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# Change in Administrative Structures

A Case Study of Kenyan Agricultural  
Development

Christopher Trapman



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*Change in Administrative Structures* was commissioned as part of the Reading University/Overseas Development Institute Joint Programme on Agricultural Development Overseas. The object of the Programme has been to encourage research concerned with the administration of agricultural development and the use of institutions designed to assist small farmers, in the belief that development has often been hampered through a failure to adapt administrative methods to the particular attitudes, capacities and needs of farmers in different localities. Six studies carried out in India under the Programme have already been published (*Serving the Small Farmer: Policy Choices in Indian Agriculture*, ed. G. Hunter and A. F. Bottrall: Croom Helm, London) and other work in Nigeria is nearing completion. The establishment of better criteria for selecting appropriate forms of agricultural administration and institutions will also be the central theme of the Second International Seminar on Change in Agriculture, which is being held at Reading University in September 1974.

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# **Change in Administrative Structures**

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## **A Case Study of Kenyan Agricultural Development**

**Christopher Trapman**

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London**

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C. Trapman

May, 1974





# Introduction

## Problems in the analysis of development administration

Over recent years there has been a growing interest in the field of administrative strategies for developing countries and development administration has become recognised as a valid academic discipline. Theoretical models of public administration have been developed to include the special circumstances which are encountered in the development environment. Riggs<sup>1</sup> has emphasised the underdeveloped nature of society as a factor influencing administrative performance and has tried to explain administrative behaviour in the light of general social and political characteristics of that society. Others<sup>2</sup> have emphasised the importance of the development of organisations and an administrative structure which are properly adapted to the problems of development in alternative circumstances.

This report is not intended to add to sociological theory or to analyse its corresponding significance in differing development situations. It is more concerned with the need for fashioning new and more appropriate administrative approaches in underdeveloped circumstances, where rising expectations, limited organisational capabilities and severe shortages of resources characterise the bureaucracy. A major question is whether the accepted bureaucratic system, frequently inherited from former colonial administrators, is the most appropriate type of public organisation for new states hoping to use the administrative arm of government as the main means of initiating and guiding the process of development. In different situations the degree to which a government can implement its development policies in conjunction with the private sector, by way of semi-official boards and corporations or through co-operatives and similar institutions, will vary.

Administrative analysis, by comparison with alternative topics, presents rather severe conceptual and methodological problems. Administrative organisations in developing countries as a rule embody features of formal models developed in European and American contexts and transplanted at successive points in time. Any outsider coming to an ex-British or ex-French colony is presented with complex administrative structures, whose arrangement seems to follow known western patterns, but whose operation has been affected by exotic cultural and economic factors.

A further problem facing research in this field has been the lack of

<sup>1</sup> See Fred Riggs, *Administration in Developing Countries* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1964).

<sup>2</sup> See B. B. Schaffer, 'The Deadlock in Development Administration' in Colin Leys (ed.) *Politics and Change in Developing Countries*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1969, pp. 172-211 for a review of the literature belonging to the 'development administration movement'.

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comparable models in the related disciplines of sociology and economics, which are applicable to the middle-range area of study. In both sociology and economics, analysis tends to focus on the macro- and micro-extremes, concerned at the national level with whole sectors or societies and at the local level with individual communities, projects and firms. In contrast many administrative decisions are concerned with an intermediary zone at regional and provincial levels, where social science disciplines have had little to say.

### **The authoritarian legacy in Kenya and African modifications**

In Kenya today the present organisation of the bureaucracy is based on an evolution from pre-Independence circumstances and is still subject to modifications as continuing anomalies and inconsistencies are identified. As far as the civil service is concerned, Kenya has inherited many of the features of the British system of government, although these have been transmitted rather arbitrarily at different times as British colonial policy gradually changed from an earlier concern with the maintenance of law and order and protecting the white settler minority to a concern with welfare and expanded social, economic and political opportunity for Africans. During most of the colonial period, British administration in Kenya was essentially authoritarian. Parliamentary rule, an impartial judiciary and an administration concerned with both welfare and development arrived in Kenya in the late stages of colonial rule, but their effect on African political consciousness was virtually nullified by the emergency measures implemented to deal with the Mau Mau uprising. Consequently the authoritarian character of earlier administration has left its impact on public attitudes and is especially evident in the status granted to the officers of the post-Independence administration in the country today.

However, the style and content of public administration has not entirely failed to be influenced by traditional African thought, which has emphasised values of equality and voluntariness in social and political action. These are particularly emphasised in the White Paper on African Socialism (Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965), which is a basic policy document of the Kenya government. Because traditional African societies in Kenya lacked hierarchical authority systems and were most often ruled by councils of elders, the principal activities for the welfare of local communities were carried out on a largely voluntary and communal basis. An area in which this has been strikingly illustrated has been in the *harambee* self-help movement, which through local efforts and initiative has produced a host of schools, clinics, cattle dips and other important facilities supporting rural development.

## The present study

It is not the intention of this study to follow the conventional pattern of analysis of agricultural development administration by examining how different factions react within the overall framework of government. For purposes of clarification, there is a brief description of the relationship between politicians and administrative officers. Only to a limited extent does the study try to evaluate the effectiveness of administrative performance in terms of the ability of the bureaucracy to carry out organisational objectives, such as the implementation of policies, programmes, plans and projects. Instead, a more limited, if more precise, examination is attempted of the relevance of the present institutions and organisations as part of the agricultural development machinery.

The study concentrates on two particular aspects of agricultural organisation under post-Independence circumstances.

Firstly it examines how well the present organisation of the formal machinery serving the agricultural sector is adapted to the type of farming community which comprises the bulk of the rural population in Kenya today. This examination relies on a descriptive approach, identifying features of different institutions of varying relevance to the type of farmers they are designed to serve, together with suggestions of how the present position could be improved.

Since Independence in 1963, there has been a significant shift in government emphasis and support away from the large-scale farming community to the smallholder areas of the country. This shift has essentially been away from the literate and self-sufficient European farmers to predominantly illiterate African subsistence farmers. The need for direct farmer contact has increased and price incentive alone has not been adequate to encourage spontaneous involvement of smallholders in commercial production. Education and extension have had to be increased dramatically at the lowest levels, in part to influence biases among many rural communities, who associated change and innovation as part of the colonial authoritarian procedure. Investment in rural roads, electrification, communication, transport, marketing and processing facilities have all been necessary. Land consolidation and registration together with the organisation of settlement schemes became an early priority. Appropriate levels of mechanisation have had to be developed and research has had to adapt to the requirements of smallholder farming techniques. Increased encouragement has been given to the formation of co-operative societies and similar institutions. Various methods have been devised, some utilising these institutions, to provide rural credit to the growing number of smallholders who acquired land title, which they were able to offer as collateral against loans.

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At the same time the structure and composition of the civil service, (Ministries of Agriculture, Settlement, Co-operatives and Social Services, Works, etc.), statutory boards and related organisations has changed with the process of Kenyanisation. The following table shows how comprehensive this process has been in the public and private sector since 1959.

**Table 1. Percentage of Africans in the total number of employees in the formal sector, excluding large farms, 1959-1969**

	1959	1964	1969
Private sector	80	81	85
Public sector	87	92	95

Source: Public Service Structure and Remuneration Commission 1970-1971. (Chairman: D. N. Ndegwa). Report of the Commission of Inquiry. Nairobi Government Printer 1971, p.29.

With this influx of new and inexperienced Africans into the various institutions which served the agricultural sector, together with the lack of management experience among employees of formal statutory bodies, it is necessary to examine how well such bodies are suited to the type of operation for which they are responsible at this stage of Kenya's development.

For example, a significant feature of the early development of agriculture in the country was the complexity of institutions which appeared. Produce marketing boards, farmers' associations, Settlement Boards and the like were predominantly designed to serve European producers, who were both literate and fairly experienced in their own field of agricultural production and who were predominantly concerned with producing for export markets. This entailed efficient marketing organisations with facilities for storage and transportation and accompanying brokerage and shipping agents for overseas markets.

The present agricultural development machinery in Kenya, which includes the full range of advisory, servicing, producing, pricing and marketing activities, is the product of the series of changes within the large- and small-scale sectors over past years. It includes within it the compromises and expediciencies which were necessary (i) to maintain continued levels and standards of production in the face of the transfer of large-scale farms for settlement and sub-division into smaller units, and (ii) to provide an agricultural service machinery which would cater increasingly for the needs of the small-scale farming communities throughout the country.

The elaborate complex of marketing boards, farmers' associations, co-operatives, inspectorates and advisory services which have been

successively built up in response to changing requirements of a changing agricultural situation attempt to operate on an integrated basis. It is, however, more as a matter of historical accident than of design that the country supports such a body of institutions both within and outside the formal government framework.<sup>1</sup>

Thus at a time when increasing attention is being devoted to improving the lot of the small-scale farming community — usually thought to represent between 85% and 90% of the country's total population — it is appropriate to look at the present basis of Kenyan agricultural development and to determine whether development services are appropriately designed to tackle the range of problems involved.

In particular, the Ministry of Agriculture itself, as the main agency for increasing agricultural production and improving agricultural services, has been endeavouring to adjust to the changes which led to political independence. It has been forced into this adaptation over recent years in response to pressures to involve the growing rural population in development, and thus to enable them to share the benefits of progress with the more fortunate large farmers and urban elite. The implication of the expanded responsibility has been mainly a simple increase in the size of the machinery formerly servicing a more limited area and a different type of farmer. There has been a fairly uniform expansion taking little account of the diversity in the areas of different potential and different farming intensity. The Ministry's field staff has been expanded at all levels and deployed evenly across the country.

The roles of the agencies involved in agricultural development have also changed over recent years, both in the extent of their coverage and in relation to the characteristics of the farming community for which they are catering.

The present study examines how well certain of the institutions and methods utilised by the Ministry of Agriculture at present and over past years are adapted to the actual requirements of the farming community for which they are designed and the technical characteristics of the projects and programmes which they involve.

This study is based on the premise that, as the process of development evolves, farmers operating at different stages of advancement possess, by virtue of their background and particular experience, differences in attitudes, aspirations and capacities in relation to their immediate environment. These differences may be expressed either in their reactions to changing circumstances as individuals or within their community as a whole. Factors responsible for diverse backgrounds might be ethnic, cultural, environmental or historical and reflect the

<sup>1</sup> See L. Winston Cone and J. F. Lipscomb, *The History of Kenyan Agriculture*, University Press of Africa 1972, for a comprehensive chronicle of the evolution of many formal and non-formal agricultural organisations and institutions.



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extent to which particular communities have been exposed to the modern commercial world with its differing techniques and values.

At the end of the scale, traditional subsistence farmers are characterised by a bare minimum of technical knowledge, a lack of commercial sophistication, few resources upon which to fall back and little market orientation. As the community evolves through a process of infiltration of new ideas, new techniques, new standards and new aspirations, so the standards of husbandry improve and the spectrum of requirements and capacities of that community change. Thus the methods and institutions adopted by a government department concerned with accelerating this development process must be suitably adapted to these changing circumstances. Broad-fronted approaches which do not differentiate between different levels of advancement defeat their own objectives and end up by providing benefits on an inequitable basis to a privileged minority. Different tribal or customary patterns of behaviour in relation to land use and ownership, labour mobilisation, or systems of inheritance all variously affect the way in which development programmes can be implemented. Similarly, due account is rarely taken of the differences in farming skill and resources among different communities, particularly in the organisation of extension and advisory services provided by government.

A second element influencing the choice of organisation or the type of administration required in a given development situation is the technical nature of the enterprise which is being promoted. Different enterprises require different support services and different intensities of such support. The requirements of large-scale agriculture inevitably differ from those of small-scale agriculture, as do those for intensive and extensive farming respectively.

Similarly the organisation and the systems utilised by government departments in the development process must be adapted to the manpower available in terms both of numbers and of the level of training. According to the nature of the service to be provided and the stage of advancement of the agricultural sector, so the organisation and establishment of the government department concerned will change. This change over time is particularly significant as the emphasis of government changes from an effort to modernise a subsistence economy to a facilitating and supervisory role in a more advanced agricultural economy.

Organisations and systems in Kenya have developed over time; and the circumstances which shaped the original structure to service the agricultural sector have changed radically in recent years. As later examples will show, there has been a tendency to maintain the old structures and mechanisms utilised previously, in the face of changing levels of manpower availability, changing levels of individual capacities to fill key positions, and a growing commitment to a much larger num-

ber of farmers, particularly smallholders, than was envisaged in the past.

There is as much a need for the formal machinery responsible for the promotion of development to be adapted to differing stages of transition reached by individual farming communities as for the internal organisation of that machinery to reflect the shortage of qualified manpower available to it. Priority areas of service to the agricultural sector can be identified readily as the ability:

- (i) to deliver clear and timely advice to farmers.
- (ii) to undertake investment in basic infrastructure.
- (iii) to provide improved essential services such as the supply of agricultural inputs, provision of marketing facilities and information services at levels readily accessible to the farmer.

The possibility of providing these services satisfactorily at the field level depends upon a properly organised and reasonably well-equipped field staff, who must be suitably trained and able to communicate with farmers satisfactorily.

The options for the organisation of agricultural marketing and processing range from straight barter in the local market to the sophisticated operations of a commercial firm collecting, grading, processing and packing primary agricultural products. Both the crop and the standard of agricultural advancement have considerable bearing on the most appropriate marketing channel to be employed, and the channel chosen itself affects the extension and delivery organisation. Past experience has demonstrated that what might be suitable for one crop in a given circumstance might be completely inappropriate for another. Kenyan experience provides examples of both successful and unsuccessful initiatives in this area.

It is inevitable that as the community becomes increasingly aware of the environment in which decisions concerning its economic and social well-being are made, there will be a desire to be increasingly represented in influencing those decisions. The degree to which locally-elected committees can decide on what is best for the community as a whole, without first-hand knowledge of overall policy objectives set by the central authorities, has long been the subject of controversy. Similarly there have been problems of preventing exploitation of local development committees for the personal benefit of local politicians. However, as the various institutions concerned with different aspects of community activity (co-operatives, elected committees, marketing agencies, etc) develop, so the need grows to provide for means of involving such groups in a representative capacity and to give due acknowledgement to their felt needs. If the development of such political activity can be accepted as a legitimate influence on the administrative machinery from the ground level up, then a sound balance between political and administrative objectives can be achieved. Fur-

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thermore, grounds for friction between political leaders and influential civil servants, so frequently a feature of a developing country's internal problems, can be reduced to a minimum.

While it is natural to think of a growing need for representation and participation, it is important to recognise that growth takes time. In the very early stages of modernisation, new services have to be established — to prevent the spread of crop or animal diseases, to check erosion and overgrazing, to control water use etc. Provided that these services can be shown to benefit the farmer, they will be accepted and finally internalised. The capacity for self-government, the ability to run co-operatives successfully and the power to control exploitation of the weaker members of society by the stronger, develop slowly. Thus the timing of the introduction of self-governing institutions must be considered carefully.



# Chapter 1

## The Kenyan Setting

### Physical background

Kenya lies astride the Equator on the eastern seaboard of Africa. From the coast of the Indian Ocean, Kenya shares frontiers with Somalia in the east, Ethiopia and the Sudan in the north-west, Uganda to the west and Tanzania to the south. The country covers an area of some 225,000 square miles, over twice the size of the United Kingdom.

Much of the interior of the country has a temperate climate due to high altitudes. From the narrow, tropical coastal belt the land rises to the high East African plateau, where mixed agriculture can be successfully undertaken at altitudes up to 10,000 feet. Most of the high-potential land is found at altitudes between 5,000 and 9,000 feet above sea level. Much of the country consists of savannah-land, made up of a combination of short trees or bush and grass. The more arid parts of the north are desert scrub and low bushes separated by bare soil. Between the coast and the Kenyan highlands is an extensive area of tangled thorn bush giving way in Masailand to open grassland dotted with thorn trees and in the highlands to forest and fertile grasslands.

However, of the total land area of 225,000 square miles, less than 10% can be described as good agricultural land in the sense that it has adequate and reliable rainfall, good soils and is not steeply sloping. A further 5% is suitable for crop production but is in areas where rainfall is uncertain and crop failures are a potential hazard. From an agricultural viewpoint, the remaining areas, in the absence of irrigation or water conservation, are only suited to stock raising at varying levels of intensity depending upon rainfall and soil type. About 60% of Kenya's land area can be described as semi-desert and possesses an extremely low potential for use. This pattern of land-use potential very much determines the possibilities open in the medium-term future to exploitation of the available land resources.

Population density in the settled agricultural areas still reflects to a considerable extent the pattern established under the colonial régime, whereby reserves were allocated for African land settlement and agricultural development. In contrast to these, the former 'scheduled areas', restricted almost exclusively to European large-scale farmers prior to Independence, are much less densely populated in relation to available arable land. There is a third category of potentially useful agricultural land which was formerly either Crown lands or reserved for certain of the pastoralist tribes. These regions reflect very low population densities.

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The overall pattern of land holdings in Kenya affects significantly the policies devised for agricultural development. The following table contains a summary of the estimated availability of good agricultural land by Districts:

**Table 2. Estimated availability of good agricultural land by Districts 1969**

District	'000 hectares	Hectares per head population	District	'000 hectares	Hectares per head population
Narok	915	7.3	Kwale	163	0.8
Lamu	74	3.3	Bungoma	253	0.7
Tana River	119	2.4	Elgeyo/		
Laikipia	138	2.1	Matakwet	105	0.7
Samburu	156	2.2	Embu	103	0.6
Uasin Gishu	327	1.7	Kisumu/Siaya	438	0.6
Trans Nzoia	208	1.7	Kilifi	162	0.5
Nyandarua	265	1.5	Muranga	217	0.5
West Pokot	67	1.3	Kirinyaga	100	0.5
Baringo	190	1.2	Taita	50	0.5
Nandi	234	1.1	Meru	263	0.4
Nakuru	301	1.0	Nyeri	160	0.4
Kitui	305	0.9	Kakamega	325	0.4
South Nyanza	567	0.9	Machakos	284	0.4
Busia	163	0.8	Kiambu	170	0.4
Kericho	380	0.8	Kisii	220	0.3

Source: Calculated from Tables 13 and 73, *Statistical Abstract 1971*.

This endorses the very marked trend towards small-scale units in the majority of the country's high-potential Districts.

### **Social and tribal structure**

Kenya's present African population of 11m people derives from four main ethnic sources: Bantu, Nilotic, Nilo-Hamitic and Hamitic. The present broad distribution of the four ethnic elements is partly a reflection of the location of Kenya in one of the major culture-contact areas

of Africa. Economic development of the country has brought about a mixing of the peoples of Kenya, although this has largely occurred in the southern half of the country. Geographically, the population has shown greater mixing in the areas favoured by reliable rainfall, primarily in the Lake Victoria Basin in the west and in the highlands. The southern half of Kenya's coastlands shows a similar pattern. The movement essentially represents a drift from rural to urban areas and from the less developed to the developing parts.

It is not easy to provide a brief yet satisfactory summary of the socio-economic characteristics of that sector of the community with which this study is concerned, since they do not represent a homogeneous group. Considerably more research is required to identify in more precise terms different characteristics of individual groups, which are likely to influence the propositions enumerated in the introduction. Some attempts have already been made to distinguish between farming groups of differing levels of progressiveness,<sup>1</sup> of which there will be further discussion in a later section, and more initiative along these lines would be highly desirable.

In the present context, this study is predominantly concerned with the smallholder farming community, which is usually considered to consist of farmers with access to not more than 10 hectares of cultivable land and in most cases considerably less. Examples are also drawn from a broader section of the agricultural community to illustrate the consequences of failing to take sociological or environmental characteristics into account (eg group ranch development in Masailand, seasonal credit justified on obsolete grounds). It is this same smallholder category which the 1970-1974 Development Plan referred to:<sup>2</sup>

'During the new Plan period . . . greater emphasis will be placed on land adjudication and registration, on the supply of credit to small-scale farmers, transport, bulk handling, marketing and pricing arrangements and on mechanisation and on the use of fertilizers and insecticides. In the pastoral areas, the range management scheme is expected to increase production of marketable animals through rationalisation of herd size, pasture use and water supplies. The aim of these measures is to increase the effectiveness and flexibility of small farm and range operations and thus produce far-reaching effects on both the general economy where agriculture and animal husbandry contribute such a large

1 J. Ascroft, F. Chege, J. Kariuki, N. Roling, *Accelerating the Flow of New Ideas to Rural People—A proposal for a pilot extension project in Nyeri*. Institute for Development Studies (IDS), Nairobi, Discussion Paper No. 133, Nov. 1971.  
Also J. Ascroft, N. Roling, J. Kariuki, F. Chege, *The Tetu Extension Project—First Report on a Field Experiment*, IDS Nairobi, Aug. 1972.

