

# Radio programme benefits Meru, Hai farmers

Peasants in Meru and Hai Districts of Arusha and Kilimanjaro have for a long period been going about their farming activities using traditional skills being passed on from generation to generation.



Speaking during the recent launch of agricultural training programmes via radio; the farmers explained that extension officers were unheard of in their remote rural villages leaving them with no option but to resort to old farming methods that are being affected by climate change.

The Meru District Commissioner, Nyirembé Munasa-Sabi, who graced the event, organised by Farm-Radio International, admitted that outreach farm support services were not being accessed by most growers in the country and thus, the advent of technology such as localized radio stations should help transfer skills to farmers effortlessly.

Mwanaisha Msangi, a vegetable grower in Meru said there are times when the soil just doesn't respond despite adding fertilizers or watering and these are moments when "you wonder where extension officers are when you need them?"

Terevaeli Aremu-Nassari is the Agricultural Value Chain officer for Farm Radio International and explained that their task is to empower local electronic media outlets in Africa to reach farmers, work with local government officers in Arusha and Kilimanjaro and use the Moshi-based, Moshi FM station 90.2 to reach onion growers in Same, vegetable growers in Meru and grain producers in Hai District.

## 250 partner radio stations

"Farm Radio currently works with 250 partner radio stations in over 35 African countries," he said adding that it is based in Ottawa Canada but its African zone offices are based in Arusha - Tanzania.

"Farm Radio started running effective farming methods programmes in 2009 serving Tanga, Arusha, Mbeya, Morogoro, Mwanza and Njombe and now Kilimanjaro Region with focus of farming, livestock keeping, environment protection and ensuring food security among families as well as poverty reduction," said Nassari.

Previously, Yusuph Michael Masanja the programme manager for Moshi FM said the station has the widest coverage in Kilimanjaro Region with its airwaves reaching to as far as Simanjiro (Manyara) and King'ori in Meru (Arusha).

"We have launched a special farming programme to be known as 'Heka-heka Vijijini' which should run every Wednesday from 5pm to 6pm and repeated on Saturdays from 2pm to 3pm," he said, adding that, farmers have been very responsive to agricultural programmes.

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