June 20/ 2014

MINAGRI Weekly Flash News

Published by the Center for Agricultural Information and Communication (CICA)

Government intensifies efforts to contain toxic products

Min Kalibata (1st R) along with other ministers addressing the press conference

The government of Rwanda has intensified efforts to contain banned harmful drugs that are mostly used in agriculture and health sectors in a bid to protect life of citizens and environment in general.

The new move says that all people must immediately stop from using or trading banned/expired drugs & chemical products. They should instead collect them and report to local authorities by June 30th, 2014.

This was announced on June 20th, 2014 during a joint press conference that took place at the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI). The media briefing was in line with raising public awareness on banned and restricted drugs.

The Minister of Local Government, James Musoni, said that all chemical products and drugs meeting international standards will be traded by authorized dealers in order to control the use of drugs.

The minister noted that the government took the decision after realizing that some harmful chemical products, drugs and a wide range of pesticides are still in use across Rwanda while the country is among top countries that are committed to protecting the environment; hence new efforts to ensure better protection of the environment.

Ministries involved in the implementation of the move include MINAGRI, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Internal Security, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Youth and ICT, Rwanda Revenue Authority, Rwanda National Policy and other affiliated institutions.

The Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Dr Agnes Kalibata, noted that they want to increase productivity by replacing harmful chemical inputs with eco-friendly inputs.

"We are committed to increasing agricultural productivity, but we want to achieve this by using authorized inputs that are not harmful to people's life and environment," Minister Kalibata pointed out, noting that some harmful pesticides such as DDT are among banned chemical products.

"This is a good move," noted the Health Minister, Dr Agnes Binagwaho. "We are not waiting for problems to act."

Some institutions have been so far put in place to deal with inspection, 30 incinerators are in place across the country and other laws are going to be reinforced in order to be able to contain these toxic products, the officials said.

A list of banned drugs and chemical products will be released soon and a joint team that will ensure the effective implementation of the decision has been put in place.

DIME team commends Rwanda agricultural transformation

Min Kalibata addressing DIME meeting in Kigali, while Arianna Legovini, Head of the DIME at the World Bank looks on

The World Bank's Development Impact Evaluation (DIME) has praised Rwanda's effort towards transforming agriculture and improving the people's lives for the better.

The remarks were made on June 16th, 2014 in Kigali, during the five–day DIME meeting dubbed "Innovations for Agriculture "a partnership between DIME, DFID and GAFSP. DIME is a global program hosted in the World Bank's Development Research Group.

Officially opening the DIME meeting, Dr. Agnes Kalibata, Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources said the forum provides an ideal platform to share ideas, knowledge and experiences that will lead to increased agricultural production and improved livelihoods.

DIME aims at increasing the use of impact evaluation (IE) in the design and implementation of public policy and increase institutional capacity and motivation for evidence-based policy.

At the meeting, Minister Kalibata said: "We are happy to host this meeting in Rwanda because it brings diverse experiences. We will be able to learn from different projects that are being implemented in various countries. This will be an enriching experience for us."

She said that there is a lot of work going on to improve people's lives for the better and the emphasis should base on finding out if it does create an impact on the ground and bring positive change.

"Our job is to make sure that, we deliver the most and get positive results, the ones we want to see. DIME is an important tool that validates results, demonstrates to us something that we are probably not so doing well so that we can learn and improve further."

Kalibata told participants that Rwanda is interested in DIME programme and proud to be associated with it, because the government is eager to learn new ideas that can bring a positive change to people's lives.

She added: "It's through this that we can improve, and I hope we can learn from each other, and please lets document it so that other people

can learn from us."

"In Rwanda we have good policies, leadership and public accountability and transparency which have led to very good results. What we registering here is not a miracle, it's because we make sure that what we implement will reach us where we are heading," Agriculture Minister noted.

The event, that took place from 16th to 20th June 2014, was part of a broader effort to support governments in getting answers, in real time, to their most pressing questions.

World Bank's support to Rwanda aims at intensifying government's effort to boost farmers' agricultural productivity as part of the strategy to reduce poverty and boost shared prosperity throughout the country.

The government of Rwanda has implemented several ambitious programs designed to improve and diversify the country's agriculture sector as a key strategy to fight poverty.