2 Republic of Kenya Development Plan 1970-1974 Government Printer, Nairobi—para. 6.13, p. 169.

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share of activity and also on the rural population which comprises over 90% of the total for the nation as a whole.'

Unfortunately, full statistics are not available to show the breakdown and land ownership patterns of the smallholder farming community, but it is possible to provide details of the size distribution of registered smallholdings, for which the land adjudication process had been completed in 1969 and which is assumed fairly representative in demonstrating the significant number of farmers with holdings of less than 2 hectares (over 50% in the present example). The national pattern of smallholdings would probably throw up even more marked emphasis on the smaller units since the figures included in the table below include farms on the major settlement schemes throughout the country, for which it has been past policy to create and maintain units of 4 and 6 hectares. This was true of the settlement schemes undertaken during the pre-Independence era and was also the basis of the Million-acre Settlement Scheme.

**Table 3. Size distribution of registered smallholdings 1969**

Farm size Hectares	No. of farms '000s	% total of registered smallholdings	Farm area '00 ha.	% of total area of registered smallholdings
0 — 0.49	91	11.7	28	1.1
0.5 — 0.9	121	15.5	89	3.4
1.0 — 1.9	192	24.6	274	10.3
2.0 — 2.9	128	16.4	303	11.4
3.0 — 4.9	104	13.3	404	15.1
5.0 — 9.9	88	11.3	629	23.8
10 and over	54	7.0	923	33.9

Source: Table 7.9(a) Small Farms and Settlement Schemes 1969.

*Statistical Abstract 1970.*

Within the smallholder sector, there is inevitably a varied pattern of agricultural development. In different areas, enterprises reflect different emphasis, and different stages of advancement among the farming population are represented by different levels of emphasis on production for subsistence as against production for cash. The recent International Labour Organisation Mission to Kenya, in its report to the Kenya government,<sup>1</sup> attempted to classify smallholder farmers on

<sup>1</sup> *Employment, Incomes and Equality—a strategy for increasing productive employment in Kenya*, International Labour Organisation 1972, pp. 35–38.

the basis of cash earnings from their farm enterprises and on their concentration in the areas of differing potential.

The Mission first identified that group of farmers in the high-potential areas, who have rapidly increased their incomes over recent years and who have increasingly participated in the development of the rural economy. Such farmers have often benefited from settlement and irrigation schemes or from land registration (and the accompanying ability to avail themselves of credit), and their cash incomes are derived from the sale of coffee, tea, livestock and dairy products, pyrethrum, maize and other cash crops. This group of farmers, accounting for some 225,000 households, represents about one-fifth of all smallholders. Such farmers employ a considerable proportion of the wage labour in the rural areas, since they have generally found more remunerative returns for their own time than working at home on their own farms. This aspect is well illustrated in an unpublished survey of non-agricultural rural enterprises, produced by the Ministry of Finance and Planning, which showed that nearly 75% of the 51,000 businesses surveyed were owned by farmers either individually or as partnerships.

In the next group, there is a substantial number of smallholders who have partially entered into a commercialisation of their enterprises with, for the time being, only limited returns. For such reasons as poor or insufficient land, lack of technical knowledge or capital, their incomes are limited and they rely on outside labour only indirectly or at seasonal peaks. Such labour might receive payment in kind rather than in cash. It has been estimated that there are some 250,000 smallholders in this category.

Finally, the majority of farming families constitute the third group, which is characterised by a lack of ability to raise productivity of their land more than marginally. Such farmers possess smallholdings in the medium-potential areas or very small plots in the high-potential areas. The number of smallholdings in this category would appear to be about 620,000 and families existing under these conditions of low agricultural production and income experience extreme poverty and are forced to seek work outside their own farms in order to maintain a livelihood for themselves and their families. It is probable that within this group there exist many who benefit from incomes earned by relatives in the urban areas, although it is not possible to specify the numbers; there must also be others who do not have additional income, and who are squatters on land which they do not own.

In the absence of a satisfactory alternative in the form of a social security system, the extended family system will continue as a means of support for the unemployed or the underprivileged in the rural areas.

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The majority of the farming community in the smallholder category is characterised by an ignorance of the use of new farming techniques such as hybrid seed, grade cattle, and disease control requirements. A recent survey by the Institute for Development Studies, Nairobi, in Nyeri District, conventionally accepted as one of the most progressive smallholder districts in the country, emphasised this.<sup>1</sup> Levels of adoption of hybrid maize were considered by extension staff to be in the region of 90%; but the IDS random sample identified only 30% of Nyeri farmers using hybrid maize seed.

Finally, the ability to raise funds or pool resources to achieve some common objective, such as the construction of a new dispensary, a cattle dip or secondary school, although by no means evident throughout all the rural areas, has been a significant feature of post-Independence Kenya. The spirit of *harambee*, as it is known, while frequently accused of misguided or irrational application (such as new schools built without adequate thought to future financial commitments) does represent an outlet for development initiative, which has only partially been exploited by government. There will be further discussion of this aspect later.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Data presented by J. Ascroft *et al.* in a paper read at the Workshop on Improving Strategies for Rural Welfare—Sept. 1971, IDS, Nairobi.

2 For an interesting discussion of the Harambee Movement in Kenya see P. M. Mbithi, 'Harambee Self Help: The Kenyan Approach', *The African Review* Vol. 2, No. 1, June 1972.



## Chapter 2

# Organisations Involved in the Agricultural Development Process

### The administration — its role and significance

In the context of development and the maintenance of a stable social environment in which it can proceed smoothly, the role of the Kenyan administration cannot be over-rated. The present system of delegation of authority from the Office of the President through 7 Provincial Commissioners, supported in turn by 41 District Commissioners and 214 District Officers (as of 1st July 1972), has its origins in the early days of settlement in the 1890s. Acting through Tribal Police and a subordinate hierarchy of appointed chiefs, sub-chiefs and headmen, the District Commissioners were responsible for law and order in the African areas, for the collection of taxes and for assisting settlers to collect labour for their farms. The original orientation of administrative policy was predominantly towards the settler areas, and this resulted in a significantly dualistic pattern of administration over the next fifty or sixty years. With increasing political pressure to improve the lot of the hitherto neglected African Reserves and the publication of documents such as the Beecher Report (1949) on education and the Swynnerton Plan (1954) to intensify the development of African agriculture, the complexity of the civil service increased, particularly for such Ministries as Agriculture, which now had to provide increasing services to the densely populated reserves. The Emergency period brought with it an increased intensity of the administration at the Divisional level, directing a double stream of technical and administrative services into the African areas.

After Independence, the civil service changed its character and the intensive training began of Africans to work within a ministerial system very much based on the Whitehall model.

Today a strongly centralised administration which delegates limited authority to the Province, District and lower levels is responsible for the maintenance of law and order, collection of local taxes, arbitration of local disputes and co-ordination of development activities. For this latter function, the District Commissioner and Provincial Commissioner are Chairmen of the District and Provincial Development Committees respectively.<sup>1</sup>

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1 For a good illustration of the activities of the Administration in detail see D. Brokensha and J. Nellis, *Administration in Mberere: Portrait of a Rural Kenyan Division*, IDS Nairobi Discussion Paper No. 114.

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There has been growing criticism of the domination of the administration in Parliament itself, from the executive of the Kenya African National Union and through the public press.<sup>1</sup> The administration is criticised for being inadequately orientated to development. The influence of the bureaucracy at the District and Divisional level, in the person of the District Commissioner and District Officer, is undoubtedly strong. In their eyes, the local MP is recognised as an influential voice to be pacified, since he has access to a hearing in the National Assembly; but in general what is done to devise and develop programmes in line with the MP's wishes is not very significant.

Members have an opportunity to voice their opinions at meetings of the District Development Advisory Committee (DDAC) and occasionally the District Development Committee (DDC). (The Commission of Inquiry into the Public Service Structure and Remuneration<sup>2</sup> recommended the amalgamation of these two Committees, to streamline committee activity at the District level, but this has not been formally adopted yet.) The DDAC has in the past included MPs and members of local councils, while the DDC has previously included predominantly official government representation. There is no doubt that there is considerable duplication in terms of proposed representation in the DDC structure.

At the same time MPs complain that local DCs have interfered with arrangements for holding local meetings (a licence for such a meeting is required from the DC) and that even meetings once licensed are often cancelled for no apparent reason and at very short notice. Such activities do not endear the administration and its representatives to either the people's representatives or the people themselves.

The Kenyan bureaucracy has maintained all these powers which were taken over at Independence, as well as control of the police and responsibility for collection of local taxes in the rural areas. In more recent years the responsibility for rural health, former Council roads and primary schools has been taken over by the Ministries for Health, Roads and Education respectively, thereby depriving the local government system of further responsibility.<sup>3</sup> These steps were officially justified by a desire to maintain law and order and provide local services more efficiently through a centralised system. While responsible for health, roads and primary education, local County Councils were con-

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1 See J. Nellis, *Is the Kenyan Bureaucracy Developmental? Political Considerations in Development Administration*, IDS Nairobi Staff Paper No. 103, June 1971, for quotations from the *East African Standard* and the *Daily Nation*.

2 Report of the Commission of Inquiry (Public Service Structure and Remuneration Commission), Chairman: Duncan Ndegwa—Nairobi, Government Printer 1971.

3 For an interesting research paper on the implications of this move, see H. Colebatch, *Some Political Implications of Service Provision: Roads and Schools and Health Services*, IDS Nairobi Working Paper No. 79.



stantly faced by financial problems and in many cases verged on near bankruptcy; schoolteachers went without pay for months, road standards deteriorated and dispensaries were not maintained. Local government has consequently fallen into relative stagnation with few financial resources to fall back upon (even in the more prosperous areas).

The official attitude to the role of the administration in the Development Plan 1970-74 (paragraph 3.12) seems to be quite clear:

'... more impetus to the development process will be obtained by accelerating the shift of emphasis in the work of the provincial administration towards development administration in which the principle objective will be to achieve rapid development to raise people's welfare. The traditional colonial emphasis on the maintenance of law and order and the collection of taxes will be changed in order to give additional emphasis to the administration of development. The administrative machinery must be development-minded and adequately informed about the country's development problems in order to seek solutions to these problems at the local level.'

At present, however, there is little evidence to suggest that this aspect of the government's intentions to increase the administration's participation in the process of development is being carried out. The Ndegwa Commission<sup>1</sup> made certain recommendations for the improved functioning and structure of the Provincial and District Development Committees, but effective action has yet to be carried out on the majority of recommendations which are significant in this respect.

The large range of functions and powers given to the administration in the Provinces and Districts (as distinct from the Provincial and District representatives of functional departments such as Agriculture, Health, Education, Works) is probably due:

- (i) to a belief that Kenya needs strong and authoritarian government and that local councils have not shown the necessary drive and ability,
- (ii) the President's personal desire to have a strong corps of élite administrators answering directly to him,
- (iii) the absence of any other means of effective co-ordination of official action at Provincial and lower levels.

This attitude may encounter growing objections from political leaders in the future and the relationship of the administration with the political system of representation will have to tread a delicate path in the years to come.

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1 Report of the Commission of Inquiry: *op. cit.*

## **The structure of the Ministry of Agriculture**

To examine the present structure in its relevant context, it is necessary to look briefly at the events which have influenced the organisation of the Ministry of Agriculture.

In 1954, the change in the mode of government in Kenya brought about the introduction of the ministerial system, by which government departments, which were formerly presided over by civil servants appointed by the Colonial Office, were allocated to members who were either elected by votes or appointed by the Governor. The basic framework established in these early days still exists and a central Ministry under a Minister appointed by the President is responsible for aspects of agricultural policy, subject to the advice of a plethora of boards, committees, councils and bodies of many complexions. Today there are separate Ministries responsible for Forestry and Natural Resources and for Co-operatives, formerly closely administered by the Ministry of Agriculture.

The original emphasis in colonial days was inevitably to protect and service the European large-scale farming areas, which represented the key areas of marketable production and foreign exchange earnings. Over time the emphasis has had to change. Notable changes have been:

- (i) acknowledgement of a dual agricultural economy with separate requirements of large- and small-scale farming areas,
- (ii) extending the scope of marketing boards to handle both European and African produce,
- (iii) creation of the African Land Development Organisation (ALDEV), which provided money and services for assisting development in the formerly neglected but highly populated African farming areas,
- (iv) the Swynnerton Plan of 1954, which outlined a scheme to accelerate the development of African agriculture, based on individual land tenure, growing of cash crops, improvement of live-stock, development of water supplies and grazing management, protective afforestation and tsetse control,
- (v) increased road construction and improvements in agricultural training facilities and extension services.

Today, the Ministry of Agriculture is one of the largest Ministries in the Kenya government. In 1972/1973 the gross recurrent budget estimated for Agriculture was K£11.2m, second only to the Ministry of Education's budget of K£34.8m. Estimated development expenditure of K£7.8m was also only second to expenditure on Roads estimated at K£16.8m.

The Ministry employs some 14,000 staff of whom probably not more than 5,500 actually make direct contact with farmers. The

remaining 8,500 work on a variety of assignments in Nairobi, at Provincial or District headquarters or at research and training institutions, driving vehicles, doing clerical work, herding livestock, supervising junior staff, undertaking field investigations etc. In terms of calculating extension worker/farmer ratio, only the lowest cadre of staff — the Junior Agricultural Assistants and the Junior Animal Health Assistants and certain specialist Agricultural Assistants and Assistant Agricultural Officers (eg Farm Management)—can be considered as proper extension staff. No official figure exists of this cadre, but the breakdown in Table 4 has been based on the Ministry's establishment records.

**Table 4. Estimated numbers of field extension workers in daily contact with farmers**

<i>Type of Staff</i>	<i>Nos. in contact with farmers</i>	<i>Total in cadre</i>
Agricultural Assistants (including range, animal production, farm management and crops staff)	700	2,191
Animal Health Assistants	400	949
Junior Agricultural Assistants	3,600	5,850
Junior Animal Health Assistants	800	1,216
	<hr/> 5,500	<hr/> 10,206

Based on a figure of 1.7m holdings in Kenya,<sup>1</sup> this gives an extension worker/farmer ratio for the whole country of 1:310, which is very favourable when compared with many other countries. Of course, this figure is a very rough one and the proportion will vary both with different enterprises and with different farming densities. The Kenya Tea Development Authority, for example, employs JAAs seconded from the Ministry, who cover an average of 130 farmers each.

The present organisation of the Ministry is quite complex and is depicted on Chart I.

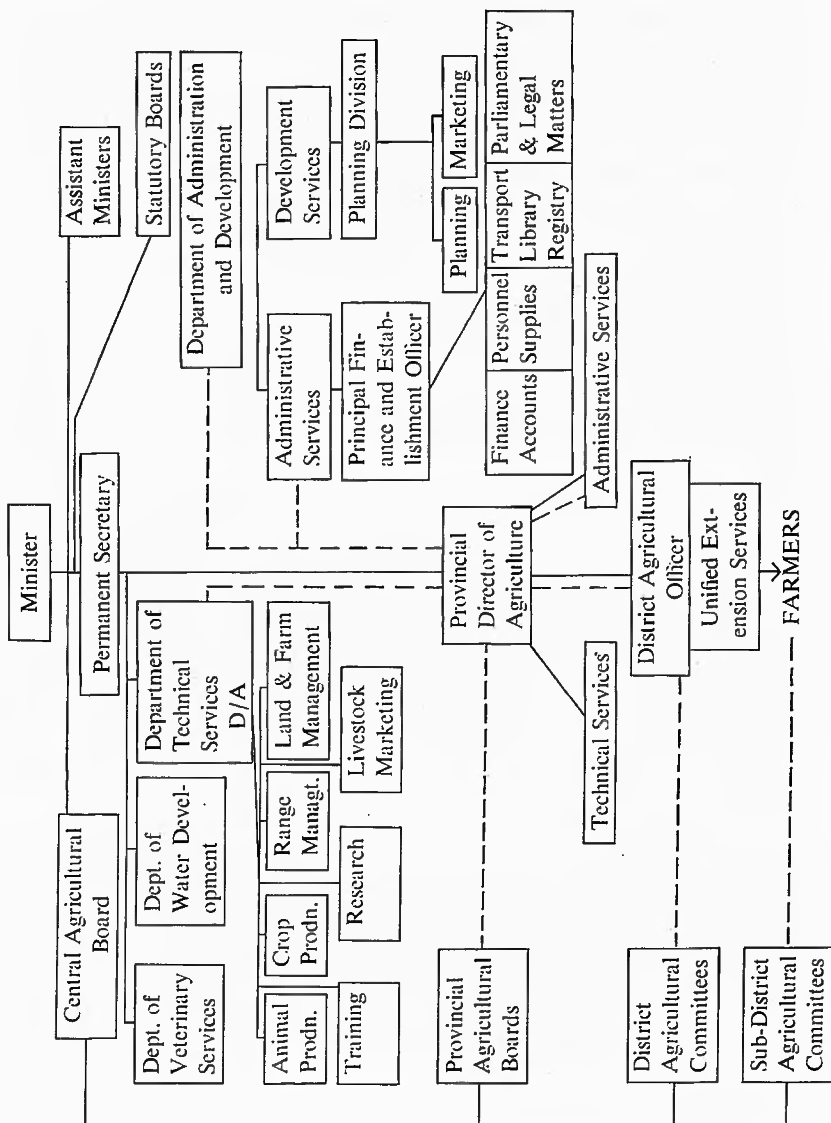
A significant re-organisation of the Ministry of Agriculture was undertaken in 1969 and was intended to separate those sections responsible for administration from those responsible for technical services. Both sections are represented at the Provincial level. At the District level below this, the District Agricultural Officer (DAO) has several technical staff (eg District Crops Officer, District Land and Farm Management Officer) to assist him, but he is responsible for the administrative aspects of all sections within his District. Since in many of the high-potential agricultural Districts, the District Agricultural

<sup>1</sup> From John C. de Wilde, *Experience with Agricultural Development in Tropical Africa* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press for IBRD, 1967).

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Officer has difficulty in keeping abreast of all the technical programmes in his District, this administrative responsibility is an extra impediment to the efficient implementation of field programmes. A strong case could therefore be made for increasing the administrative cadre at the District level to overcome this.

CHART I Organisation of the Ministry of Agriculture 1973



## ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Much of the advantage obtained in improving administrative efficiency at the intermediate levels of delegation and decision-making is lost if the crucial lower level of field staff and farmer contact is neglected. It was at this level that the Ministry's re-organisation failed, since little was done to improve the basic channels of contact between the Ministry and the farmer by including the lower level échelons of the field staff. A major objective of re-organisation was to develop a single agricultural advisory service at the farm level, which would improve services to the producer. Several technical divisions which could make a case for using particular grades of staff for specified duties or particular projects were allocated a certain establishment from the available Junior Agricultural Assistants, Agricultural Assistants and Animal Health Assistants. The balance of the Junior Staff, who were not allocated to a particular technical division in this way, were posted to the Crop Production Division and collectively represent the bulk of the 'General Extension Service'. These officers continue to operate in much the same way as they have done in the past at the sub-locational level under the supervision of the locational Agricultural Assistant.

A brief examination of their numbers, provided in Table 5, shows the full significance of this cadre of staff (over 40% of the overall total).

