

FROM THE EDITOR

Very few people pursue their passions to fruition and that is why the story of Denis Olam stands out. The 28-year-old graduate has turned into a consultant because of his expertise and flourishing Habanero peppers business.

I do hope that this story will motivate many young people out there to think beyond job employment and think job creation.

Do flip the pages for all your queries on farming as well as best practices.

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regional news > policy

BAT's profits decline in Zimbabwe

Tobacco processor, British American Tobacco (BAT) Zimbabwe, reported a 45 per cent drop in its bottom line for the year ended 31 December 2016. The decline in revenue was a result of weak consumer demand for tobacco, according to NewsDay, Zimbabwe.

Last year, BAT Zimbabwe reported a gross profit of \$15.47 million (about R201 million). This year, its gross profit declined to \$8.5 million (about R110 million), according to NewsDay. BAT Zimbabwe's net income declined 25% to \$34.1 million (about R441 million).

At a recent analyst briefing in Harare, Clara Mlambo, BAT Zimbabwe managing director, told NewsDay that despite the reduction in profit, she was pleased with the results as 2016 was a particularly difficult year.

NewsDay

Kenya expects poor rainfall

Kenya is expected to receive poor rainfall in the main March to May rainy season, the meteorological office said, a situation which could exacerbate an already acute drought. Weather forecasts in Kenya, which largely depends on rain-fed agriculture, are key in gauging inflation trends. The Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD) said in its long rains (March-May) outlook that food growing areas of Western and Nyanza would have near-normal rain. "The expected poor temporal distribution of the seasonal rainfall is, however, likely to negatively impact most agricultural areas," KMD said in a statement.

Kenya Meteorological Department



Farmers launch mobile irrigation project in Kasese

BY ENID NINSIIMA
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Following the prolonged drought that has left some farmers counting losses in Kasese District, farmers in Karusandara Sub-county have devised means to bail themselves out by establishing a mobile irrigation project in a bid to save their gardens. Karusandara Sub-county is the food basket for Kasese District popular for food production especially maize, banana, potatoes, cassava, onions and tomatoes.

Through their initiatives, farmers in Karusandara under their organisation Centre for Environment and Technology in Rural Development (KCETRD), have managed to lobby for mobile irrigation project from their friends in Santa Cruz in the US.

"We have lost crops covering several acres of land due to prolonged drought. As affected farmers we decided to save our gardens by

establishing a mobile irrigation scheme that was given to us by, Ms Peggy Pollard, in USA," said Mr Godfrey Dembe Kashozi, the group chairperson.

Mr Dembe said the innovation was made to minimise on the effects of drought in the area.

Dembe noted that mobile irrigation is in the pilot phase. Under KCETRD, the farmers have planted a 300 acre block of both Robusta and Arabica coffee plantations, neighbouring the Queen Elizabeth National Park. But in most parts of the plantation, the coffee trees had withered due to the long drought spell.

He adds that maize and beans farmers in Karusandara this season harvested only 30 per cent of what they planted because the crops were hit by an unpredictable dry spell.

According to Dembe, the petrol generator and the size of the pump, so far acquired, are able to push 35,000 cubic litres of water from a source per hour and could irrigate one acre using direct irrigation.

Kasese District Chief Administrative Officer, Mr Mathias Ndifuna who recently visited the project, said his office will connect the farmers to Operation Wealth Creation programme for support adding that government had the ability and willingness to help the affected farmers in Karusandara Sub-county to acquire overhead sprinklers.



International news > innovation

Heart-shaped lemons a hit

A farm in Japan has succeeded in producing a heart-shaped lemon. The product has become highly popular with restaurants and bakeries across Japan, reported Asahi Shimbun, a Japanese news outlet. Growers have struggled to retain fruit quality, however, as the fruit tends to rot or burst in the mould.

The Mihara Citrus Fruit Company, in eastern Hiroshima prefecture, produced a crop of heart-shaped lemons by cradling the fruit inside a V-shaped wedge while young, then placing a cylinder on top of it as it grew.



www.farmersweekly.

International news > research

Turning food waste into tyres

According to researchers at Ohio State University (OSU) in the US, food waste could partially replace the petroleum-based filler currently used in the manufacturing of tyres. Ohio Research Scholar and Endowed Chair in Biomaterials at OSU, Katrina Cornish, explained that this technology could make the manufacturing of rubber products more sustainable, reduce US dependence on foreign oil and keep waste out of landfills. This was according to an article published by OSU.

Cornish developed a method for turning eggshells and tomato peels into a viable replacement for carbon black, a petroleum-based filler that US companies often imported. The materials of modern inflated tyres are synthetic rubber, natural rubber, fabric and wire, along with carbon black and other chemical compounds.

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local news > outreach

Budaka Legislator in food insecurity campaign



BUDAKA-The Budaka District Woman MP, Ms Pamela Nasiyo Kamugo, has embarked on a campaign against food insecurity campaign in a bid to address the hunger-famine in Budaka District.

Ms Kamugo noted that Budaka District has been facing food crisis as a result of the prolonged drought, leaving many families with no food. "This is the right time farmers have to be empowered with improved seeds to take advantage of the prevailing rainfall to grow fast growing crops in order to address food shortages that had hit the district hard," Ms Kamugo said.

She said this while distributing improved maize seeds to farmers in the district as part of efforts to supplement on the implementation of the Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) programme. Each Member of Parliament received two tonnes (constituency MPs) while district woman MPs received four tonnes (4000kgs). The seeds, according to Ms Kamugo, were meant to be distributed to their respective constituencies in line with the ongoing government programme to improve household incomes.

Mudangha Kolyangha

Farmers advised to sell off animals

BULIISA: District authorities have urged farmers to sell off some of their animals as a short term measure to prolonged drought.

The Bullisa District veterinary officer, Dr Rashid Mubiru, says many animals have died in the past one month due to lack of pasture and water.

The most affected area is Bugana village, Bullisa Sub-county in Bullisa District where he said that all the swamps and river Waiga have dried up due to prolonged drought.

"The only option is for farmers to sell off some animals and keep their money or invest it in other things," Dr Mubiru says.

George Muzoora

did you know?

Don't mix chemicals when spraying

LOGIC. When spraying different pests at the same time, many farmers try to kill two birds with one stone by making elaborate mixtures.

Efficacy

Pesticides are formulated by mixing various chemicals. Add other chemicals to the tank and you run the risk of reducing the efficacy of each chemical. You could even end up with a toxic mixture that may damage the plants.

Supply deficient element only

In all but the most exceptional cases, the symptoms of a deficiency will manifest unevenly on the land. The trick is to identify the deficiency in these areas and then foliar-feed the lacking element only, or another

element in some cases. For example, for a molybdenum deficiency, you can apply boron at the same time for convenience.

Spraying under dry conditions

Farmers often struggle with mineral build-up when carrying out pest control before the rain starts. This is especially so when they use overhead irrigation from a borehole, stream or dam, with a high mineral content. Evaporation on the leaf surface can cause minerals to accumulate on the leaves.

Buffering the water in the spray tank can solve the problem, but sometimes, when the product lands on the leaf, the chemicals are rapidly neutralised. When this happens, add more buffer to the water and spray (as much as you're able to) under the leaves, where the accumulation does not occur.



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