Rwanda is using IE findings to improve policy implementation in order to achieve better and sustainable results.

The impact evaluations done in the country before show that much work is being done to improve the lives of Rwandans for the better and there is livelihood change in areas where the project works.

However Arianna Legovini, the Head of the DIME at the World Bank said that Rwanda is an outstanding performer among other countries in investing in agricultural transformation because the results on the ground speak for themselves.

"We are impressed by the Rwanda's policy and vigour to improve the lives of the population by implementing better and sustainable agricultural practices," she noted.

Legovini urged other countries to emulate Rwanda's policy towards investing in agricultural transformation for sustainable results.

Rwanda received a major boost through Land Husbandry, Water Harvesting and Hillside Irrigation (LWH) Programme fund coordinated by the World Bank/IDA, co-funded by Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), USAID, and CIDA to boost agricultural transformation and improve lives.

The LWH Project focuses on increasing productivity and commercialization of hillside agriculture in target areas across the country.

Working on 170 impact evaluations, DIME operates across all sectors in 47 countries spanning the globe.

The DIME event brought together 150 delegates from 17 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to enhance knowledge and capacity to design and implement rigorous IEs through hands-on training in IE methods and management including data collection and analysis.

Participants from Rwanda

DIME delegation tours LWH/RSSP intervention sites

Ephraim Uwitonze, President of GWIZA RW34 co-operative talking to DIME delegates during the tour

About 150 delegates attending the World Bank's Development Impact Evaluation (DIME) meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, on Wednesday visited Land Husbandry, Water Harvesting and Hillside irrigation (LWH) and Rural Sector Support Project intervention sites of Nyanza, Rwamagana and Gatsibo districts.

The visit was part of the team's quest for identifying the impact of the project on the ground, and to ascertain how impact evaluation (IE) can help in the design and implementation of public policy and increase institutional capacity.

The DIME meeting dubbed "Innovations for Agriculture "a partnership between DIME, DFID and GAFSP started on Monday, 16th and ends on Friday 20th June 2014. It is part of a broader effort to support governments in getting answers, in real time, to their most pressing questions.

Rwanda was chosen to host the event because of the country's advanced IE systems used in measuring the impact of the project activities in the areas of intervention.

Accompanied by Jolly Dusabe, Coordinator of LWH/RSSP and other project staff, the delegation visited various sites and had interactive discussions with farmers.

During the tour, the team got acquainted with the role of the project in supporting farmers to improve their livelihoods through practicing better and sustainable agricultural practices.

Dusabe briefed the delegation on a wide range of land husbandry technologies that are being applied by farmers to achieve increased crop production for home consumption and the markets.

"Our aim is to achieve shared prosperity and improved livelihoods and this will be done through practicing better and most appropriate sustainable agricultural practices," she said.

She explained to the visitors how farmers have been trained to adopt commercialised farming instead of traditional subsistence agriculture.

The delegation also familiarized itself with the modern agricultural methods and systems used in the LWH-RSSP intervention areas including terracing, harvesting and packaging, compost making, farmer organizations, rural finance and marketing among others.

The DIME delegation was impressed by the progress of agricultural transformation and how farmer's lives have dramatically changed and the efforts of the government in achieving food security and improved lives.

In Rwamagana, the group held interactive discussions with the members of "GWIZA RW34", a cooperative of farmers made up of 3414, including 1777 males and 1637 and in Gatsibo, the DIME team met members of Rice growers co-operative (Coproriz) in Ntende marshland, and in Nyanza they toured irrigation infrastructure.

The government of Rwanda has implemented several ambitious programs designed to improve and diversify the country's agriculture sector as a key strategy to fight poverty.

Rwanda is using IE findings to improve policy implementation in order to achieve better and sustainable results.

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MINAGRI holds its forward looking Joint Sector Review

Participants to the forward looking Joint Sector Review

The Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) and its partners have held its forward looking Joint Sector Review in a bid to assess last year's achievements and discuss the next step towards achieving targets of the next fiscal year.

The Joint Sector Review (JSR) is a participatory forum held for stakeholders across the agriculture sector, including government, private and donor institutions. The JSR is also a process that emphasizes accountability of governance to improve service delivery and encourage proper collaboration with stakeholders of the sector.