**Table 5. Junior agricultural staff in the Ministry of Agriculture**

	<i>AAs or AHAs</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>JAAAs, JAHAs, JRAs</i>	<i>% of total</i>
Research Division	216	6.9	815	11.5
Training Division	138	4.4	588	8.4
Land & Farm Management	216	6.9	385	5.5
Water Development Department	—	—	269	3.8
Veterinary Department	949	30.2	1216	17.3
Animal Production Division	74	2.4	413	5.8
Livestock Marketing Division	—	—	493	6.9
Range Management Division	86	2.7	143	2.0
Crop Production Division	1461	46.5	2744	38.8
Total	3140	100	7066	100

Additionally, the salaries of these staff (in excess of K£2.2m pa) represent over 40% of the Ministry's total annual salary allocation —

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a point of considerable significance when assessing productivity and returns to public investment.

Field staff represent the final link in the chain of activities undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture to assist the farming community. Research programmes, training programmes, disease control work, credit schemes, crop and livestock production programmes are all crippled if the link between the field staff and the farm is poor. Methods of improving this link which take into account both the relative degree of training of field staff and the large numbers of farmers to be covered are discussed later in this study.

There are three separate technical departments. The largest of these is the Department of Technical Services, comprising Animal Production, Crop Production, Range Management, Land and Farm Management, Training, Research and Livestock Marketing, all under the responsibility of the Director of Agriculture. There are additionally separate Directors for Veterinary Services and Water Development. Each of these Departments is represented at the Provincial level. In the case of Technical Services, where there is no Provincial Technical Officer (eg Provincial Crop Production Officer) the Provincial Director of Agriculture (PDA) acts on behalf of that officer. Otherwise the Provincial Director's task is to co-ordinate agricultural activities undertaken by the individual technical divisions and departments. This includes Water Development and Veterinary Services for which there are Provincial representatives in each case. The Provincial Director of Agriculture is furthermore responsible for the control of the financial allocation for his eight technical departments, while Water and Veterinary Services separately control their own allocations. This ensures the latter two Departments of a minimum ceiling of funds within which they can undertake their essential services, without the risk of re-allocation of funds by the Provincial Headquarters to other services.

Alongside its formal organisational structure staffed by government officials, the Ministry has recognised the need for some kind of farmer representation in the process of decision-making. This takes the form of the Central Agricultural Board with its decentralised Provincial Boards and District Committees (see Chart I). The Chairman of the Central Agricultural Board has direct access to the Minister. The Board represents the only institutionalised form of farmer representation in the process of agricultural policy making, apart from the Kenya National Farmers' Union, which still has a membership limited predominantly to large scale farmers, reflecting its origins in the earlier British settler community. District and sub-District Agricultural Committees are supposed to include 6-10 farmers from the area, representing the views and opinions of their fellow farmers. Since District Agricultural Officers are also represented either as Executive Officers of



these committees or simply as members, there is an opportunity for an exchange of ideas on pressing agricultural matters.

These committees are not, however, representative of the mass of small-scale farmers. Firstly, those farmers who do attend regularly are usually the most advanced and progressive and while they may be recognised as 'local leaders' in the conventional sense, they are not always fully aware of the problems of some of the more backward of their fellow farmers. Again, farmer representation on these committees has been most successful in the richest farming areas of the country, where individual farmers have been able to afford the time to attend meetings regularly. A previous practice of paying a sitting allowance to non-official members of the local committees was discontinued some years ago and only nominal travel expenses are reimbursed. To a smallholder farmer relying on his own labour, the sacrifice of travelling lengthy distances to the local meeting at certain times of the farming year is considerable. Representation is theoretically based on annual election of farmer members, but in some Districts elections have not been held for three or four years and the same representatives or no representatives at all attend the regular meetings. All of these factors reduce the effectiveness of the Central Agricultural Board at the local level.

## **The nature of governmental development participation**

There are several features of overall government policy which significantly affect and in some ways limit the role of the operational Ministries within the Kenya government structure. Firstly overall development takes place in the context of a free enterprise economy. The autonomy of individual commercial action and the unimpeded operation of private enterprise is allowed to develop with considerably more freedom than, for example, in neighbouring Tanzania. Only where there are clear conflicts between private and commercial interests and more general social welfare does the government intervene and impose controls and restrictions on the operations of the free market mechanism. One of the dangers of this policy is to allow excessive inequalities to grow up between different sections of the community, leading to subsequent stiff measures to redress the imbalance.

To date government participation in the development process has been of a facilitating and fostering nature in both urban and rural development. There has been a tendency to use a number of centralised parastatal organisations and Boards to undertake certain activities, particularly in the field of marketing of agricultural produce, and this may be on the increase with the creation of a growing number of

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government trading bodies, such as the Kenya National Trading Corporation.

Services provided by the Ministry of Agriculture have been primarily limited to the provision of advice and supervision of the development of rural areas, with major investments in research, agricultural education, disease control, credit and land transfer. Where the Ministry is represented in commercial organisations, such as sugar companies, this has usually been effected on a delegated basis through the Agricultural Development Corporation. For example, government investments in the Kenya Seed Company, Kenya Poultry Development Company, Kenya Fruit Processors, Chemilil Sugar Company were all made through the Agricultural Development Corporation.

### **Boards and Corporations**

Many of the Boards and Corporations existing in Kenya today grew up in colonial times and have been adapted to meet the requirements of African producers. Major Boards, Authorities and Commissions in existence at present can be listed as follows:

- The Maize Board
- The Wheat Board
- The Coffee Marketing Board
- The Pyrethrum Marketing Board
- Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA)
- Kenya Co-operative Creameries (KCC)
- The Horticultural Crops Development Authority (HCDA)
- Uplands Bacon Factory Board
- Kenya Meat Commission (KMC)
- Cotton Lint and Seed Marketing Board
- The National Irrigation Board
- The Sisal Board

None of these organisations have exactly similar characteristics and all carry out a variety of different functions. The Wheat Board, for example, has made itself responsible not only for buying wheat from farmers, but also for building stores, organising transportation, paying for research into new rust-resistant varieties and providing special credit to some producers. The Pyrethrum Board employs its own extension staff and research staff and is responsible for processing the crop. The Kenya Tea Development Authority employs an extensive field staff, runs a large transport fleet and manages its own tea factories serving, in particular, smallholder farmers. The Irrigation Board operates more as a government department, with development projects, extension staff and a variety of research and investigation programmes. The Kenya Meat Commission is the main source of wholesale meat



for the urban Mombasa and Nairobi markets and provides a meat inspection service for slaughter-houses in other parts of the country.

The financial requirements of these Boards are met, for the most part, by a cess levied on the produce with which they deal. In the main this system works satisfactorily, although a small organisation such as the HCDA has difficulty in expanding owing to the restricted size of its throughput (HCDA has, for a long time, been trying to get improved financial backing from the government). Again the Sisal Board, until recently, has been in a state of decline, due to the depression in the industry.

The different Boards and Authorities each show different symptoms of success or failure and it is difficult to rationalise these in trying to establish what would be an *ideal* institution for a particular set of circumstances. Several significant features do, however, influence success:

- (i) prices of the final product, whether locally or on the world market, must be adequate to enable an intermediary board or agency to cover its costs and still be able to pay an acceptable price to the producer. Until recently, when prices have risen beyond all expectations to over £230 per ton, there were serious doubts as to the future of the Sisal Board
- (ii) a well-organised collection and marketing structure has been the key to the success of the KCC and the KTDA. In both cases final processing at the local plant has been possible and thus avoided problems of perishability of the primary product (milk and leaf tea)
- (iii) the extension staff of the Pyrethrum Board and the KTDA have both done much to ensure high-quality production by small-scale growers. In the case of pyrethrum, the Board has depended on a handful of staff, while KTDA employs over 750 field staff. The differences both in production techniques and in the length of time required before planted acreages mature explain and justify this difference. In a similar way the Coffee Board has provided a considerable training input in the use of sprays against Coffee Berry Disease and in pruning techniques at Farmers Training Centres for both farmers and general extension staff
- (iv) the provision of credit to farmers by these Boards has been limited to those products where the processing and marketing channel is either a single one (eg tea) or where there is only a limited opportunity for sale outside the institutional marketing channel (eg wheat).

The KTDA makes advances to farmers who are establishing new tea acreage, for units as small as  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre, and also provides

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credit for the purchase of fertilizer after the tea bushes are firmly established. The Pyrethrum Board supplies plants and fertilizer to Co-operative Societies on credit. The Cotton Lint and Seed Marketing Board used to make substantial loans to farmers but now these are very limited. The main reason for poor repayment records has been poor cotton yields due to lack of rainfall, pests and diseases. The Wheat Board, through its agent the Kenya Farmers' Association, has been able to provide credit to farmers against a standing or stored crop, verified by the KFA. This represents bridging finance to enable work to start on land preparation for the next crop

- (v) the daily management of each of these Boards is autonomous and all operate outside the main ministerial machinery. Each has its own policy with regard to delegated financial responsibility, staff terms and procurement arrangements. In many cases, salary and terms for staff are parallel with those for government officers and in the case of the KTDA, similar, since the KTDA field staff are seconded from the Ministry. However, the Boards have a clear operational advantage, since decisions can be made by a General Manager, avoiding the interminable delays for similar decisions taken within the civil service structure.

In addition to these Boards, Commissions and Authorities, the Ministry of Agriculture works through official Corporations. The Agricultural Development Corporation, already mentioned as one of these, exists as a channel by which government invests in commercial agricultural concerns in the private sector. The Corporation also runs several National Farms for hybrid seed production and to accommodate pedigree herds of cattle, sheep and pigs in the national interest. Lands Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the ADC, has been responsible over past years for the land transfer programme of European large-scale farms in the former scheduled areas. Acting as landlord, Lands Limited offers these farms for sale or lease. Suitable owners or tenants are carefully screened before being accepted, in an attempt to ensure that standards of production will not fall under the new management. This programme of transfer is separate from the settlement scheme transfer programme or the Agricultural Finance Corporation programme of land transfer.

The Agricultural Finance Corporation is a further institution within this category. The AFC is the primary agricultural credit institution in Kenya and it is the only lender serving the agricultural sector through a variety of lending programmes aimed at both the small- and large-scale farmer. The functions of the present Corporation are to assist in the development of agriculture and agricultural industries by making loans to farmers, co-operatives societies, incorporated group

representatives, private companies, public bodies, local authorities and other persons engaged in agriculture and agricultural industries.

The responsibility for all the above statutory boards has fallen under the Office of the President since June 1970 and not under the Ministry of Agriculture as might have been expected. While representation in these Boards and Corporations has not altered significantly, all major policy issues now have to be endorsed by the Permanent Secretary in the Office of the President, and the Inspector of Statutory Boards reports direct to that Ministry. This move was an attempt to provide greater control on exploitation and corruption within these Boards, although in operational terms there has been no significant change.

This heavy dependency on such a large number of formal Boards and Corporations is a characteristic not found to the same extent in many developing countries of Kenya's state of advancement. While the existence of such bodies may have been justified in terms of the type of farmer for whom they were designed to cater, their continued operation perhaps needs to be modified. The key question is whether Kenya, in its present state of development, can really afford to rely on these sophisticated institutions, which provide considerable problems in even the more advanced countries.

On the one hand, these boards require their own staff, their own offices and financial backing and in most cases are centralised organisations based on large urban areas. In few cases do any of them have means of making contact with farmers (the KTDA and the Pyrethrum Board are exceptions) and their services generally benefit the more advanced and richer members of the farming community. Inevitably, costs of operation of the boards and parastatal bodies are deducted in some way or other from the final price paid to the farmer.

On the other hand, these parastatal bodies carry out a marketing function not otherwise undertaken by the Ministry and still not adequately undertaken at all levels by the co-operative movement (particularly on the export market) or by traders. In most cases they provide farmers and farmer co-operatives with a guaranteed outlet for produce at fixed minimum prices. Unlike examples in West Africa, marketing Boards are not milked of their profits to finance development elsewhere. They are, in fact, frequently made to bear the brunt of changing world market fluctuations and subject to directives to increase prices to the farmer, without increasing final consumer prices. In few cases do these Boards duplicate services provided from other sources, although this may simply reflect the paucity of other services — and they often represent the only formal agency through which the Ministry can develop expanded marketing facilities.

A significant reason for the appearance of so many official Boards has been the lack of indigenous traders. In the colonial period, the

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main organisation buying and selling (often for export) major European-grown crops was built up by the European farmers and the government in the form of Marketing and similar Boards just described. Petty commerce and building was handled by small traders. These were mainly Asian, providing a service of small shops for both Europeans and Africans and dominating the small-scale building trade.

After Independence, when an increasing proportion of commercial crops was grown by Africans, the government was faced by a shortage of African traders able to handle large-scale operations, but was unwilling to encourage Asian traders to step into the breach. In consequence, there followed an attempt to modify the Boards so that they could handle a multitude of small-scale African farmers, each producing small surpluses at the farm gate, and also to introduce African co-operatives at the intermediate level.

Where there have been notable shortcomings has been in the single-enterprise approach of many of these agencies, particularly those involved in production *and* marketing, which have tended to emphasise their own crop or enterprise in terms of increased acreage targets etc, while overlooking broader farm management implications. Again the monopoly rights of certain Boards preclude the involvement of local traders and thus dampen the expansion of private enterprise in the rural areas, even if black market activities may persist.

The justification for the continued existence of a multitude of Boards and Corporations would be stronger if there was a more significant move to decentralise and if these institutions were to make greater use of the existing institutional framework servicing the rural areas. The main gap at present exists between the statutory Boards and their various agents in the major urban centres and individual farmers and farmer organisations. If this gap could be filled, then organisations such as the Maize Board, the Coffee Marketing Board, the HCDA, the Cotton Lint and Seed Marketing Board would be considerably more effective.

### **Private sector involvement**

In some parts of the agricultural sector, the line between the private sector and these semi-official bodies is very narrow. As mentioned earlier there is a general acceptance of the *laissez-faire* attitude to private enterprise, so long as broader social issues are not involved. Over recent years, the larger commercial organisations involved with agriculture have moved towards a closer co-operation with the Ministry, both for their own good and in the general interest. It is interesting to look at a few examples.

Fertilizer companies have been making an increasing effort to provide services to the smallholder farming areas of the country in

answer to growing demands from that sector. At the same time as employing their own field promotion staff, three of the major companies provide soil analysis facilities to determine appropriate fertilizer usage, as a free service. There is also close co-operation with the Ministry's Crop Production Division in an attempt to standardise recommendations and determine future demands. The major supplying companies are currently included in a scheme with one of the commercial banks to provide input supplies on credit to stockists.

Several processing companies have depended on a close collaboration between the Ministry's field staff and company management to ensure adequate supplies of produce. The experience of Passi Ltd, passion fruit producers in Kisii District, is one example. When the Ministry tried to encourage a similar plant in the Taita Hills, the extension staff were unable to persuade farmers to grow an adequate acreage of passion fruit trees and the company could not move in. Present attempts to resuscitate this project are now meeting scepticism from farmers who did go ahead and plant originally.

Panafrican Foods, operating a vegetable dehydration plant at Naivasha, employ their own extension staff to work and co-ordinate with agricultural staff assisting Kinangop settlement farmers.

There is close co-operation between the milling companies Unga and Maida and the Kenya Farmers' Association, the main agent for animal feedstuffs. Likewise the Wellcome Foundation operates closely with the Veterinary Department in the production of vaccine and drugs.

In the farm machinery world, Massey Ferguson provided a considerable investment of mechanical implements, tractors and combine harvesters at the new Eldoret Large Scale Farmers' Training Centre. The machinery was donated to the Centre and Massey Ferguson have also assisted by providing staff for the FTC.

In the production of both pineapples and sugar, the government has gone into partnership with commercial companies to provide an element of control over the industry and to encourage the companies to cater for small-scale as well as estate producers. Experience with sugar has been more favourable than with pineapple in this respect.

The Kenya Seed Company, producing hybrid maize seed for some years in conjunction with private growers and the Ministry's Seed Certification Service, has recently been appointed by the Wheat Board to multiply new wheat varieties. The company has been highly successful in catering for the needs of both small-scale and large-scale farmers all over the country. The company has always worked closely with the Ministry's research and extension staff and has managed to maintain a reasonable balance between commercial aims and strictly government desires.

The expansion of the barley acreage over the last few years has been



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almost entirely due to the initiative of East African Breweries Ltd. Not only have the breweries been offering price incentives for suitable malting barley, but they have also offered credit to selected farmers to grow barley on a contractual basis.

Similarly the British American Tobacco Company has recently entered the broiler chicken industry in Kenya. The company has taken a 50% share in the former ADC subsidiary Kenya Poultry Development Company and proposes to produce chicks for sale to African producers, either large- or small-scale, mainly around potential urban markets. The production arrangement will be based on a contract between the producer and the company. The farmer will be paid for his management input and the facilities he offers according to the quality of the final mature chicken. The company will supply the chicks, feed and costs of vaccine and other medication, and operates a field extension service to assist and advise producers.

The last two are the most interesting examples. While this type of commercial involvement in agricultural production is probably limited to the more advanced members of the farming community (and, in the case of barley, to large-scale producers), there is undoubtedly considerable potential for initiatives of this kind in other sectors of the Kenyan agricultural economy. Even in Europe contract growing is still something of a new departure but there is scope for the same sort of thing under small-scale African conditions, particularly where high-value crops or livestock are being produced and where, as with statutory Boards, the costs of advisory and support services can be adequately covered.

The tendency for increased participation by commercial organisations is no doubt partly due to the increased purchasing power of sections of the farming community, which makes them more attractive customers for commercial undertakings. This in part reflects the success of earlier governmental efforts and marks a stage at which government can withdraw somewhat from executive handling of the commercial functions of agricultural development. But the same is probably not true for the large and still backward groups who have almost no cash resources and very little to attract commercial investment.

## Chapter 3

# Agricultural Development Administration in the Field

Clearly there are major problems confronting senior government staff responsible for the development of small-scale agriculture in Kenya. Approaches adopted in the past, as the following examples show, have often been misguided and there are still misgivings about some present approaches. But experience has also pointed to some clear lessons for the future.

Firstly there seems little to be gained from the isolated operation of individual departments carrying out their own plans, with their own staff and separate finances. Not only does this lead to a waste of resources and duplication but it makes the local planning operation much more difficult. Certain functional and technical responsibilities must be carried out separately. But problems arise when there are separate departments for extension, co-operative development, community development, minor irrigation, veterinary services, animal husbandry, soil conservation, lands, planning, crop development, commerce and industry, and each representative reports vertically to his head of department. In cases where staff are recruited from similar sources, although their final assignments may differ (eg agricultural staff for the extension service, for settlement and for statutory Boards), the ultimate objective should be uniform overall control of such staff to reduce duplication to a minimum and ensure co-ordination of technical responsibilities.

There is clearly a need to differentiate between the technical functions of agricultural staff and purely administrative duties. Attempts are presently being made to reduce the burden of petty administrative chores on lower level technical officers and such attempts should be upheld.

Closer interaction between central decision-makers and local staff in research and production (the advantages are illustrated below) must precede the issuing of directives for crop and livestock priorities for extension staff.

Rigid financial control and inadequate provision of funds for annual recurrent purposes present a problem. On the one hand experience has often shown that a certain conservatism at the Treasury level or by financial controllers has, *ex post*, proved justified: when unexpected delays have occurred, money would have been committed but not used for lengthy periods of time and other development projects would have suffered. On the other hand the continued cutting back of annual estimates of expenditure for no stated reason leads to increasing exasperation and frustration lower down the line. If staff are expected

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to do a job of work, they must have the resources with which to do it, and shortfalls of funds to meet transport and travel expenses, for example, mean that the large sums spent annually on staff salaries are being inefficiently used.

A similar argument might also apply to the centralised control of finances, where delays in issuing funds jeopardise the efficient operation of staff and programmes at the field level. Without undertaking a very much more extensive study, it is difficult to judge whether the losses and misappropriations incurred in a more decentralised system would be more than offset by the advantages of more efficient local operations.

