

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



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Biovision Africa Trust

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WEATHER-BASED AGRO-ADVISORY FOR MACHAKOS COUNTY

MARCH-APRIL-MAY 2020

About this Advisory

This advisory was developed on 25th 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 Machakos 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 Machakos County.

Performance of the Oct-Dec 2019 Rain Season

Like the rest of the country, Machakos 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, land and mudslides were experienced in some parts of the county leading to loss of lives and destruction of property.

Outlook for March– May 2020 Rain Season

- Machakos County and its environs are expected to receive above normal (enhanced) rainfall
- Machakos 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 (Kathian, Kangund, Ndithini Matungulu & Mua)	Beans (<i>Mbooso</i>)	Angaza, Nyota, KAT X56 & KAT X69	45cm x20cm
	Maize (<i>Mbemba</i>)	High yielding hybrid varieties such as KDV4, DH04 and others as may be recommended by agricultural extension officers	One plant per hill at 90cm x30cm or two plants per hill at 90cm x60cm
	Sweet potatoes (<i>Ngwasi</i>)	Kemb10, Kabonde, Irene, Kenspot 4&5	75cm x50cm
	Pasture grasses (<i>Nyekzi</i>)	Bracharia, Bana grass Napier grass (<i>Kitothyia</i>)	Broadcasting & <i>Tumbukiza</i> (for Napier)
Mid-zones (Mutituni, Muvuti, Kathekakai, Kaani, Kalama & Machakos Central)	Beans (<i>Mbooso</i>)	KAT Bean 1	45cm x20cm
	Maize (<i>Mbemba</i>)	High yielding hybrid varieties such as DH 04 and others as may be recommended by agric. extension officers	One plant per hill at 90cm x30cm or two plants per hill at 90cm x60cm
	Cowpea (<i>Nthooko</i>)	M66	60cm x20cm
Lower zones (Katangi, Masinga, Mwala, Kimutwa, Yatta & Athi River)	Cowpeas (<i>Nthooko</i>)	KVU27-1, K80	60cm x20cm
	Maize (<i>Mbemba</i>)	KDV1, KDV4, DH01, DH02 and others as may be recommended by the agric. extension officers	One plant per hill at 90cm x30cm or two plants per hill at 90cm x60cm

Target Area	Crop	Recommended Variety	Correct Spacing
Lower zones (Katangi, Masinga, Mwala, Kimutwa, Yatta & Athi River)	Green grams (<i>Ndakiithi, Ndengu</i>)	N26, KS20, Ndengu Biashara, Nden-gu Karembo	45cm x 15cm
	Dolichos lab lab (<i>Mbumbu</i>)	DL 1002	50cm x50cm
	Pigeonpea (<i>Nzou</i>)	Kat 60/8 Mbaazi I	75cm x50cm 50cm x10cm

- For those with fruit (mango, avocado and orange) orchards or bananas, we advise that they prune, cut & burn or bury fruit stalks, add manure and construct *negarims* and *semi-circular bunds* around them to harvest water, before the start of the season
- Farmers are advised to watch out for aphids (*umuu*) especially in cowpea and fruit trees; Fall Army Worms (*Kinyu*), stem borers and termites in maize; shoot fly and stalk borers in sorghum; Anthracnose in beans; scab (*Kikaa*); borers and bugs in pigeonpea; locusts and report such outbreaks to agricultural extension officers
- Livestock farmers are advised to look out for Lumpy Skin (*Makundu*) and Foot and Mouth (*Muthingithu*) Diseases and report such outbreaks to the nearest agricultural extension office
- Poultry farmers should look out for viral diseases, especially the Newcastle Disease (NCD), and vaccinate their birds in time
- 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 risk.
- 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