Development partners represented during the JSR include USAID, Dutch embassy, European Union, IFAD, FAO, World Bank, Belgian Technical Cooperation, Private Sector Federation among other stakeholders.

This working forum, which took place on June18th, 2014, discussed key issues, covered sector outcomes, overall impact and the next step towards achieving the second cycle of Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADPII) which the government of Rwanda signed recently; which is in line with the Strategic Vision for the Transformation of Rwandan Agriculture (PSTAIII).

The forum also discussed on how to sustain what the government has been able to achieve over the last years by empowering farmers to increase productivity. For instance, the ministry has been able to reduce soil erosion on about 90% of the arable land, 20% of abandoned land has been recovered while 25% of marginal land has been unfolded.

The National Strategic Reserve and storage practices were also part of the discussion to ensure food security at household level.

It was noted that 2013/14, which was the first year of implementation of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS II), has been marked by different activities that provided tangible results meant to position the agriculture as a business.

The Director General at the ministry, Raphael Rurangwa, noted that the main message now is "how do we engage the private sector in the agriculture sector in a bid to take the sector to the next level."

During the next fiscal year, the focus will be on major activities meant to scale up agriculture development, it has been pointed out. In this regard, the agriculture sector will also streamline efforts to mitigate effects of climate change by scaling up irrigation activities.

The Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Tony Nsanganira, noted that a team was formed to come up with technical guidelines on how to effectively deal with effects of the climate change.

The next fiscal year will also see the implementation of the Post-Harvest and Agribusiness Support Project (PASP) and activities of rehabilitating feeder roads across the country.

According to Minister Kalibata, the budget statement captures that there will be increase in fertilizer and seeds use – a good indication that these inputs will significantly contribute to increase productivity.

"Last few years showed us that we can do better. This is high time to make sure that we triple what we have done," the minister pointed out.

Planting season 2014C officially launched in Gisagara District

Min Kalibata (2nd from right) launching season 2014C in Gisagara district

The Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), Dr Agnes Kalibata, has launched planting season 2014C in Gisagara district. The event took place on June 17th, 2014 in Rwamuzenga marshland located in Mamba sector of the district.

During the event, the minister has commended Mamba farmers for their efforts in applying both chemical and organic fertilizers in their farmlands. The minister also called upon the farmers to adopt good practices of post-harvest and storage.

"We came here to join hands with you in a bid to encourage you to improve your farming practices during this season," the minister told Mamba farmers, urging them to store enough quantity of their yield from last season to ensure food security at household level.

The minister went on urging all Rwandans to exploit marshlands in order to increase agricultural production.

It has been planed that maize will be grown on 500 ha in Rwabuzenga marshland while more than 1000 ha will be cultivated in the whole district of Gisagara during the season 2014C.

Partnership between farmers and investors proves to be fruitful

Min Kalibata speaking to farmers in Rulindo District

A new model of partnership between farmers and investors that allows investors to work closely with local farmers to grow high-quality coffee is proving to be very fruitful, farmers have affirmed.

Such a model, initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) in Rulindo District, Northern Province, is enabling Rwanda-Britain(R&B) Import- Export Limited to work alongside local farmers to grow productive coffee on large scale.

Through the partnership, farmers grow coffee trees in their own farmlands while R&B Import- Export Ltd gives them their wages and provides them with all inputs & technical assistance to ensure good produce. At harvest time, the farmers supply all their produce to the investor.

On June 18th, 2014, the Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Dr Agnes Kalibata, paid a visit to Mbogo and Rusiga sectors of Rulindo District where R&B Importer-Exporter Ltd is working closely with more than 300 local farmers to grow coffee on more than 250 ha. And the farmers informed the minister that the model has significantly changed their lives.

The farmers testify that when the investor requested for the partnership, only very few people were willing to partner, but many more decided to join the scheme after realizing that those who had joined before were benefiting a lot.

"I have been registering great change in my life since I started working with this investor. I can now provide my children with basic needs, pay for their school fees and health insurance thanks to growing coffee," said Chantal Mukashyaka, one of the farmers.

Minister Kalibata said that this model ensures proper use of land by producing more yields on scarce land, noting that the ministry wants to use the same model in growing other crops such as tea where investors are willing to work closely with farmers to make available land more productive.