There is no straightforward answer to the problem posed by decentralised planning. A system relying completely on planning from the centre is far from fully efficient. A system relying on plans formulated at the local level is likewise inadequate, and a warning must be sounded on present approaches in Kenya. There is no ready formula which will adequately take into account elements of both approaches. One answer might be to identify particular functions which are strictly District-specific and draw up a plan for these. This would then be amalgamated with a second section prepared at the centre incorporating national and sectoral priorities for the District. Another suggestion has been made to create a central team of specialists under the Planning Ministry who visit individual Districts and, in conjunction with the District Development Committee, draw up a local plan incorporating both local priorities and proposals from the centre. Any satisfactory proposal which takes account of both local and central priorities should be examined.

However, it must be remembered that central government is always loath to relinquish power; it is always quick to invent reasons why delegation should lead to catastrophe; and it is judge in its own cause. For these reasons the onus should always be put on central government to show cause why power should *not* be delegated, and their arguments should be subjected to the most exacting criticism. Adaptation to local needs will never be done if the central government is unwilling to grant a wide discretion (within broad national policies) to local knowledge and local administrators.

A complete upheaval and re-organisation of present institutions responsible for agricultural development to achieve improved operation is not the only answer, as recent Kenyan experience has shown. For example, simple management systems which are aimed at improving relationships between the field and the centre and which also assist co-ordination of different departments at the field level could go far to improve the effectiveness of these departments. There are considerable advantages to systems which adapt to the existing machinery and



preclude the need for a complicated re-organisation, with its inevitable loss of efficiency in the early stages.

The remainder of this chapter looks briefly at certain aspects of current agricultural development administration by the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture. It first identifies those weaknesses which impede optimal efficiency of the development machinery. Rectification of these weaknesses is a first priority to providing a more efficient structure, geared to serve the smallholder farming community. A second part describes steps which have been taken over recent times to rectify these weaknesses and realign the administrative machinery, so that it is more appropriately orientated towards the less favoured rural communities.

### Problems

The Ministry's organisation chart<sup>1</sup> depicts what appears to be a relatively well-integrated structure of technical and administrative services working down from headquarters to each Province and likewise from Province to District. However, in actual operation, there are a number of weaknesses.

#### Isolated operation of different departments

The problem of excessive administrative work on the shoulders of the District Agricultural Officer has already been alluded to. The DAO is generally the highest qualified man in the District and, if for no other reason, should thus be readily available to provide technical advice and time in the preparation of new development plans.

In the Ministry's day-to-day operations, the individual technical divisions within the Ministry are co-ordinated through the offices of the Director of Agriculture, the Provincial Director of Agriculture, and the DAO. However a serious lack of co-operation exists between the agricultural department and departments under other ministerial heads, such as Co-operatives and Social Services, Natural Resources and Settlement. Each of these three Ministries is already involved in certain aspects of the agricultural field, but either because of inter-ministerial jealousies or simply through lack of communication, in particular at head office level, staff in the Ministries operate in isolation. At the District level, the existence of the District team as an entity under the chairmanship of the District Commissioner provides a monthly opportunity to air differences and discuss mutual problems, but no such mechanism exists below the Cabinet level to co-ordinate Ministries in Nairobi. This lack of communication has led to a significant degree of overlapping and duplication. Perhaps the prime ex-

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1 See page 20.

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ample has been the Department of Settlement, which, in a bid to be more autonomous, now employs all its own field extension staff direct (instead of seconding them from the Ministry of Agriculture) and thus operates in isolation in devising recommendations and familiarising its staff with new production techniques. In the long run, of course, it is the settlement farmers who will suffer from this.<sup>1</sup>

### **Haphazard system of priority setting**

A fairly haphazard system of priority setting exists within the Ministry at present. There has been a tendency in the past to identify projects which would attract outside donor finance. These have consisted of capital projects such as Farmers' Training Centres, research buildings and equipment and service projects for credit provision, disease control, artificial insemination or vaccine production. Such projects are readily identifiable without too intensive an examination of the benefits or costs, but have taxed heavily the recurrent budget and, with a few exceptions, have done little to help the smallholder farming community.

### **Centralised decision-making**

There has in the past been a tendency for poor co-ordination between economists and technical officers within the Ministry, so that decisions have been made in isolation by heads of technical divisions and circulated as directives to the provincial offices, without consultation either of the planners or of the field staff themselves. Coupled with the attitudes of field staff who tend to implement directives unquestioningly, this has led to some strange combinations of agricultural policy at the field level. For example, a recent directive from the Crop Production Division to Eastern Province, recommending increased time and effort by field staff on cotton extension, was passed on to field staff without questioning whether the crop was suited to the differing environments within the Province and whether there were likely to be any other constraints such as shortages of labour. When interviewed, field staff in Mbere Division of Embu District in Eastern Province stated that they were recommending cotton as a first priority crop, in line with instructions, but admitted freely that they would be reluctant to grow it themselves for a number of good reasons, including drought risks, its non-edibility and the heavy commitment it placed on family labour at crucial times of the year. Obviously, in the eyes of the farmer who has any idea of what he can and cannot grow, the credibility of any future crop promotion programmes, however suitable, is thereby reduced.

1 Interestingly, this is in direct contrast with the recommendations put forward in the government commissioned *Report of the Mission on Land Settlement in Kenya 1966*, B. Van Arkadie (Chairman).

The question of centralised decision-making on crop and livestock priorities is discussed below in the context of District or decentralised development planning. In some ways it is not easy to leave decisions on local priorities to the local staff, but at the same time it is completely irrational to set such priorities without drawing upon local knowledge or suggestions.

## Personnel control

Another serious problem has been the rapid transfer of staff from one part of the country to another—with inevitable bad results. No sooner has a good officer begun to recognise the potential of his Division or District and to devise means of exploiting such potential, than he is posted elsewhere. For example, in a recent report by the IDS, Nairobi,<sup>1</sup> data collected from 10 Farmers' Training Centres showed that the Junior Agricultural Assistants had spent only 2.1 years on average in each area of work since joining the service. A third of the number had stayed an average of 1 year or less. Possible solutions which have been offered to mitigate the effects of such rapid transfers are:

- (i) a closer monitoring of postings of staff through the personnel sections of different departments
- (ii) limiting postings to within individual provinces
- (iii) acknowledging individual requests and preferences for initial postings to reduce the number of applications for reposting submitted later
- (iv) posting staff between areas of similar conditions and environment.

In respect of (iv) above, it would seem quite practical to break the country down by Districts of varying agricultural characteristics and limit staff postings to within these blocks. It is accepted that the process of posting and reposting is part of the built-in incentive system. A new posting often carries with it a promotion or improves the chance of future promotion. This principle need not be disrupted if the block limitation to posting is accepted. Perhaps as an extra concession, postings within blocks would be limited to a minimum of five years for medium-level staff who would also benefit from diverse experience in other areas, before being promoted to posts at headquarters where a breadth of experience would be valuable. The break-down by Districts might look as follows:

1 'Evaluation of the JAA Training Manual': Views of FTC Teachers and JAAs: *Report to the Head of Training Divisions, Ministry of Agriculture*, N. Roling et al. IDS Nairobi Working Paper No. 42, June 1972.

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**Table 6. Breakdown of Districts into four extension blocks**

<i>Smallholder high-potential block</i>		<i>Large-scale high-potential block</i>	<i>Medium-density rangeland block</i>	<i>Low-density rangeland block</i>
Kiambu	S. Nyanza	Nakuru	Kajiado	Garissa
Kirinyaga	Bungoma	Trans Nzoia	Laikipia	Mandera
Muranga	Busia	Uasin Gisnu	Karok	Wajir
Nyandarua	Kakamega	Eigeyo Marakwet	Kitui	Marsabit
Nyeri	Nandi		Tana River	Turkana
Embu	W. Pokot		Lamu	Samburu
Machakos	Kilifi		Baringo	Isiolo
Meru	Kwale			
Kisii	Taita			
Kisumu	Kericho			
Siaya				

Acceptance of this principle would result in an improvement in staff specialisation over time and represent a recognition of the differing agricultural communities.

### Financial control

Discussion with field staff at both Provincial and District Headquarters has revealed that one of the major drawbacks to the Ministry's project implementation process is the constraint of the financial regulations. The system is quite complex and can be briefly outlined as follows.

The government financial year runs from July 1st to June 30th. Shortly after allocations are made to field stations in July or August, bids are called in for the following financial year. While there are obvious advantages in forward financial planning of this nature, this represents the only opportunity for field staff to put forward projects and proposals for financial support. If these are not accepted, then the only alternatives are to work within the funds available or drop the scheme altogether. In practice, individual schemes or proposals put forward by District or Provincial staff are rarely, if ever, accepted, unless they can be tied in to a national or regional programme along similar lines. Such national programmes are generally formulated by headquarters staff or planning officers and, until the recent emergence of the District Development Committee and Provincial Development Committee, were generally put forward without any detailed ratification at the lower levels — the levels which would later be responsible for implementation.

Meanwhile, in Nairobi, the process of estimate formulation, discussion and approval continues throughout the year until about May,

when final totals are approved by the Treasury and details released. These details are rarely passed on to field officers who must await receipt of a half-yearly Authority to Incur Expenditure (AIE) before they know the limits within which they can work. Some 20,000 of these AIEs are prepared in the Ministry headquarters during a single year and over half of these have to be issued in July. One officer alone is responsible for this task and it is hardly surprising that field staff complain of delays in issuing Authorities from one year to the next. AIEs once issued to the Provincial Offices are then broken down and re-issued, where appropriate, to Districts, who are then responsible for working within the limit of the funds available. It is generally not before mid-August that the District Office receives its financial allocations and since expenditure in the previous year has to end in mid-June for accounting purposes, two months of inactivity have passed.

Many proposals have been put forward for improving this financial procedure, but with little success. A straightforward move might be to inform Provinces of their ceilings in May or June, if only to give them time to plan their work and organise staff for the following twelve months. A block allocation to the Provincial heads might make the procedure even more efficient, although the element of stringent financial control from the centre would consequently be diluted. Again, a system of forward financial budgeting for two years, instead of one, with an annual review preceding each new year would make for an improved system of planning for implementation.

One of the chief anomalies in the present system of financial control and accounting is that revenue-earning projects or programmes benefit little from increased revenue resulting from improved efficiency or other causes. In other words expenditure and revenue accounts operate independently and a project earning twice as much revenue as originally estimated still has access to a fixed amount of expenditure. This explains the reason why the farms attached to Farmers' Training Centres throughout the country are in such poor condition — since all the funds allocated for the FTCs are used to meet the costs of running courses. Proposals for establishing revolving funds based on local bank accounts have frequently been proposed but rarely accepted. Clearly any solution requires greater integrity locally and corresponding trust from the centre. Proposals to increase flexibility in the funding procedure must satisfy the proponents of a less formal system at the same time as the auditors.

There is no single answer to the problem of providing a more efficient system of delegated financial responsibility. One of the costs of corruption is undoubtedly the delay in administrative procedures incurred in efforts to prevent it. One solution presently being tried by the Co-operative Department is to strengthen their internal audit section and increase the number of preconditions required to be ful-

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filled before individual co-operative societies are accepted for new credit schemes etc (see the section on credit below). There may be a case for a generalised improvement in the staffing and functioning of internal audit sections, but an audit clerk can only pick up a case of misappropriation after it has been committed. A stricter system of penalties may provide a further disincentive. But while the cases of misappropriation of funds, theft and loss of cash continue to grow, it is not surprising that there is a continued reluctance to embark on a more liberal policy of decentralised financial control.

### Farmer representation

Up to date the agricultural planning process has done little to involve farmers themselves in decisions on matters directly affecting them. The Department of Community Development has been used 'to inform the people' of what has been proposed in the way of new development projects. *Barazas* convened by the District Officer or the District Commissioner have been a further means of bringing together the local people to hear what the Assistant Agricultural Officer or the District Agricultural Officer has to say about a new vaccination campaign or crop production techniques. But in terms of farmer representation in the process of making decisions or of benefiting from local knowledge, very little has been done until recently to improve the situation.

The Central Agricultural Board structure was originally set up to provide a system of committees, with farmer representation at the District level and below, to channel farmers' grievances and complaints to officials at levels where they could be dealt with and, if necessary, translated into policy changes. To date these committees have only been active with proper farmer representation in the large-scale farming areas, where European farmers still figure prominently on the committees. They do not yet operate effectively in the small-scale farming areas or provide a satisfactory forum where individual farmers, either directly or through representatives, can raise problems with government staff.

### Local planning and involvement

The principle of local planning and decision-making has for some time been accepted as a feature of the overall rural development process. One of the basic principles which emerged from the 1966 Kericho Conference on Education, Employment and Rural Development<sup>1</sup> was that rural development cannot successfully take place unless the people who are to benefit from it are involved in its processes. Since then, both in the principles by which the Kenyan Special Rural Devel-

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<sup>1</sup> Proceedings of the Conference published in Sheffield, J. (ed). *Education, Employment and Rural Development*, East African Publishing House, 1967.



opment Programme was initiated and in more recent attempts to formulate plans for specific geographical areas, it has been accepted that only by a process of local planning by field officers and local representatives who are in living contact with local communities, can local capacities, aspirations and needs be taken into account. By bringing in local participation, interest and enthusiasm, the preparation and execution of local development programmes should be stimulated to include a realistic appraisal of local resources and the ability to carry out local projects.

Ideally, there would seem to be little question that attempts to encourage fuller local participation in the planning process must improve the process of plan implementation. Evidence continues to accumulate of the lack of awareness of local conditions leading to poor plan implementation. However, the process of decentralised agricultural planning poses several problems in practice, and experience to date with the devolution of the planning exercise has not been good. District and Divisional staff were involved to some extent in the initial stages of the plan preparation process for the Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP) areas<sup>1</sup> but most of the detailed work undertaken on programme preparation and project write-up was carried out in the Provincial Offices or at the centre in Nairobi. The same has been true of the District Plans which have been drawn to date. One explanation for this may be historical. In the past, technical and planning officers have taken responsibility for preparing programmes and then issuing instructions down the line to the field. There have been few spontaneous proposals emanating from field officers and feed-back from field staff is limited, even when proposals for local action programmes from the centre are inappropriate to local circumstances. Acceptance of the autonomy of senior staff at Provincial headquarters and in Nairobi is strongly ingrained in the system and there is a consequent tacit acceptance of instructions passed down to the field.

The poor experience with plan preparation at the field level may also be explained by:

- (i) A lack of support in the past for proposals which field staff have taken the trouble to prepare. This has created a disillusioned attitude towards further efforts in this direction. The same applies to the preparation of estimates annually by District and Provincial staff, which are rarely given consideration in annual estimates discussion.
- (ii) An increased number of programmes in one area will probably

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<sup>1</sup> The SRDP was devised originally as an experimental rural development initiative, involving six separate areas, each constituting an administrative Division in six of the country's seven Provinces. Each area represented a different ecological environment and possessed differing characteristics, which as a whole were representative of the majority of other high- and medium-potential areas of the country. It was hoped that lessons learnt from a programme of broad-fronted rural development (ie incorporating agriculture, co-operatives, roads, water, health, education and social services) in these six pilot areas, could be applied on a broader scale throughout the country.



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mean more work for existing staff in that area, when attempts to acquire extra staff are frustrated or delayed in head office.

- (iii) Poorly qualified staff at the lowest levels are inevitably handicapped in preparing detailed and justified proposals. However their local knowledge and verbal impressions of the local environment and potential could readily be tapped by better qualified supervisory staff.
- (iv) The perennial problem of rapid staff transfers further militates against individuals acquiring an adequate local knowledge of their area and thus reduces their ability to put forward sound proposals.

The theoretical concept behind decentralised planning may be sound, but reservations and modifications must be incorporated in the light of the problems listed above. Decentralised planning applied to the activities of an individual Ministry at the field level must be supported by an accompanying indication of overall national priorities. Guidelines and targets, with indications of ceilings and quotas, where relevant, must be supplied to local planners, before they can be expected to embark on a meaningful plan.

With regard to the activities of an agricultural Ministry it is possible to be more specific and list those areas of responsibility for which preliminary statements of policy and guidelines will generally be required. Such a list is set out below beside an accompanying list of those areas where local decisions and plans can be formulated by local staff in isolation.

### *Activities of the Ministry of Agriculture*

<i>For which the decentralised planning concept is applicable undirected</i>	<i>For which central policy support and control is required</i>
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Short farmer-training courses.

Institutional and in-service agricultural staff training.

Extension services — direct advisory, farm management, crop and livestock demonstrations and credit supervision.

Long-term farmer-training programmes.

Approval and supervision of short-term agricultural credit.

Guidelines for information and mass communication programmes.

Soil conservation and land development programmes.

Crop research — seed development, soil analysis and soil survey, grain storage.

## AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Small rural agricultural projects.	Medium- and long-term agricultural credit and liaison with major commercial credit institutions.
Dip construction programmes.	
Local veterinary services.	Land transfer programmes.
Range management—group ranch organisation and promotion.	Public and private investment in commercial organisations and processing industries.
Small-scale irrigation and development.	Animal husbandry research — maintenance of national stud, beef, dairy, pig, sheep and goat research.
Minor water development schemes and ancillary rural water supplies.	Veterinary research and services, clinical and investigation laboratories, tsetse control, vaccination campaigns, disease research and control, artificial insemination programmes, vaccine production.
Local information services and mass communication programmes.	
Dairying and milk marketing.	Range management research, survey of range areas, range water surveys.
Livestock sales and development of local holding grounds.	National livestock marketing programmes, national stock route development.
	Large scale irrigation schemes.
	Water development — gazetted water supplies, major rural water programmes, range water exploitation, hydrometeorological surveys, reclamation and flood control.
	Marketing of produce for export.

The above list is not exhaustive but provides an indication of some of those areas where the principles of decentralised planning at the local level can be applied. Although the functions in the left-hand column are particularly important, these are probably fewer than are often anticipated by strict advocates of comprehensive decentralised planning. The District Team or District Development Committee unas-

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sisted should be able to produce proposals which are District-specific for those activities listed in the left-hand column based on local knowledge and local priorities. For those in the right-hand column, which represent a high proportion of the Ministry's functions, the provincial office or headquarters has to provide clear if brief overall guidelines. Such guidelines include:

- (i) Items of national policy and priorities
- (ii) Production ceilings, where output has to be limited for one reason or another (eg quotas)
- (iii) Market trends and prices
- (iv) Employment and incomes policy guidelines
- (v) Details of complementary programmes operating elsewhere in the country where relevant
- (vi) Experience gained from similar programmes elsewhere.

There are considerable advantages in relieving the local planning teams of certain decisions. If, for example, the central planning authorities set resource ceilings for sectoral programmes in each District, the District Planning teams would be better able to concentrate on production activities and production infrastructure, where knowledge of local variation in potential and in problems gives a better return in any case.

In spite of the problems involved in District-level planning, the principle of planning based on individual Districts has been accepted by the Kenyan government. An extract from a recent brief to Provincial Planning Officers on the preparation of the next Development Plan reads as follows:

'The basic strategy in the next Plan, like that of the current one, will be to direct an increasing share of the total resources available to the country towards the rural areas and rural development; particularly the creation of employment opportunities will be given the highest importance in the Plan. As a step towards more balanced development of different areas in the country and to stimulate the interest of field officers and local leaders in planned development, it is proposed to move shortly into the formulation of plans for each District for implementation in the next Development Plan . . . In the sectoral chapters, projects and programmes for the next Plan will be District-specific.'

A policy paper has since been prepared which outlines what is meant by District Planning and what is involved (in general terms) for field officers, Provincial and District Planning Officers and the local community.

Within the framework set out in the overall National Plan, it is intended that District Plans will include elements of sectoral programmes which fall within the geographical boundaries of the District. There is particular emphasis on the need for integration and inter-

action between programmes and projects, where relevant, to avoid duplication of resources. The role of co-ordinator will be played by the District Development Committees (DDCs) composed of government field staff, local leaders and local representatives. The ultimate responsibility for the planning and implementation process will remain with individual Ministries but the involvement of the DDCs is an attempt to ensure that programmes are discharged in a co-ordinated manner.

A distinction is drawn between those projects and programmes for which plans can be prepared at the District level and those which rely on national priorities and decisions and which may be implemented on a sectoral rather than District-orientated basis. Such activities as higher education, research, major highways, large-scale industries, major irrigation programmes as well as large-scale water schemes, marketing programmes, tea production, artificial insemination services will all fall into the category of centrally planned activities.

