 2019 Rain Season

Like the rest of the country, Kitui County experienced heavy rainfall throughout the October-November-December season. Most rainfall stations in the county recorded above normal rainfall. Crop performance was exceptionally good. However, mudslides were experienced in some parts of the county leading to loss of lives and destruction of property.

### Outlook for Mar– May 2020 Rain Season

- Kitui County and its environs are expected to receive above normal (enhanced) rainfall
- Kitui County is expected to realize the onset in the first to second week of March 2020 and cessation in the second to third week of May 2020
- The March to May 2020 rainfall is predicted to be well distributed
- The peak of the rains is expected to be in the month of April 2020

### Implications of the forecast on agriculture

Based on the above outlook:

- Farmers are advised to plant crops of their choice at the earliest opportunity by dry planting after preparing the farm in the 1st week of March 2020
- They are advised to repair their terraces and desilt existing dams and water pans before the on-set
- Farmers are encouraged to plant the following crops:

Target Area	Crop	Recommended Variety	Correct Spacing
Upper zones (Migwani, Nuu, nyambani, zambani, Chuluni)	Cowpea ( <i>Nthooko</i> )	M66	60cm x 20cm
	Maize ( <i>Mbamba</i> )	High yielding hybrid varieties eg. KDV4, DH04 & as may be recommended by agricultural extension officers	One plant per hill at 90cm x 30cm or two plants per hill at 90cm x 60cm
	Sweet Potatoes ( <i>Makwasi</i> )	Kemb 10, Kabonde, Kenspot4, KSP 0047, KSP0072, KSP 0084, KSP0154 & Vita A	75cm x 50cm
	Sorghum ( <i>Munya</i> )	Sila	Sole crop at 60cmx20cm or 120cm x 15cm when inter-cropped with a row of legume
	Pasture grasses ( <i>Nyekzi</i> )	Bracharia, Bana grass Panicum & Napier grass	Broadcasting & <i>Tumbukiza</i> (for Napier)
Mid-zones (Nguutani, Tulia, Muthale, Endau, Malalani, Voo, Kyamatu, Kwa Vonza)	Beans ( <i>Mbooso</i> )	Nyota, KATX 56, KATX 69, KAT B1	45 cm x 20 cm
	Maize ( <i>Mbamba</i> )	High yielding hybrid varieties eg DH 04 & as may be recommended by agricultural extension officers	One plant per hill at 90cmx30cm or two plants per hill at 90cm x 60cm
	Cowpea ( <i>Nthooko</i> )	K 80, KVU 27-1 & M66	60cm x 20cm
	Pigeon-pea ( <i>Nzou</i> )	Kat 60/8, Mbaazi I	75cm x 50cm
	Sorghum ( <i>Munya</i> )	Gadam, Seredo, KARI Mtama 1 and Sila	Sole crop at 60cmx20cm & 120cm x 15cm when inter-cropped with a row of legume
	Vegetables	African leafy vegetables e.g. Katumani Murenda, Giant purple & Giant green (Managu), TerereSmart & KAT Gold (Grain Amaranth), KAT veg1 (vegetable Amaranth)	
	Pasture Grass ( <i>Nyekzi</i> )	Mbeetwa, Panicum, & Rhodes grass	Broadcasting

Target Area	Crop	Recommended Variety	Correct Spacing
Mid-zone (Nguutani, Tulia, Muthale, Endau, Malalani, Voo, Kyamatu, Kwa Vonza)	Sweet potatoes ( <i>Makwasi</i> )	Kemb10, Kabonde, Kenspot4, KSP 0047, KSP0072, KSP 0084, KSP 0154 & Vita A	75cm x 50cm
	Finger millet ( <i>wimbi</i> )	KAT FM1	30cm x10cm
	Dolichos ( <i>Mbumbu</i> )	DL 1002	50cm x 50cm
Lower zones (Mutombo, Kyomo, Kyetani, Kyome, Thanaa, Kanyangi, Ngongoni, Kanyonyo, Nguuni, Katoteni, Mumuni, Kamwongo, Kivou, & Waita)	Sorghum ( <i>Munya</i> )	Gadam, Seredo & KARI Mtama1	Sole crop at 60cmx20cm & 120cm x 15cm when inter-cropped with a row of legume
	Finger millet	KAT FM1	30cm x10cm
	Pearl millet ( <i>Mwee</i> )	KAT PM1 & KAT PM3	Sole crop at 60cmx20cm & 120cm x 15cm when inter-cropped with a row of legume
	Pasture grass ( <i>Nyekzi</i> )	Mbeetwa, Ndata kivumbu & Ikoka	Broadcasting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For those with fruit (mango, avocado and orange) orchards or bananas, we advise that they prune, cut &amp; burn or burry fruit stalks, add manure and construct <i>negarims</i> and <i>semi-circular bunds</i> around them to harvest water, before the start of the season</li> <li>• Farmers are advised to watch out for aphids (<i>umuu</i>) especially in cowpea and fruit trees; Fall Army Worms (<i>Kiinyu</i>); stem borers and termites in maize; shoot fly and stalk borers in sorghum; Anthracnose in beans; scab (<i>Kikaa</i>); borers and bugs (<i>Ivivi</i>) in pigeonpea; Desert locusts, and report such outbreaks to agricultural extension officers</li> <li>• Livestock farmers are advised to look out for Lumpy Skin (<i>Makundu</i>) and Foot and Mouth (<i>Muthingithu</i>) Diseases and report such outbreaks to the nearest agricultural extension office</li> <li>• Poultry farmers should look out for viral diseases, especially the Newcastle Disease (NCD), and vaccinate their birds in time</li> </ul>			