It is intended that the District Planning process in each case should be preceded by a stock-taking exercise, whereby an inventory of ongoing District programme is made. In this way field staff will make an assessment of ongoing programmes, in conjunction with the local communities for whom the schemes are intended, to ensure maximum utilisation of available resources and to identify major gaps and unsuccessful schemes which should be altered or discontinued. In the overall assessment of the existing framework, the availability of infrastructural facilities, extension services, credit and inputs, social services and local government activities will be considered important. An examination of these facilities will assist in deciding the areas for future development.

In deciding the strategy for individual Districts, the present approach stresses the importance of the following four objectives:

- (i) a better utilisation of existing resources
- (ii) increase in per unit productivity
- (iii) more equitable distribution of the benefits of development between different areas and between different groups of people
- (iv) the expansion and diversification of employment opportunities.

Details of the development strategies for each District will depend upon an identification of the main economic activities within the District. Subsidiary economic activities and accompanying facilities will depend largely on the nature of the basic activities for each area.

It is not intended to alter the present system of financial allocation or accounting responsibility, despite the disadvantages of the present system mentioned above. A District Development Fund has, however, been created, which makes provision for monies to be issued through the Provincial Planning Officers for projects which are approved and accepted by the District Development Committees. Limitations to the

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use of this fund have been made specific and in particular it is stressed that DDCs should not simply prepare shopping lists of capital development projects for which they have failed to attract financial support from other sources. Neither does this fund replace finance already allocated for self-help schemes under the Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services. Furthermore, projects submitted for financing should not include items requiring recurrent finances over an extended period of time but the funds should rather 'be used for filling gaps in the local development strategy'.

This last condition, which might be altered in due course, but which applies to the consideration of projects for finance through the District Development Fund, limits the effectiveness of the grants considerably. It portrays an idea that rural development can be accomplished by the construction of bridges, the installation of water supplies and other infrastructural improvements. These are, of course, only part of the solution for intensified development and are mainly applicable to the development of areas which are relatively least advanced.

The foregoing briefly represents the essence of current thinking on District Planning; little further detail or discussion of the real and workable implications has yet been provided. While the debate between centralised and decentralised planning continues, it is interesting to look at one recent example of the problems encountered in drawing up a District Plan, in Narok District. The point which Narok demonstrated was that, despite the desire to delegate decision-making to the local level by local representative committees, there were many overall national issues involved which could not be decided locally and which relied upon central direction.

The Narok Plan was admittedly not prepared by a strictly local team but the DDC was closely involved and the implications are clearly exemplified:

- (i) A decision on land use in the District posed an early problem. In Narok, a predominantly Masai pastoral area, with conflicting tourist (game) and ranching potential, the priorities of the local people and the central government came into direct conflict. Proposals to develop tourist facilities and a hunting network in the area were opposed to the wishes of the local people, who were keen to use the area for more intensive cattle stocking.
- (ii) The Mau area in Narok District, as the only high rainfall part of the District, is suitable for both large-scale and small-scale agriculture. The local Development Committee would not consider the possibility of large-scale immigration from neighbouring tribal groups into this potentially productive area. However, the Regional Physical Development Plan for the Province prepared by the Ministry of Lands and Settlement had calculated

that the Rift Valley Province could absorb a population influx from the outside and it was assumed that the Mau area would be available. A top level policy decision would clearly be required to decide on this issue in due course.

- (iii) In the crop production field, the Narok DDC had decided that coffee, tea and pyrethrum would be grown. However, coffee cannot be planted legally at present and if planting were to be allowed in new areas in the future, it would be doubtful if the Coffee Board or the Ministry would consider the Narok area as suitable. Tea also can only be planted if it is part of the programme of the Kenya Tea Development Authority. From the national point of view, pyrethrum would be better planted in those Districts with a predominance of smallholder farmers, which is not a characteristic of Narok.
- (iv) The Narok DDC had proposed that barley should be promoted in the Mau, because of both better prices and better organisation for purchase of the harvested crop. In the face of growing imports of wheat from abroad, the Mau is considered one of the main potential areas for expansion of the country's wheat acreage.
- (v) A considerable element of the development of Narok District will depend upon implementation of the IDA Livestock Development Project. However, since this is a sectoral project covering a considerably broader overall area of the country, the local District Development Committee can do only a limited amount to influence the extent of the Project in its District.

### **Sociological and ecological factors**

As final examples under this section on administrative problems and repercussions, the experience of group ranch development in Kajiado District and West Pokot District reveals the consequences of failing to take adequate account of local circumstances and traditional customs. These examples are included at some length to provide adequate background.

The group ranch approach is one of the major organisational innovations in encouraging settlement of former semi-nomads and providing a basis on which proper range management practices can be undertaken. Reasons justifying the registration of group ranches, whereby individual tenurial rights are relinquished in the interests of group participation, include the benefits of economies of scale, protection of the majority of pastoralists from indiscriminate grabbing by more progressive tribesmen, provision of land title as security against loans and planned settlement.



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The principle of group ranching appears to be sound but the application of this principle has encountered problems, as evidenced in the following two examples. The implications in each case are not that the group ranch approach should be abandoned. It should, however, be adopted with caution, with the full spectrum of related sociological and environmental conditions taken into account.

### Kaputiei group ranches<sup>1</sup>

In line with the Ministry's policy of group ranch establishment in the range areas, Kaputiei section of Kajiado District was divided into individual and group ranches in 1965. It was intended that by formalising the boundaries of each ranch, both group ranchers and individual ranchers would be able to control and manage the pasture resources on their land more effectively. It was also hoped that these Masai would settle permanently on the ranches in question, construct more permanent dwelling places and participate more fully in conventional economic activities exploiting and supplying the country's growing market for beef. As will be seen, there was little chance of the settlement aspect materialising.

The willingness of the Masai to participate in the group ranching proposals was the product of a different set of circumstances than those which prompted the Range Management Division to promote group ranching. Earlier attempts to encourage systematic rotational grazing under the colonial government had long met with resistance. Traditional methods of semi-nomadism in response to periods of good rainfall persisted until the drought years of 1959-1962. Approximately 80% of the local herds were lost during this period and the Masai began to have considerable doubts about the adequacy of their traditional system. Additionally, with the advent of Independence, there was considerable anxiety regarding future ownership of traditional territories. The 1911 treaty between the Masai and the colonial government, which guaranteed integrity of tribal lands, effectively lapsed. As a consequence it was considered that the only way for the Masai to obtain formal acknowledgement of their rights to this land was to obtain legal land title. Later, these titles were accepted as security for development loans and this constituted a further impetus to the formation and acceptance of group ranches.

However, contrary to the expectations of the Range Management Division, the process of group ranch formation and the acquisition of land title did not put an end to the traditional practice of semi-nomadism. This was particularly true of those ranches in the less

1 For a full and more detailed account of group ranch experience in Kaputiei see J. M. Ifeiderman, *An analysis of continued semi-nomadism on the Kaputiei Masai Group Ranches—Sociological and Ecological Factors*, IDS Nairobi Working Paper No. 24.



favourable rainfall areas. This is less surprising when one examines the actual position.

Firstly, the original report on Kaputiei Section stated that the group ranches were based on sociologically determined boundaries and sociological groupings of the population. The Kaputiei sub-tribe was identified as consisting of small political units which formed the basis of the group ranches. However, *ex-post* research clearly indicates that the interpretation of the traditional groups, upon which the ranches were based, was misguided, in that these groups were actually temporary units which broke up when the tribe moved to a new area and so were inappropriate institutions upon which to base the future group ranches. Thus the assumed implication, that the territory and membership of each group ranch in the section corresponds to the membership of customarily used territory of accepted tribal groupings in that area, is not correct.

Secondly, the question of settlement on any one area at a particular time is directly connected with the availability of grass in that area. Thus when the rains fail in one area but are favourable in another, the Masai inevitably move to the latter area to graze their stock. Access to the better grazing areas has historically been a matter of equal rights since land, forage and natural water supplies have always been communally owned. Since under existing rainfall patterns many of the group ranches could never expect to support both dry and wet season grazing, the pattern of movement between group ranches will inevitably continue. Even on the group ranch which experiences the most favourable rainfall conditions in the section, and is considered to be the most progressive, traditional patterns of behaviour have continued. The members of the ranch settled and remained within its confines from 1964/65 till 1970. The only reason that this settlement was possible was that during this entire period there was always sufficient forage on the ranch to support livestock. Even when Masai in other parts of the section were forced by local droughts and/or lack of dry grazing to move their cattle from one locality to another, it was never necessary for these residents to move their herds. However, during the 1970/71 dry season, for the first time in the brief history of this group ranch, there was inadequate forage on the ranch as a result of an army worm invasion. Consequently the residents reverted to their traditional practice of semi-nomadism and moved to a neighbouring ranch where there was adequate grazing.

Thirdly, insisting on closed boundaries against outside intrusion has undesirable implications. If those ranches with adequate dry season grazing did close their boundaries, this step would represent a major departure from tradition and would be regarded as selfish and anti-social. Members of the group ranches without sufficient dry season grazing and those in areas of insufficient rainfall would be in an

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extremely unfavourable position, since it would be virtually impossible to remain within the boundaries of their own ranches. The result could be a great deal of friction between the members of the various ranches — a conflict which the traditional system carefully avoided through communal land ownership. Masai in other parts of Kenya, many of whom are very interested in the results of the group ranch experiment in Kaputiei, might reject this form of development if they conclude that it will result in a large proportion of the population being cut off from their former traditional dry season grazing grounds.

Fourthly, it appears that the survey which was undertaken of Kaputiei section by the UNDP/FAO team was conducted at a time when the rangelands of Kaputiei were in excellent condition. The grasses had firmly re-established themselves after the drought of 1961, when so many cattle had died, and it was on the strength of these good conditions that projections of livestock carrying capacity of the group ranches were made in 1968. A fairly erratic distribution of rainfall ensued during the following three years and resulted in a considerable movement of cattle across not only group ranch but also section boundaries.

The lesson that is clear from this experience is that nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists cannot be settled simply by improved physical development such as water points and cattle dips. The ecological conditions themselves must be such as to allow for permanent settlement. Future plans for the development of such areas must take into account:

- (i) The traditional system of resource utilisation so that the existing structure and customary habits of the indigenous pastoralists are incorporated.
- (ii) The long-term ecological conditions so that grazing schemes can be established in a potentially viable area, which allows for permanent settlement, where group ranch members can develop a responsibility for the preservation of the range resources.

### Group ranch proposals in West Pokot<sup>1</sup>

An interesting comparison of the foregoing experience can be made with proposals for group ranch establishment in West Pokot District.

As part of the Special Rural Development Programme in West Pokot, it is intended to control and improve range management practices and stocking densities by way of the establishment of group ranches in the lowland range areas by Kapenguria division. Ecologically the District is characterised by contrasting circumstances. There is hot, dry, lowland country in the east and west rising through the more

<sup>1</sup> Much of the material in this section is based on interesting reports prepared by Carl G. Widstrand, while SIDA adviser in the Kapenguria Special Rural Development area.

fertile and better rain-fed hills of the Cherangani Range which traverses the District from north to south. Livestock, traditional rotational grazing, crops and planting schedules have been adapted to accommodate these environmental differences. Through ownership and use of the land in different zones, the Pokot have been able to balance seasonal variations of rainfall with the exploitation of the land for grazing and crop development purposes. In fact, an efficient management of different parts of the District under different seasonal conditions has been a necessary condition for the successful subsistence of the Pokot.

Attempts have already been made in the past to control grazing in the area and reduce what was considered an ever-increasing encroachment of grazing in the higher fertile areas. The authorities were afraid that as the herds in the lower areas destroyed more and more of their traditional pasture they would move further and further into the hills and effect similar damage there in due course.

However, this fear was in fact a misinterpretation of the Pokots' tendency to feed and water their cattle in the wet season in the lowland areas and to move them up into the hills during the dry season, walking them down again every second day or so to a permanent river or water hole. The initiation of the Grazing Scheme in 1954 was an attempt to stem this encroachment of the graziers and their stock into the agricultural areas of the higher regions. The scheme assumed that arable practices were a better and more justifiable means of exploiting available land and that livestock husbandry had to be controlled.

As a consequence of a totally unrealistic administrative decision under the scheme a number of grazing blocks were organised running parallel to the river, which ran through the lowland areas in the west, and progressing parallel to the hillslopes. The system of grazing blocks was designed to control the amount of time which cattle spent in any one area. Graziers moved from one block to another every four months and consequently had to move their dwelling with them also. Not only did the scheme relieve the Pokot of the need to control grazing in their own way, but it also meant that they had to move their *manyattas* more often than had been the traditional practice in the past. Additionally, the boundaries of the new blocks ran straight across the traditional land blocks, which were the basis of Pokot social organisation. These blocks were based on a system of ridges and not only defined a variety of different environmental features, but also represented the social units from which the local councillors were drawn. Since these blocks ran down from the hillslopes to the lowland areas they were directly traversed by the grazing blocks.

The Grazing Scheme in Pokot was gradually discontinued and by 1964/65 the scheme had been wound up. However, today, plans for range development in the Kapenguria Special Rural Development area

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envisage the establishment of group ranches in the division. The first of these is proposed to be established on an experimental basis occupying a similar area to one of the earlier grazing schemes. Apart from the basic desire to try to settle stock owners in one particular area in the interests of improved range management practices, it is also felt to be administratively expedient to utilise the existing grazing scheme area as the basis of the new group ranch. The rationale behind establishing group ranches is similar to that used in Masailand.

As far as group ranches for Kapenguria are concerned, the following points are particularly important:

- (i) The ranch boundaries must provide access to both dry and wet season grazing. At present the proposed initial grazing scheme does not allow for this. There are times during the year when the area is completely devoid of cattle.
- (ii) Due account must also be taken of the boundaries of different sociological areas, to avoid breaking up units into two or more ranches.
- (iii) In view of the importance of reciprocity among neighbouring pastoral groups, there will inevitably be times when neighbouring herdsmen request permission to use water and grazing rights on the group ranches. Unless the new group ranchers are going to be prepared to deny this facility in future, arrangements should be made to ensure that, where possible, capacities of watering facilities etc. are provided to accommodate rather more than the optimum numbers defined for the ranch. It is only in this way that the traditional and more modern approaches to range resource exploitation can be prevented from coming into direct conflict.
- (iv) Not only for reasons under (iii) above, but also owing to the natural tendency of pastoralists to increase the size of their individual herds in the face of limited communal grazing, the question of stock control will pose a major problem. Improved marketing facilities which are presently being introduced by way of better stock routes, improved holding grounds, new sales yards and loading points will have little effect if the traditional reluctance to de-stock persists.
- (v) Finally, the problem posed by the management of group ranches will influence the actual size of the ranch. While a large ranch is required for economies of scale to offset overhead costs, the problem of adequate management as the ranch gets larger will act as constraint.

All of these considerations pose a number of problems. And in the light of experience elsewhere with the group ranch approach, it may well be that the reservations outweigh the perceived advantages of employing this method of developing the Pokot rangeland potential

and that alternative approaches should be examined first. Kapenguria does after all represent an experimental area and the opportunity to try possible alternatives has been clearly defined in the objectives of the Special Rural Development Programme.

### **Potential improvements**

Having listed a series of problems in the administration of Kenyan agricultural development, it is relevant to look briefly at a few areas where positive attempts have been made to overcome some of these problems.

### **Re-organisation**

The reasoning behind the 1969 re-organisation of the Ministry of Agriculture and its consequences have already been mentioned in Chapter 2. The move to re-organise was prompted by a desire to differentiate between technical and administrative responsibilities of qualified staff. Previously excessive time spent on routine administration had prevented staff from spending adequate time on technical matters and consequently represented a waste of scarce resources. The posting of a new cadre of administrative officers to the Provincial offices and the creation of separate technical divisions in Nairobi represented at the Province and District level has achieved much in improving the potential of the Ministry. Re-organisation represented a positive response to a perceived administrative weakness and steps were taken to overcome this. There is still much which can be done to ensure that re-organisation objectives are achieved more comprehensively, but the machinery has at least been set in motion and the move indicates a willingness to question the conventional organisational structure inherited from the colonial days.

### **The Central Agricultural Board**

In response to the need to improve the system of farmer representation, the staffing and organisation of the Central Agricultural Board have been strengthened over recent months. Executive Officers have been recruited to fill full-time posts in each Province and a separate Executive Officer is being recruited for each of the most active agricultural Districts. Where no Executive Officer exists in a District, the DAO acts on behalf of the Board. The consequence of this has meant an established framework with full-time staff whose specific duties are to look into problems and complaints put up by the District and sub-District committees and to liaise with these committees and the agricultural staff to resolve them. This move, in particular, has assured a future for the Board, which, with the proposed changes in the short-



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term credit system and a decline in the imposition of management orders on mismanaged farms, has been reduced to more limited activities than at any time since its establishment. The Board has effectively and officially been recognised as the most appropriate forum for dialogue between farmers and the government, both for expressing problems and for conveying intentions of policy changes.

Present proposals envisage an improved farmer representative structure of District Agricultural Committees and sub-Committees in all parts of the country by a series of new elections of non-official farmer members and, as an extra incentive to attend meetings of these Committees, the Board is prepared to pay sitting allowances to non-official members, a practice which has previously been discouraged by the Treasury. There is no doubt that non-official representatives who attend these meetings sacrifice both time and money in so doing and it is felt that adequate mileage and sitting allowance would provide an incentive for improved attendance. The problem of involving small-holders in active participation on these Committees has already been discussed (see Chapter 2) but the CAB is keen to improve its structure in these areas and a pilot sub-DAC has been established, as part of one of the SRDP programmes, to provide lessons for further expansion.

### **District Development Planning**

While much has already been written of reservations to the District Development Planning approach both in this study and in official government memoranda, the basic principles behind the move to decentralised planning are sound. One of the main reasons for reservations has been the lack of qualified staff to put the new initiative into effect. Proposals to employ qualified mobile teams of experienced planning staff who can be drafted into an area for a specified period of time have only been tentatively experimented with. At one stage a three-month training course was organised for fifteen newly recruited graduates, who, it was intended, should be eventually posted as District Development Officers under the Ministry of Finance and Planning. However, by the end of their course, it was clear that yet higher qualified officers were required and attempts are presently being made to recruit candidates with post-graduate experience to fill the DDO posts. The original recruits have been assigned to the Office of the President to work under the District Commissioner as District Officers (Planning).

The Special Rural Development Programme experience is relevant in the consideration of these moves. The responsibility for co-ordination of project and programmes under the SRDP was vested in the office of an Area Co-ordinator for each area. Each of these Area Co-ordinators was posted from within the administration as District

Officers with special duties. Almost without exception this innovation was successful and the value of such a co-ordinator was acknowledged at all levels.

Working from within the administration, the Area Co-ordinator was able to maintain an objective but keen interest in the programmes and projects of different sectoral departments and divisions. With the traditional respect which the administration commands, Area Co-ordinators have been able to maintain a reasonable discipline among other departmental staff without creating the friction which might have faced interference from another department. One reservation which Area Co-ordinators have themselves expressed has been a difficulty in making contact with headquarters staff of different departments, to iron out problems or bottlenecks. In view of the fact that the Area Co-ordinator is responsible for activities at the Divisional level, which in relative terms is a long way down the hierarchical line from the centre, this is not perhaps surprising.

But in the formulation of District Development policy, the post of Area Co-ordinator has not been exploited as a prototype for this new cadre of District Development Officers, who will be responsible for the District Planning exercise. Instead the Provincial Planning Office will assume direct responsibility for District Development Officers on behalf of the Ministry of Finance and Planning. There are a number of factors which would support this change of decision:

- (i) As mentioned earlier there has been considerable dissatisfaction with the degree of authority exercised by the administration at District and Provincial level. The appointment of the DDOs, who will be simultaneously secretaries to the District Development Committees, would exacerbate this position. The administration's influence would be strengthened in the eyes of the local representatives and the MPs at the District level, thus reducing further the power of the democratic forces at that level.
- (ii) There is no assurance that where a District Officer was able to co-ordinate the activities of field staff at the divisional level, he would be able to do the same at the District level, where levels and seniority of officers is that much higher.
- (iii) There is a desire to maintain a functional distinction between administration and planning. With one Ministry already responsible for planning and co-ordination of plan implementation, it seems anomalous not to post planning officers to this Ministry.

The influence which a new District Development Officer might be expected to carry both on initial posting and later as he establishes himself has been bolstered by way of the financial arrangements agreed for District Development Planning. The influence and strength of the position of a District Development Officer working under the DC would have been supported by the conventional respect for the admin-



istration. The significance of the DDO in the new planning framework under the Provincial Planning Officer has been assured by his control of the District Development Fund available for projects and programmes to be financed as part of the District Development Planning exercise. Since he is financially responsible, he is now able to control and limit the operations of individual departments within his District according to perceived priorities and the extent to which different Ministries are able to carry out development programmes successfully.

Tying planning and financial responsibility in this way is a significant and positive move and one means which could lead in due course to a more wholesale decentralisation of financial control. One major reason for the relative ineffectiveness of the Provincial Planning Officer's position in the past was that he lacked this element of financial control coupled with planning responsibility. The new move could go far to giving the District and Provincial Planning offices a greatly increased functional role.

### **Programme implementation and management system<sup>1</sup>**

One of the most successful experiments undertaken under the auspices of the Special Rural Development Programme over the past two years has been the adoption and modification of a system to improve co-ordination of departmental programmes at the field level and monitor the implementation of such programmes through a system of regular meetings. The system was initiated by the Area Co-ordinators of each Special Rural Development area and was intended as a management tool to:

- (i) Improve and focus information flows between field and headquarters
- (ii) Increase co-ordination between Ministries in the field
- (iii) Raise the level of commitment of local officers to the programme
- (iv) Provide for more effective control over the performance of field staff
- (v) Provide a mechanism for enabling field officers to make demands upon headquarters where necessary for programme implementation
- (vi) Improve the general understanding of officers at all levels of the steps and timings involved in the implementation process
- (vii) Provide data for subsequent programme evaluation exercises

There is no reason why this system cannot be applied at a higher

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1. A detailed description of the present system will soon be available in a forthcoming book by Robert Chambers and Deryke Belshaw, *Managing Rural Development—Lessons and Methods from Eastern Africa*. See also H. H. A. Chabala *et al.* *An Evaluation of the Programming and Implementation Management System*, IDS Nairobi Working Paper No. 89, Mar. 1973.

level than the Division at which it has been instigated. The system is based on three main components: a programming exercise, a regular management meeting and an action report.

In the course of the programming exercise, the step-by-step details of each programme or project are outlined in adequate detail to enable individual tasks and responsibilities to be identified and assigned to the responsibility of a particular officer, with dates for the start and finish of each operation included. These details are then written up and circulated to all concerned, and at subsequent monthly or two-monthly meetings actual achievements are compared with targetted plans. Bar charts depicting progress by way of red or green parallel lines are also used as a visual indicator of progress. Reasons for delays and other problems are identified and an action report is then circulated to relevant officers at all levels delineating these reasons and calling for action from individual officers or sections. In itself, the system is not very complicated but its adoption could have a widespread effect on improved co-ordination of programme implementation between headquarters and the field. The system is quite versatile and has been used for a wide range of projects: dip construction, farmer training, crop production programmes, farm credit, fertilizer demonstrations, dairy development, home economics, young farmers' clubs, trials and research, road construction, land adjudication, self-help development etc.

The advantages of this system can be enumerated as follows:

- (i) The system of regular meetings ensures improved communication between staff of different departments and also at differing levels within the official hierarchy. The same is true of the original programming exercise. The action report improves the communication process insofar as it puts pressure on superior staff along the hierarchy to provide assistance.
- (ii) The regular meetings are orientated towards specific programme and project topics and thus avoid wasteful time and irrelevances.
- (iii) The form of the action report is brief and to the point and is concerned with achieving results rather than simply reporting for reporting's sake.
- (iv) Implementation of the system during the programming stages to date has involved the attendance of staff from headquarters to ensure that someone from the top has known what is required. This represents an important element for replication, although a manpower constraint might occur if the system were implemented on a much broader scale. The programming charts, action reports and implementation reviews pick up and dramatise the damaging effects of inaction at headquarters, partic-

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ularly in late release of funds, which has disrupted so many rural development programmes in the past.

- (v) The system ensures improved and effective work programming. The programming chart requires and embodies systematic action planning for each project, identifying who has to do what and when.
- (vi) The system has been particularly effective in raising staff morale. This is because officers can identify themselves clearly with responsibilities and participate actively in setting their own targets. As officers set their own work load, they cannot later explain away delays by saying the work was more than they could cope with.

The present system is still going through various stages of refinement. It is hoped, however, that attempts will continue to implement this management tool on a broader scale in the near future.

## Chapter 4

### Agricultural Credit

The institutional structure for the provision of credit to farmers in Kenya is fragmented and there is no mechanism for co-ordinating the several sources and flows of credit to the agricultural sector. The various types of farms and farm enterprises are not served on an integrated or uniform basis and short-term and longer-term needs are not met in a co-ordinated manner. Much of the seasonal credit used in agriculture is provided by the commercial banking system, where such lending is generally considered to be of secondary attractiveness and for which specialised management and supervision are often lacking.

The organised credit market serving Kenyan agriculture reaches only a small minority of the total number of farms. No studies exist of the informal or unorganised credit markets, but the extent of small farmer indebtedness to such sources is generally assumed to be minor and rural indebtedness is not regarded as a social problem in Kenya.

The Central Bank of Kenya has no special programme or regulations which deal with the agricultural sector on a selective basis. The principal medium- and long-term lender to the agricultural sector is the Agricultural Finance Corporation, but less than 15% of its loan portfolio consists of loans to small farmers. Other medium- and long-term credit programmes include those under which settlers on government schemes purchase their farms on credit from the settlement authorities and those administered by marketing boards which provide credit for the establishment of crops purchased by the board.

Over the period 1967-1971 commercial banks' advances to the agricultural sector accounted for between 10% and 13% of these banks' total lending. These advances included those to statutory bodies in the sector and farming companies, as well as loans and overdrafts to individual farmers. It is probable that total advances outstanding to African farmers represent something less than 3% of total outstanding commercial bank credit.

Farmers with more than 15 acres planted in maize or wheat may qualify for the Guaranteed Minimum Return Scheme which provides seasonal credit and crop insurance from government funds. Of 7,500 advances made under GMR in 1972, probably 4,500 were to farmers with between 15 and 20 acres under either crop.

A major source of short-term smallholder finance is through the co-operative structure, which includes perhaps 500,000 active members. Probably somewhat less than half of these members are rural people enjoying access to co-operative credit, which is largely provided in kind

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for seasonal inputs for coffee farmers in amounts between Kshs 100/- and Kshs 1,000/-.

The large-scale sector has access to credit from the AFC, commercial banks, suppliers etc, on a commercial basis. Small farmers do not enjoy such generalised access and may have no access at all to organised credit.

It is generally assumed that the provision of credit in smallholder areas will provide a strong stimulus to smallholder development. To date there has been little evidence of escalating rates of capital formation in the smallholder areas, which might be explained by two reasons: on the one hand it may be that the rate of capital formation in smallholder agriculture is low because of the difficulty of financing investments that would be profitable if the finance could be found. Alternatively, it is possible that the rate of capital formation is low because returns to investment are low. The question of returns to smallholder investment is critical to smallholder credit policy. Different policy responses are appropriate depending upon whether returns are low or high. For smallholder credit programmes, from the national point of view, it needs to be shown that returns to investment in smallholder agriculture are sufficient not only to cover the accounting costs of providing the funds to finance this investment, but also to justify the use of development funds, agricultural staff and other resources for credit programmes rather than for alternative development programmes in smallholder agriculture or elsewhere.

Furthermore, there is no clear picture of the appropriate institutional structure for the provision of smallholder credit in Kenya. At present, the co-operative marketing societies represent one of the main channels of short-term credit. There is also the Agricultural Finance Corporation, which is highly centralised (110 out of 250 employees work in Nairobi) and thinly spread through the smallholder areas as the main source of medium-term credit for smallholders. And thirdly, there are the commercial banks, which extend short- and medium-term credit, up to three years, in a similar way to the AFC. Neither the commercial banks nor the AFC is involved in the local communities. They have little access to local knowledge below the District level on individual applicants, on local views on the likely success of particular investment propositions or on local sanctions which could be useful in enforcing repayment.

The difficulty with local participation is that it opens the system to local political influence and corruption. But increased local participation certainly needs to be considered as one of the possible solutions to the administrative problems faced by Kenya's smallholder credit schemes.

There is little documentary detail of the non-official sources of credit, such as trader credit, credit from relatives, clan groups and

friends. Casual evidence suggests that it is quite extensive but that little uniformity exists in respect of the terms or conditions of such credit. Certainly, there is not the same widespread tradition of borrowing and lending from moneylenders and merchants as there is, for example, in India. Several reasons might be advanced to explain this. Firstly, it may be that there has been little demand in the rural areas for credit, due to the fact that people there have only recently been exposed to the full force of economic and monetary pressures, with the accompanying implications for the creation of an active money market. Perhaps it will not be long before the practice of moneylending increases, initially in the more advanced areas, on a more spontaneous basis.

Secondly, the strong traditional family background, which characterises so many tribes in Kenya, whereby the most fortunate members of the family with a job and a monthly income look after the less fortunate, may explain the scarcity of village moneylenders. Requests for financial assistance are met as a normal family commitment in most cases on the understanding that, in similar circumstances, the beneficiary would do likewise. Such loans as are made on this basis seldom carry any interest and even repayment terms tend to be a little hazy.

A third point is that, during the colonial period, loans to Africans were not recoverable in the courts and special loan approval was required from the District Commissioner. This regulation was designed to prevent the growth of moneylending by Asians to Africans.

Until recently, most official credit available to smallholders has been medium-term. In the late 1960s there was a change of policy and short-term credit is now getting more emphasis through the co-operative credit scheme which started in 1970. The purposes for which credit is available are limited. The IDA credit project which is the main source of medium-term credit in fifteen Districts in which land has been registered, has been predominantly for purchases of grade cattle or dairy equipment, fencing, pasture clearing and water development. These credits are supplemented by tea fertilizer loans, cotton loans, pyrethrum planting loans and wheat and maize loans under the GMR scheme (discussed below in more detail). The newly started co-operative credit scheme will provide loans primarily for coffee producers in its initial stages, but the loans will not be confined to the development of coffee.

The interest charged on smallholder credit varies. In recent years it has been  $7\frac{1}{2}\%$  on loans from the AFC but has now risen to 8%. The co-operative credit scheme allows some flexibility in the rates charged by societies but recently the rate in many cases has been 10%. Commercial banks have been charging 9%. There is little question that all these rates are subsidised. Even commercial banks appear to be operating smallholder credit schemes which are, at best, marginally worth-



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while, depending on how one computes the opportunity costs of the funds involved.

Selection criteria are important as the means by which available supplies of funds are rationed among a large number of applicants. The criteria in use at present appear to include some notion of creditworthiness, of the viability of the investment and of the ability to provide security. Loans are more likely to be given to people with regular off-farm income, or with established reputations as good farmers and men of integrity, or those farmers who have adequate resources to carry investments through. The criteria clearly favour the farmers who are relatively well-off, who only farm part-time and who have adequate resources already. There is a pre-occupation with ability to repay, rather than whether the farmer really needs the credit.

In spite of these criteria, the repayment record is poor. The situation deteriorated in the 1960s as the smallholder credit programmes have been expanded. In 1966, 70% of the total number of loans issued by the Agricultural Finance Corporation were overdue. Of these 47% had been overdue for more than one year. According to the 1970-1974 Development Plan, smallholder loans are still 50% in arrears.<sup>1</sup>

In part the problem is obviously an administrative one. It does not necessarily signify failure on the part of the farm concerned. It may be that repayment has not been sufficiently strongly solicited. But even if the problem is only administrative, it has serious implications. It limits the extent to which funds can revolve and can be used to finance new investments on new farms. It also limits the ability to attract more funds for smallholder credit in the future.

The local administration of smallholder credit in Kenya varies. The AFC operates through District branches and sub-branches, but only one District in three has these. The branches and sub-branches are manned by about 120 field staff altogether, each branch or sub-branch averaging 7-8 staff. The branches serve the large farms as well as the small, the bulk of the business still relating to large farms. For the smallholder loans, most of the time of AFC staff is taken up with filling the individual applications for credit and processing these applications. AFC staff visit farms to help fill in loan applications, part of which are also filled in by agricultural staff, and these visits take up considerable time. Once the loan has been granted, there is little further contact with AFC staff. Farmers may be visited if repayments are seriously overdue, in which case the farmer is charged Kshs 35/- for the visit. Government agricultural staff also help fill in the application forms and have to support the loan applications. The agricultural staff have other responsibilities and they often find that loan work takes up a disproportionate amount of their time. It may be argued that it is

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1 Republic of Kenya Development Plan 1970-1974, p. 216. Nairobi Government Printer.

undesirable to involve agricultural extension staff in the administration of loans as this destroys their advisory relationship with the farmers. The AFC loan administration in the smallholder areas is undoubtedly weak, but there is little satisfactory evidence to confirm whether the cost of providing a more adequate service would be justified.

The commercial banks are in a similar position to the AFC but they do not have the same access to the agricultural advisory staff. The Standard Bank employs a field officer at every major branch and assists with the completion of loan application forms. The Kenya Commercial Bank and Barclays simply interview applicants at the bank branch and only visit the farm if the loan applied for is large. An expanding fleet of mobile banks is employed to gain access to the rural areas, but these only operate at divisional level in the richer high-potential areas.

Some loan schemes are being undertaken by the AFC which rely on heavy supervision and follow-up to ensure loan repayment; but a proper evaluation remains to be undertaken to determine whether the additional cost of such a heavy service could be justified on a larger supervisory scale.

Co-operative credit is available on a different basis. In the co-operative credit scheme the only direct supervision is informal, by fellow co-operative society members who have an interest in ensuring the repayment of the loan.

The strength of the administrative machinery is important not only in relation to the recovery of the loans but also from the development point of view. If loans are coupled with good advice, and if they are refused in the right situations, they can provide an incentive to farmers and encourage the adoption of new methods and new farm systems with increased income, output and employment opportunities. The loans administrative structure is then being used to supplement the extension services.

From the point of view of repayment, it is not only the administrative machinery but also the enforcement sanctions which count. The existence of ultimate sanctions that can be applied in cases of default makes a great deal of difference to the loan repayment position, whatever the administrative machinery. In the mid-1960s the ultimate sanctions were weak. Land titles were used as securities but, the credit agencies were not prepared to foreclose on the land. Similarly they were reluctant to take defaulters to court to get salaries or moveable assets attached. Recently there has been a change in this policy. Land has been sold to recover outstanding loan amounts in a few cases, and this has provided a warning to potential defaulters who know that threats that they might lose their land are real. There is an obvious reluctance to use ultimate sanctions — it is expensive, troublesome and

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can earn the credit organisation a great deal of ill-will; but the existence of a few examples is sufficient to deter a large number of potential defaulters.

The most significant discrepancy in the present attitude to credit is the lack of any clear idea of the extent to which credit is really required by smallholder farmers and how much its absence impedes the adoption of new innovations. The rural community has, for example, provided considerable evidence in certain parts of Kenya of an ability to draw upon significant savings for local investment and in support of self-help schemes. Again, the continuing existence of the extended family structure, with a growing proportion of the country's employed working for wages in the urban areas, has been responsible for increased flows of cash remittances to the rural areas.

After Independence, groups of farmers and African farming companies collected remarkable sums of money from among their numbers to buy out European farms. Likewise deposits made with local post office branches, banks and co-operative societies, generating low rates of interest, have been growing and this points strongly to the availability of spare cash in the rural areas.

All these factors prompt one to wonder whether the energy and resources, which are spent in developing new institutional credit schemes for the rural areas, with the accompanying problems and costs of supervision and recovery, are really justified. It may be more rewarding to improve other facilities servicing this sector, such as marketing facilities, roads and input supply networks, avoiding the problems involved with escalating numbers of loan accounts. Perhaps the simplest solution would be to abandon altogether short-term credit to smallholders, leaving farmers to find finance themselves.

This suggestion is not as despairing or unreasoned as it may sound. There is a strong view among many economists that crop-season credit should not be used while agriculture is still stagnant — ie until any necessary new investment (road-to-market, water-supply, storage or whatever) has taken place and until the farmers have shown themselves willing and able to adopt better farming methods — eg row-planting, mulching, weed control, water-use. Secondly, crop season credit is in any case a very expensive input, either because from 10% to 20% of the loans are not recovered (80%–90% recovery rates are often considered 'good') or because the administrative cost of recovery is high; it may, of course, be concealed by using extension staff for loans application and loan recovery work, but it is still there, and perhaps even higher if it occupies, as it may, 30% or even 40% of extension staff time.

In those cases where chemical fertilizer and sprays are the key inputs at the earliest stage (and such cases are more rare than is often supposed, as the differences between 'good' and 'bad' farmers, when none

are using chemicals, will show), there may be a case for crop-season credit for, say, the first two years. By that time, if the 'package' is really a good and profitable one, farmers should be able to meet their own input costs from the profits of the previous year; if they cannot, there is something wrong with the package or with the farmer, which renewed credit will not cure.

We should also remember that there is more cash in the rural economy than is often supposed (how else are schools fees paid?), often from internal family borrowing; and that savings schemes, vigorously pursued, make a far more satisfactory basis for financing relatively small costs (often only Kshs 200-500/-).

Thus the assumption that all farmers need, and should be given, official and usually subsidised credit should be treated with caution.

Looking at the full extent of the potential credit demand from the small-scale farming sector, it is clear that a system cannot be devised which will be able to handle over one million accounts for a cross-section of different enterprises. The main credit programmes for small-holders for medium- and long-term credit operated by the AFC only cover about 15,000 accounts at present and not more than 7,500 accounts for short-term loans.

However, given these reservations, recent experience in Kenya has provided one or two indications of how the supply and coverage of short-term credit might be improved. Firstly, there have been increases in efficiency by decentralising the loan approval process. Again, the Co-operative Production Credit Scheme and the Stockist Credit Scheme have both attempted to increase the supply of credit to the rural areas by working through existing institutions, which are more accessible and more easily identifiable than a mass of individual small-scale units. Credit provided through banks, post office branches and savings unions also benefit from this advantage.

The practice of depriving farmers of access to a second year's credit unless they have paid back the outstanding loan amount in full, utilised by the CPCS scheme and incorporated in most AFC schemes, is a good one. The effect is to increase the awareness of farmers of the need to repay and is a positive method of improving general credit-worthiness among the farming community. As the element of credit-worthiness grows, so the provision of credit can increase and barriers to participation in loan schemes to certain sectors of the farming community can come down. (Unfortunately, of course, the farmers who need credit most — the most backward farmers — are also those who are most likely to be defaulters, unless closely supervised.)

Involving extension staff on supervision and collection for credit programmes is not only expensive since the time spent in chasing defaulters is never charged or recovered in the interest rate; it is also a misuse of extension time. Both points support the contention that

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money spent on administering credit schemes would probably be better spent on other forms of support and assistance to the smallholder community.

### **The Guaranteed Minimum Return Seasonal Crop Credit Scheme**

#### **Background**

The GMR programme of seasonal crop credit provides a clear example of a system which was introduced at a time when farming conditions in Kenya were very different from today, but which continues to be applied as a major source of crop credit despite changed conditions and circumstances. Not only has the type of farmer to whom GMR is applicable changed, but the coverage of the system has grown, the personnel working for the credit institution involved have changed and the continued appropriateness of the scheme has been brought seriously into doubt.

The GMR scheme was started in 1942 as a wartime measure to encourage crop production among large-scale farmers. The programme consisted of advances made to farmers, together with guaranteed minimum prices for crops they produced. Crops included under the scheme in the early days were sunflower, linseed, vegetable seed, grass, potatoes, rice, flax, oats, barley, rye, wheat and maize. Up till 1966, 100 acres was the minimum acreage under cultivation to these specified crops to qualify for eligibility under the scheme. (It may be that it was only on this scale of production that the administration of such a system of credit was economically viable. As will be shown, the GMR scheme illustrates a clear case where a scheme which has been designed for large-scale European farmers is not appropriate for a large number of small African farmers.) Over time the programme has been reduced in scope in respect of the variety of crops covered, but has been expanded by lowering the minimum acreage under cultivation to one crop. Today, the scheme applies only to wheat and maize for which 15 acres is the minimum qualifying acreage.

#### **Operation**

The GMR programme (so called owing to the crop insurance element in the scheme, which guarantees compensation in the event of crop failure) is funded through the Cereals and Sugar Finance Corporation. This is a statutory Board, established in 1955, which originally provided advances to large-scale farmers against crops held in storage and also financed overseas purchases of sugar and cereals. The Agricultural Finance Corporation acts as agent for the Cereals and Sugar Finance Corporation in disbursing and collecting funds. The other major institution involved in the scheme is the Kenya Farmers' Asso-



ciation (Co-op) Ltd, which is the buying agent for the Wheat Board throughout Kenya and for the Maize and Produce Board in the Rift Valley Province, the main large-scale farming area. The majority of GMR turnover passes through the accounts of the KFA and repayments are deducted by KFA from payments for crop deliveries due to participants.

Maximum advances in terms of shillings per acre are announced annually by the Ministry of Agriculture and the purposes for which the advances may be used are specified in the application forms. In 1972, advances for both wheat and maize were Kshs 180/- per acre and could be used to pay for seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, contract cultivation, fuel, machinery repairs and spare parts, bags, harvesting and transporting services. Payments are made by the AFC against suppliers' invoices countersigned by the borrower and subsequently debited to the borrower's account. No cash advances are made and invoices for contract work are only paid when the work has been checked by an official of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Since 1969 a crop insurance premium has been included in the advance granted to farmers, although this was recently amended by the AFC and now has to be paid in cash. The charge represents an initial step towards the separation of crop credit and crop insurance and it is the ultimate objective of the AFC that these two aspects be handled separately.

Farmers having crop failures for two successive years (for reasons not attributable to natural catastrophes) are excluded from further participation in the programmes. A crop failure is defined as a yield below that which is adequate to repay the maximum advance allowable. The purpose of this requirement is to exclude incompetent farmers and those in marginal wheat and maize areas, who would be better advised to grow other crops. In this way an attempt is made to limit the economic risks of the programme.

The mechanics of the GMR operation involve many different parties and steps. The responsibility for verifying that applicants are eligible for participation and the information given is accurate rests with the Agricultural Sub-Committee of each District Agricultural Committee. Each ASC reviews application forms forwarded to it by District Co-operative Officers for co-operative applicants, by the local farm settlement officers for settlement farmers and by the AFC for other applicants.

After approval by the ASC, the local AFC branch is responsible for checking the application forms for correctness and completeness. The application is then considered by the District Loans Committee, an advisory body serving the local AFC branch. The DAO acts as the chairman of the District Loans Committee and the manager of the local AFC branch usually acts as secretary. Members include the senior agri-



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cultural extension officer in the District, the District Co-operative Officer, the local farm settlement officer, the Chairman of the local Agricultural Sub-Committee and co-opted local representatives from the local farming community. Recently this latter element has not been very prominent. The Loans Committee recommends to the AFC action to be taken on each loan application. Until recently all final decisions on applications had to be submitted to Nairobi for final endorsement. This inevitably meant long delays. However, the recent move to decentralisation includes GMR approval, and individual branch managers now have powers to approve GMR applications up to certain limits. These limits depend upon the experience of the individual manager, and applications for credit for acreages over and above these limits are referred to the AFC area supervisors for approval. Applicants are informed of the status of their applications at any stage at which rejection occurs or by the AFC when final approval is given.

This plethora of committees, references and decisions reflects two beliefs: first, that no one is to be trusted, and second, that the more complicated an administrative procedure, the greater its efficiency. Both points are wrong. Someone at some stage has to be trusted if any action is to be taken at all; and the simpler procedures are, the more likely will timely action result. Particularly in developing countries which are short of trained manpower, complex administrative organisation is virtually a recipe for failure. In the following paragraphs, the fact that this complexity does not ensure even the avoidance of fraud, let alone efficiency, is exemplified.

### **Loan terms and crop insurance**

GMR advances carry  $8\frac{1}{2}\%$  interest which is recovered from deliveries or from insurance payment in the event of partial or total crop failure. Of this  $8\frac{1}{2}\%$ , the Cereals and Sugar Finance Corporation receives 5% and the AFC 3%, as a commission for its agency activities, and 0.5% is credited to a crop inspection account.

Insurance claims resulting from crop failures are paid by the Central Agricultural Board, which reimburses the Cereals and Sugar Finance Corporation for advances not recovered. The CAB receives funds for this purpose annually through the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Farmers participating in the GMR scheme are supposed to inform their District Agricultural Sub-Committee as soon as a crop failure is expected. An inspection committee consisting of the DAO, the AFC branch manager and the Chairman of the District Agricultural Sub-Committee visit the farm to determine whether the farmer may claim insurance compensation. The inspection team also recommends whether or not the crop should be harvested, on the basis of whether the costs of harvesting will be covered by the value of the crop.

## Problems in the operation of GMR

There are presently many operational problems facing the administration of the GMR system, which all compromise its effectiveness in one way or another:

- (i) There are generally lengthy delays in payment to farmers after the delivery of their crops. The time which elapses between farmers' deliveries and their receiving payment may exceed three months. This is because KFA must submit records of all wheat and maize deliveries to AFC, so that those from GMR participants may be sorted out and the necessary deductions be made. A further one or two weeks then elapses before the farmer can be paid.
- (ii) There are further delays with the payment of the GMR insurance claims. Here the fault is not so much a product of the system, but more because the Ministry of Agriculture's budget rarely provides adequate funds for compensation. The longest outstanding claims are invariably settled first and those not settled are carried forward to the new financial year. As of November 1972, claims for 1970 were still being settled. Farmers are charged interest on all amounts outstanding, and hence interest accumulates on outstanding claims approved but not paid. Interest is not included in the expenses covered by GMR and farmers on whose accounts interest is accumulable must pay all interest due, to be eligible for further participation in the scheme.
- (iii) Because of the lengthy process of loan application and consideration, approval of GMR takes a considerable time. Farmers may have to incur certain obligations with respect to their crops before the status of their GMR application is known, and they may often simply hold any invoices received prior to notification of approval or rejection.
- (iv) The GMR system is also open to considerable exploitation and malpractice. For example, farmers, in collaboration with suppliers of inputs or contractors, submit invoices for work never done or goods never supplied. Payment made by the AFC is then shared by the so-called 'loanee' and the invoicer.
- (v) As the number of GMR loanees has increased, it has been difficult to monitor spending within the limits of the loan approved. A farmer could go to two suppliers and receive his maximum approved loan equivalent in supplies from both. One or other of the suppliers would then have his invoices returned by the AFC unhonoured.
- (vi) Until recently it was possible for a farmer to send some member of his family to apply for GMR after he himself had defaulted

the previous year. Alternatively he re-applied, using a different name. In an attempt to curb this, the AFC are insisting on Land Registration details, and computerisation of the AFC accounts will shortly make it easier to tighten up in this area.

- (vii) Some farmers have been known to apply for crop failure claims after they have harvested and sold their maize while still green or even when mature. Since, in such cases it is almost impossible to prove malpractice, claims are endorsed.
- (viii) The crop inspection team is only called out once a failure is suspected. The question of crop failure is not related to how badly the crop had been planted originally or whether husbandry practices were sound. Admittedly a farmer who produces an unsatisfactory crop two years running does not qualify for further credit.

In addition to these points, the system is limited to farmers of relatively large acreages and the administrative bottlenecks in the approval and recovery process will bring the system to a halt if it is expanded very much further. A real need does exist to replace or drastically modify the system. The need is endorsed when it is considered that this form of credit reaches no more than 5,500-6,000 farmers. In 1971/72 K£3.1m was disbursed on 6,500 loan accounts estimated to represent 5,500 farmers, ie in certain cases farmers are granted more than one loan and many of these fall in the more advanced large-scale category. This represents an average of K£560 credit per farmer, which is substantial when compared with any other agricultural loan programme in the country.

Loan repayment experience under the GMR credit system has not been good. In most years since 1963 the amount of repayments has been below the amount of advances issued. Additionally the insurance premiums collected for GMR coverage in most years have been well below the amount paid out in claims. Both these factors effectively represent a subsidy for large-scale wheat and maize producers, which even on the grounds of a desire for self-sufficiency in wheat and maize is hard to justify.

Possible alternatives for the provision of similar seasonal credit for smallholder farmers on a more acceptable administrative basis are considered in the next section.

### **Alternative seasonal credit approaches**

Several recent moves represent a positive initiative to expand the availability of credit to all sectors of the farming community and simultaneously improve the efficiency of its disbursement. These moves in particular assume:

- (i) That small farmers do need credit

- (ii) That the system should not depend upon formal land title as security
- (iii) That improvements in credit disbursements might be effected by utilising the stockist/trader network instead of insisting on a direct farmer/credit agency interaction
- (iv) That credit should be made available for a variety of enterprises and not limited to one or two as at present
- (v) That the efficiency of the credit disbursement process will only be improved if the system of loan approval is decentralised away from Nairobi
- (vi) That the growing co-operative movement might serve as a major channel for credit provision

The main elements of these new initiatives are looked at briefly below.

### **Decentralisation of the AFC operations**

The structure of the AFC is predominantly a centralised one, based on head offices in Nairobi. Accounts are kept at head office and the accounting system is intended to provide branches with timely information required for the supervision and collection of loans. To date lending decisions have been made at head office but gradually plans are being implemented for the establishment of discretionary lending limits.

Initially the problem has been one of training branch managers (there are 32 branches at present) in loan approval procedures. To do this a system of area supervisors has been instigated, who act as local trainers and are directly responsible for loans disbursed by branch managers in their areas.

As yet it is too early to evaluate the move to decentralise the AFC's loan approval procedure, but in the pilot areas where it has taken place, there has been a considerable increase in efficiency and timeliness of approving loans and the burden of heavy paper work in Nairobi has been relieved.

### **New programme of seasonal credit**

A new programme has been proposed to provide viable farming operations with seasonal credit for inputs required in production, to replace the present GMR system. AFC will operate the programme through its local offices with advisory loan committees, which will include agricultural staff and other local representatives. It is intended that the amount of the loan will be based on individual needs and creditworthiness rather than on an acreage basis, as at present. The programme will not include an element of insurance, as under GMR.

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The argument behind this proposal is that AFC's direct responsibility for credit approval under such a programme, as opposed to its present agency role under GMR, will increase the Corporation's commitment to sounder creditworthiness and risk assessment. However, there is, in fact, no guarantee that the loan collection record will be any more healthy than under GMR and the future of this proposal has still to be settled.

### Voucher Credit System

The Voucher Credit System is presently being implemented on a pilot basis in the two Special Rural Development areas of Tetu and Vihiga. This system would appear to have significantly greater potential for replacing the present channels of short-term seasonal credit, and it can be applied to a cross-section of different enterprises to be undertaken by small-scale farmers.

The system is based on the principle of providing vouchers to approved applicants; these vouchers can be exchanged with local stockists for specified quantities of inputs, according to agricultural staff recommendations. Part of the extension staff's responsibility is to ensure that adequate supplies of inputs are available with local stockists to enable them to 'honour' these vouchers. To operate efficiently, the loan approval process has been undertaken in both Tetu and Vihiga at the local level, although reimbursement of stockists is still undertaken from Nairobi, incurring delays which could jeopardise the future of the scheme.

The procedure is relatively straightforward:

- (i) Loan application forms are filled in by the farmer in conjunction with his local extension officer.
- (ii) Once the application is processed and approved, the farmer receives vouchers for the package of inputs in question. He endorses his liability for the loan once drawn by indicating agreement to repossession of goods and chattels to the value of the unpaid loan and interest due in the event of default.
- (iii) The voucher can then be traded against a specified quantity of inputs from local stockists who, in turn, pass on the voucher to the distributing agency for new stocks to the same value, together with an agreed 8% margin. The voucher is finally presented by distributors to the AFC for cash settlement.
- (iv) Repayment is due after harvest and the levels of repayment will depend upon how closely the extension staff can follow up farmers whom they have originally assisted in the completion of their application forms. In any case, failure to repay automatically debars the farmer from access to credit in the following season.

The scheme has only been in operation for two crop seasons in its present form and a satisfactory evaluation has yet to be undertaken. However, it is clear that the expansion of the voucher system will depend upon increased participation by extension staff and experimentation with the use of group farmer approaches, if significant numbers of smallholders are to be involved in the future.

The significant features which recommend this means of providing credit are as follows:

- (i) A system of vouchers, which are valid for a limited period of time for a specific package of inputs, involves no cash element. Simultaneously, it is possible to ensure that recommended applications of fertilizer, seeds, insecticides etc are used for particular enterprises.
- (ii) By checking the number of vouchers issued, extension staff in a given area can ensure that local stockists have on hand at least the amounts and types of inputs required by farmers.
- (iii) The use of vouchers prevents farmers acquiring goods from more than one source, thus exceeding approved loan ceilings.
- (iv) By insisting on full repayment of previous loans before new vouchers are issued, the recovery system is strengthened and the extent of ultimate losses over time is kept to a minimum.
- (v) In signing the loan agreement, the farmer acknowledges that, in the event of default, the AFC can appropriate goods or chattels to the value of outstanding loans. While in practical terms, this element may be difficult to implement on a wide-scale basis, it does provide a means of making an example of one or two farmers, if necessary, to stimulate loan repayment among other defaulters.
- (vi) The system is applicable to farmers of virtually any acreage and can be tied in with the work of farm management staff in preparing farm plans and budgets.

### **Stockist credit and input supply**

As an alternative method of improving access to agricultural inputs by smallholder farmers in the rural areas, a scheme has been initiated in conjunction with the commercial banks to provide credit to stockists of agricultural inputs.

The principles behind the scheme are quite straightforward. In an attempt to improve the supply of agricultural inputs to farmers in the more remote areas and to encourage rural stockists to increase their businesses in agricultural inputs, the Kenya Commercial Bank has agreed to embark on a scheme, whereby limited credit is provided to such stockists and to primary co-operative societies for the purchase of inputs and for the improvement of storage facilities for holding



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stocks. Experience has shown that many farmers are able and willing to pay cash for inputs, if these are available at the right time, in the right quantity and if they can be provided with proper advice on how to use them.

Conclusive evidence is not yet available to show that stockists who are given credit are prepared to sell to farmers on credit terms, but there are hopeful indications. A pilot scheme undertaken by the FAO Fertilizer Team in Western Kenya in conjunction with local staff has shown that when stockists are able to obtain input supplies on credit, they are prepared to pass part of the credit to their more reliable smallholder customers. Similar pilot operations have also demonstrated that co-operative societies can extend seasonal credit to their members if they are properly supplied with inputs and the respective credit funds. If it were proved later that this means of advancing credit to the smallholder farming community were feasible and operated spontaneously, the costs to government of channelling such credit would be considerably less than developing a parallel set of institutional outlets for seasonal credit.

The immediate benefit from providing stockists with inputs on credit is that the problem of tying up scarce cash in bulky agricultural inputs with low profit margins is overcome. In the past stockists have frequently argued that they are unable or unwilling to invest significant sums of money in such inputs as fertilizer and seeds because mark-ups on these high-value goods are low and they can get a much better return on such things as maize meal, sugar, tea, or chemicals. Furthermore they can never be sure of demand. In fact, when sales do begin, with the onset of the rains, most farmers want fertilizers at the same time and supplies are exhausted overnight. It is only then, with cash in hand from these sales, that stockists are prepared to order more, by which time it may already be too late for many farmers.

The stockist credit scheme, furthermore, acknowledges the need for improved stockist storage facilities for inputs and includes an element of medium-term credit to build these.

Whether or not stockists are prepared to pass credit on to the farmers themselves, there are still some definite advantages in this approach:

- (i) There is the institutional advantage of providing credit to a limited number of stockists, who are easier to deal with and more accessible numerically than thousands of smallholders.
- (ii) The stockists themselves, in most cases, are in a much better position to offer collateral against this credit facility than would be individual farmers.
- (iii) The fact that a commercial bank is involved strengthens the argument that the scheme is economically viable. In any case

the operations of commercial organisations in the credit field have always been more efficient, if less extensive, than official government schemes in the past.

- (iv) Involving the commercial banks and private stockists in such a scheme gives a considerable boost to the development of non-official lines of credit and credit provision. Awareness of the utility of credit is stimulated and the local economy benefits from an increasing availability of capital.
- (v) Improved co-ordination between field staff and the distributors of agricultural inputs can be achieved through improved liaison with individual stockists, who will require indications of forthcoming demand from staff, based on acreages planned by farmers.
- (vi) The scheme includes proposals for training courses for stockists so that they can offer advice to farmers on what types and quantities of inputs to use for different enterprises and so supplement the work of the extension service.
- (vii) As part of the scheme, credit will be extended by the bank to co-operative unions to supplement the on-going Co-operative Production Credit Scheme (discussed below) utilising established administrative mechanisms. Its pilot characteristic lies in the promotion of food crops, which have so far been neglected by co-operative societies, and in the establishment of much closer links between the co-operative movement and the agricultural extension services.

All working capital loans for input supplies would be the responsibility of the co-operative union, but passed on, in kind, to their societies and from societies to members. This would increase competition between the societies and stockists to the benefit of farmers. It would also provide experience as to the types of operation in which co-operatives are more successful than stockists, and vice versa.

### **Co-operative Production Credit Scheme**

The Co-operative Production Credit Scheme (CPCS) is a final example of a new initiative in the credit field designed to improve access to credit facilities by the smallholder farming community. The scheme was started in 1970 both to increase productivity by enabling co-operators to obtain purchased inputs on credit and as a mechanism for encouraging better management at the primary society and union levels, stimulating rural savings, retaining such funds in the sector for the benefit of co-operators, and providing the co-operative movement with greater liquidity. The CPCS and its related Co-operative Thrift Scheme (CTS) are the principal nationwide programmes under which members of producer co-operative societies may accumulate savings.

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The CPCS/CTS are especially important in terms of their potential and in terms of their operations for several reasons:

- (i) The programmes are orientated towards small-scale farmers — minimum loan size is Kshs 100/- and minimum savings account balance is Kshs 50/-.
- (ii) Administration and credit decision-making are decentralised, so societies have responsibility for their own performance.
- (iii) The programmes are designed to strengthen the co-operative movement in Kenya.

The operation of the scheme involves virtually every level in the co-operative structure, with overall responsibility for implementation and control shared by the Co-operative Bank and the Department of Co-operative Development in the Ministry of Co-operatives and Social Services. The principal activity of most of Kenya's 1,000 viable co-operative societies is the marketing of agricultural produce and the CPCS is geared to this activity.

The scheme was introduced at a time when credit transactions between societies and members were chaotic. Members were heavily indebted to societies and in many cases there were no records of debts, or uniform procedure under which societies extended credit to members, and recovery mechanisms were inadequate. These difficulties reflected poor management and themselves created an obstacle to building strong societies in which members and prospective members could have confidence.

To participate in the scheme, unions must:

- (i) Settle all outstanding debts owed to the union and by the union
- (ii) Appoint a qualified Credit Secretary as a full-time employee of the union
- (iii) Establish a banking section within the union
- (iv) Operate centralised banking services for affiliated societies
- (v) Appoint a Banking Committee.

These last three related requirements ensure that the union has a mechanism through which it and its affiliated societies may participate in the CPCS and that the operations of the mechanism are under the surveillance of the committee of members' representatives, in accordance with normal co-operative practice. Unions frequently carry the heaviest administrative load, with respect to CPCS, of any of the units involved and hence operations at the union level assume a special importance.

A number of requirements must also be met by the primary society and these are similar to those specified for the union:

- (i) It must have settled all debts which it owes and which are owing to it

- (ii) It must be affiliated to a union which participates in the scheme
- (iii) It must have been in operation, and have had its accounts in order, for at least three years
- (iv) It must have a qualified secretary, who has attended a specially organised course
- (v) It must obtain funds for lending either from internal sources or from its union.

Members must also meet certain eligibility standards in order to receive credit under the CPCS:

- (i) He must be at least 21 years old and must have been a member of the society for at least three years
- (ii) He must have marketed produce through the society for at least three years prior to his application for credit
- (iii) He must be the owner or recognised holder of the farm he cultivates or must obtain the agreement of the owner of the farm he cultivates to act as guarantor.
- (iv) He must agree to have included in the loan for which he is applying any of his debts due to the society which will not be paid off in the next payment due to him.

These requirements ensure that only members in good standing have access to CPCS credit and are designed to provide an inducement for active and loyal participation by members. To the extent that the co-operative structure operates democratically from the bottom up, co-operators' desire for CPCS funds should animate the entire system, resulting in primary societies and the unions meeting their eligibility requirements.

The conditions attached to the credit provided to co-operators under the scheme also attempt to ensure the viability of the scheme by fixing borrowing limits and restricting loan usage. Credit is granted only for specific agricultural purposes which are laid down in a list of loan priorities. This list also specifies the maximum term for which credit may be granted for each authorised purpose. Payouts are made in kind wherever possible.

Loan sizes are limited in several ways. A member may not borrow less than Kshs 100/- and not more than two-thirds of the average value of his crop deliveries to the society over the preceding three years, up to a limit imposed by a regulation that no member borrow more than 10% of the total amount available for loans to members. This latter prescription is designed to ensure that benefits are not monopolised by 'big men' who figure prominently in many primary societies and who often have political aspirations.

A co-operator who has borrowed under the scheme may not receive further CPCS credit until previous loans have been repaid and no

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application for additional funds by co-operators with CPCS debts outstanding will be considered.

Closely related to the CPCS is the Co-operative Thrift Scheme, which is intended for introduction as a second phase once the credit programme is operating successfully. The thrift scheme involves the establishment of savings accounts for all members of societies participating in CPCS. Societies which have shown that they are capable of handling the managerial aspect of CPCS are selected by the Department of Co-operative Development for participation in the CTS. Societies so selected must pass enabling legislation, their officials must take training courses and the society must install a safe or concreted cash box.

As with CPCS, the scheme operates through members' accounts. While the CPCS involves the establishment of loan accounts for borrowers, CTS simply functions through the members' operating accounts which the society maintains as channels for payment for deliveries and for record-keeping purposes. Members agree to leave funds in this account rather than draw cash for deliveries and these balances form the savings involved in the scheme. The CTS assists in strengthening the co-operative structure by providing a closer relationship between co-operators' cash savings and their ability to use these savings.

A minimum balance of Kshs 50/-, as required under the CTS, gives much more scope for the smallholder to have a working account, while at the same time providing resources to the co-operative structure, which would not be available on the same terms if members kept their accounts at commercial banks. The CTS and the CPCS are complementary in that the former provides resources for the latter, both operate at the level of the small-scale farmer and a well-run CTS account undoubtedly increases a co-operator's credit-worthiness and reputation for financial responsibility in the eyes of other society members, including those officials who make CPCS credit decisions.

Experience with the CPCS scheme has been encouraging to date. Admittedly most lending has been for coffee-picking and husbandry improvements, reflecting the importance of the coffee societies in the co-operative structure, but diversification should occur automatically as the structure expands. At all stages the cost of such diversification must be watched. There will be an inevitable increase of paperwork and clerical costs, as the scheme expands, which could paralyse the whole system, if management and accounting efficiency cannot keep pace.

## Chapter 5

### Agricultural Extension and Research

Agricultural development within a smallholder community depends on a more efficient use of existing resources. There is a tendency to continue traditional patterns of farming, in spite of the fact that the population and its needs are increasing rapidly. This leads, as is evidenced in many parts of Kenya, in due course to the reduction of fallow and the cultivation of marginal land and steep slopes, with accompanying low yields per acre, poor livestock and increasing erosion. Tradition, dependence on neighbours, aversion to risk-taking, lack of capital and of access to auxiliary services are all factors impeding development. The development process requires improved flows of information, guidance, and some degree of supervision, and this is the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture's extension services and the extension services of related Boards and producer authorities.

In the earlier discussion of the shortcomings of the reorganisation of the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, the significance of the present agricultural extension staff was stressed together with the need to devote more attention to devising and implementing methods which would secure a greater return from this cadre. This chapter looks at aspects of Kenyan extension as a service, which represents probably the most significant method of reaching the farming community and of improving crop and livestock husbandry. The major problems in development administration are first outlined, followed by improvements designed to give the service a greater relevance for the bulk of the less developed farming community.

#### Problems

Kenya is fortunate in having one of the highest extension worker/farmer ratios in the world.<sup>1</sup> Studies undertaken in Kisii, Vihiga and Tetu Districts show a very favourable extension coverage of farmers. Where in many other developing countries rarely more than one-fifth to one quarter of farmers are visited, the recent studies for these three Districts indicated that about 80% of smallholders are reached by agricultural extension workers at least once a year.

Nevertheless, the extension service does not operate as efficiently or effectively as these data might indicate. The lack of an extension director has already been emphasised earlier in this study. There are further ways in which the impact of the service is hampered and these are examined below.

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1 See p. 19.



### Unilateral approach of the extension service

The present extension service in Kenya is characterised by a lack of differentiation between the services required by large-scale or small-scale farmers, by advanced farmers or less advanced farmers, and by farmers in high density or low density areas. Constant movement of staff accentuates this problem and a proposal for breaking the country up into specific extension blocks, between which transfers cannot take place, was made above.<sup>1</sup> Obviously extension staff adapt to the requirements of their area and in time become specialised in the different problems facing that particular community. Again, certain staff — such as farm management or animal production — can only be posted to areas where their specialised knowledge will be utilised. But within each of these areas, no real attempt is made to instruct farmers by techniques differing according to their levels of advancement and understanding of modern innovations.

For example, Farmers' Training Centres hold courses for farmers in a particular area at only one level, offering neither specialised courses for the more advanced nor simpler courses for the newly initiated farmers. The result has been to accentuate the tendency to rural inequality. Indications of this have been shown in recent social science research in Kenya, which, in trying to ascertain why certain individuals in rural communities are relatively poor and likely to remain so, has focused on the farmer contact pattern of the extension services. The following quotations illustrate the main findings:

'The most progressive farmers are in receipt of a disproportionate amount of attention (from the extension services) and the laggards are conspicuous by the paucity of attention received.'<sup>2</sup>

'More progressive farmers are in greater contact with change agents than are less progressive farmers.'<sup>3</sup>

'Nearly two-fifths of the laggards, compared to none of the more progressives, have never been visited by an extension officer of any kind during the last year . . . Crop and animal husbandry demonstrations are primarily attended by the most progressive farmers . . . Demonstration plots are only placed on the most progressive farmers' farms.'<sup>4</sup>

'Extension work seems to be very largely directed to male farmers with cash crops and above average acreages.'<sup>5</sup>

'In the Province as a whole, the average extension agent spends

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1 See p. 35.

2 J. Ascroft *et al.* *The Kisii SRDP Survey of farm level enterprises—a preliminary report of findings*, IDS Nairobi Working Paper No. 5, p. 33.

3 P. Moock, *The Vihiga SRDP Farm Level Survey: a preliminary report of findings*, IDS Nairobi Discussion Paper No. 111, June 1971.

4 J. Ascroft, *The Tetu Pilot Extension Project*, IDS Occasional Paper No. 4, pp. 65 and 66.

5 D. K. Leonard, *Some Hypotheses Concerning the Impact of Government Agricultural Extension on Small Farmers*, IDS Staff Paper No. 71.

57% of his visits with progressive farmers (who are 10% of all farmers) and 6% of his visits with non-innovative ones (47% of the total).<sup>1</sup>

The survey of the Tetu Special Rural Development area undertaken by the Institute for Development Studies, Nairobi, confirms the prominence of the more progressive farmers covered by the training and extension services provided by the government. Table 7 presents a selection of data from the survey supporting this conclusion. Progressiveness was assessed by examining how recently a farmer had adopted certain innovations, eg grade cattle or hybrid maize.

From this data it is clear that considerably more of the most progressive farmers have been visited and reciprocated the visits of crop and livestock extension workers; that more of them have attended crop, livestock and farm planning demonstrations; that more of them have had demonstration plots on their land or attended Farmer Training courses; that they have greater average farm sizes and paid seasonal labour forces; and that more of them have more than one parcel of land, thus probably accounting for their larger average farm sizes. Further data provided by the survey show the same pattern for visits to and by community development workers, health visitors, home economics personnel and administration staff.

The nature of the relationship between the extension services and the most progressive farmers is not clear. It cannot be absolutely determined from the data whether the extension personnel naturally gravitated towards already progressive farmers or whether such farmers were made initially progressive by the extension personnel and that the situation has now developed to a point where it is difficult to break the mutually-reinforcing interdependence.

The tendency for extension staff to concentrate their efforts upon more progressive farmers in the small-farm sector is reinforced by the Ministry's practice of setting production targets for the extension staff. Production targets emphasise the need to increase the output of particular agricultural enterprises without providing guidance as to how this increase is to be achieved. Inevitably extension staff will tend to look for these increases by persuading the already converted, more progressive farmers to increase their acreages. The returns are quicker than adopting the more difficult task of persuading the more backward farmers to embark on a new enterprise.

The result is that the disparity between the more and less progressive farmers is increased. The cumulative effect of extension over-emphasis upon the more progressive farmers is to encourage an openness to innovations and a willingness to try more productive and commercial

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1 D. K. Leonard, *The Social Structure of the Agricultural Extension Services in Western Province of Kenya*, IDS Discussion Paper No. 126, p. 4.

Table 7. Progressiveness by selected factors of production

PROGRESSIVENESS					
	Most	Upper Middle	Lower Middle	Least	TOTAL
AGENT-INITIATED CONTACT	%	%	%	%	%
Crops	100	96	85	41	84
Livestock	93	77	63	22	68
CLIENT-INITIATED CONTACT					
Crops	81	65	56	17	58
Livestock	88	64	50	14	57
DEMONSTRATIONS ATTENDED					
Crops	92	76	76	37	70
Livestock	91	72	61	32	67
Farm planning	30	9	0	0	10
Owners	13	3	0	0	4
FTC attended	48	26	13	5	24
DEMO PLOTS					
FARMER TRAINING					
CO-OP SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP					
Member	91	76	61	35	70
Office-bearer	9	2	1	0	3
Mean acreage	9.7	6.7	4.2	2.6	6.0
2-plus parcels	40	24	9	4	5
PAID SEASONAL LABOUR					
Mean No. of hired	3.7	3.0	1.3	0.3	2.2
FARM ENTERPRISES					
Grade cattle	93	70	49	11	60
Coffee	72	68	30	0	45
Hybrid maize	63	32	22	0	31
Pigs	57	35	21	0	30
Local cattle	22	28	25	22	25
Macademia	30	31	16	0	21
Pyrethrum	22	13	10	0	12
Tea	22	12	3	0	10
Cert. Potatoes	9	2	1	0	3

Source: Table 1, p. 16. IDS Nairobi Discussion Paper No. 133. *Accelerating the Flow of New Ideas to Rural People; A Proposal for a Pilot Extension Training Project in Nyeri* by J. R. Ascroft et al.

ways of agriculture, thereby improving their opportunity to break out of subsistence farming and to move towards a cash economy. The cumulative effect of extension under-emphasis upon the less progressive farmers is to discourage them from trying new methods and techniques, to increase resistance towards extension staff, and to provide motives to sell out and to move to the urban areas of the country.

Furthermore the practice of locating demonstration plots only upon farms of progressive farmers fosters the feeling in less progressive farmers that whatever is being demonstrated is not really for them.

An alternative to setting production targets for extension staff might be to set targets of numbers of farmers producing a particular crop or undertaking a particular enterprise (rather than overall production goals for a District or Division) and thus reduce the overt reliance on more progressive farmers and increase responsibility towards the less advanced farmers.

As a final slant on the question of extension emphasis, a report of a survey in Vihiga Division, Kakamega District<sup>1</sup> suggests that the returns to extension work are likely to be greater on farms operated by women. This is not because women make better farmers than men but rather because women have not been worked with in the past and thus present better unexploited opportunities on the farms they operate. The author felt that, considering the lack of contact women had with extension in the past, many of them in his sample possessed a high level of information about improved practices, even though their level of confidence in using these practices seemed weak.

### **Extension organisation and efficiency**

#### **Transport and housing**

There are three major aspects of the present organisation of the extension services which inhibit better performance. The first of these relates to the working conditions under which extension staff carry out their daily activities. Invariably transport is a problem; in some cases a Junior Agricultural Assistant may spend up to five hours of the day bicycling to and from the most remote farms in his sub-location. In most rural areas, public transport is non-existent; where it is available the local transport and travel funds held by the District Agricultural Officer are often inadequate to meet claims. Staff frequently cannot even afford to purchase their own bicycles and these are seldom supplied by the Ministry. In many cases, one of the chief causes of the problem of excessive distance covered daily is that staff live outside the area in which they work because they are unable to find closer accommodation. With the exception of the Kenya Tea Development

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<sup>1</sup> D. K. Leonard with B. Chahilu and J. Tumwa, *Some Hypotheses Concerning the Impact of Kenya Government Agricultural Extension on Small Farmers*, IDS Nairobi Staff Paper No. 71.

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Authority, who try to put all their field staff in houses built for them by the Ministry, institutional housing is not yet available throughout the country for Assistant Agricultural Officers, let alone Agricultural Assistants and Junior Agricultural Assistants. The Ministry of Agriculture is slowly building up the number of houses for its staff, but, unless these are built on agricultural stations or training centres, the administration is free to appropriate them after a period of two years for its own staff or staff from other departments. Proposals have been made to improve the position by extending loans for the purchase of motor cycles or by providing government motor cycles. However, experience with the use of motor cycles for the Artificial Insemination Scheme in the smallholder areas has not been convincing, and poor roads together with inexperienced riders have caused many write-offs, injuries and even deaths among field staff. A more practical means of assisting field staff with transport problems might be for daily runs to be organised by a department Land Rover, dropping staff at given points in the morning and collecting them again in the evening. Attempts to launch such a pilot scheme in the Kapenguria Special Rural Development area have not so far succeeded, owing to delays in acquiring a Land Rover for the scheme.

### **Programmes and supplies**

Inappropriate production programmes have been mentioned earlier as a danger to the morale and effectiveness of extension staff. Very rarely are local conditions taken into account, when directives providing new crop and livestock priorities are issued from the centre.

Again there are frequent occasions when supplies of inputs are inadequate for production programmes. A perennial problem facing new cotton schemes in the past has been a lack of available insecticides and although field staff may recommend their use, farmers frequently have failed to get hold of sprays at the appropriate time for their new crop. Sometimes the constraint has occurred at the stockist level and at other times much higher up, as recently, when import licences were delayed for cotton sprays and the crop suffered throughout the country. Whatever the cause, the effect is a growing feeling of frustration among the field staff and farmers.

### **Terms of service**

A third reason for poor extension performance lies in the terms of service. For Junior Agricultural Assistants, who form the basis of the field extension staff, the possibilities for promotion are negligible. To qualify for the higher cadre of Agricultural Assistant, a JAA must attend a one-year course at Embu Institute of Agriculture. However, to qualify for such a course, although well experienced in field work,

a JAA must possess the Cambridge School Certificate and compete with large numbers of younger, more recent school leavers. In most cases, Junior Agricultural Assistants have not taken the School Certificate paper.

To make the position worse, job security, irrespective of performance, is high and it is extremely rare for an extension officer to be dismissed unless he has been convicted of a criminal offence in a court of law. Thus discipline is weak and incentives to do better are poor.

### **Supervision and management**

A fourth factor influencing poor extension performance is that supervision is very poor, often non-existent. The lowest cadre of field staff at the sub-locational level is supposedly supervised by an Agricultural Assistant working in a single location. He in turn is supervised by a divisional Assistant Agricultural Officer, who reports to the District Agricultural Officer. However, due to similar problems of poor transportation, low motivation, a lack of interest from headquarters and no accepted management system for organising field work in a disciplined fashion, field staff rarely risk detection if they submit false or exaggerated reports. In most Districts a monthly meeting is held with field staff, but little business seems to be concerned with agricultural extension, and where it is, grievances and needs are frequently not met and problems not referred to higher authorities.

A fairly typical situation of field staff weaknesses in Kenya was recorded for Mbere Division, where an extension staff management system was to be initiated.<sup>1</sup>

'The procedural situation before the experiment was probably quite typical for Kenya and perhaps for other countries. District targets for crop acreages were set at the district level or received from the provincial level. Using the local knowledge of the DAO, AAO, and locational AA at their various levels, these targets were successively disaggregated to individual JAAs. The targets tended to escalate year by year with inadequate feed-back from experience. The targets also did not take account of staff time availability and had their extension implications been followed through would have involved staff in very heavy work overloads at some times of the year. There was no system of work programming and lower levels of staff did not take part in setting their own targets. Priorities between programmes were determined largely by their recentness: a steady flow of priorities came from the centre, each overlaying and burying its predecessors; for example, a young farmers' programme which was unexpectedly introduced from

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<sup>1</sup> See R. Chambers and D. Belshaw, *op. cit.*



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Nairobi took up two-thirds of the time of a JAA at the cost of other work he was doing. Reports were variable. JAAs submitted reports to LAAs each month, but the information they contained was not always standardised between reports. LAAs reported to the AAO who collected the information and reported to the DAO. Crop acreage figures were accurate, on the acreage targets set.'

The main weaknesses revealed under these circumstances were the following:

- (i) Target setting from the top downwards which was unrealistic and did not involve field staff
- (ii) No systematic ordering of priorities
- (iii) Little feedback from field staff
- (iv) No systematic work planning
- (v) No standard reporting procedures

Unfortunately, while there is an awareness of the general nature of these extension weaknesses, the standard solution proposed for dealing with them is a full-scale replacement programme of new and better trained staff over the coming 5-10 years. Very little attempt has been made to find intermediate solutions for improved equipment of the service, increased investment in recurrent expenditure by re-ordering of financial priorities within the Ministry, and the introduction of management systems.

### **Neglect of economic factors**

A further problem is the continued absence of proper farm management analysis of new recommendations. Most innovations at the local level are judged firstly in terms of technical efficiency and without consideration of the effect on the whole farm unit. Because the present system of orientation of the advisory services is based on District acreage targets, little attention has been paid to the constraints caused on individual farms by the expansion of certain acreages. Whether these targets are made at the District level or at the centre, there is rarely any consideration of the relative profitability of different enterprises or the most profitable level of resource use. Thus a farmer is urged to grow a larger acreage of a crop but the opportunity cost in terms of an alternative crop foregone is ignored. Similarly, farmers almost everywhere in Kenya are urged to improve the standard of their coffee husbandry to meet international quota ceilings, when in some areas it is almost certainly more profitable to the farmer to neglect his coffee and put the released resources into dairying.

There is a clear need for District and Provincial Farm Management Officers to play a central part in the planning of District targets. There is also the need for District targets to be disaggregated into ecological

zones so that each target is pursued within the area in which farm management investigations show the enterprise to be profitable.

Most advice offered by extension staff is based on production and output priorities and little recognition is given to ensuing marketing constraints. The case of macademia nuts in Central Province is a prime example of this. In 1966/1967, crop extension staff embarked on a comprehensive exercise to encourage the production of macademia nuts as a smallholder tree crop. Seedlings were produced by a private company on a local farm and sold to farmers through their co-operatives. Based on prices of macademia nuts prevailing at the time, farmers were told that when fully mature, their trees might be expected to yield up to Kshs 500/- of nuts each. This represented a far higher return per acre than any other comparable enterprise. Many farmers adopted macademia but when their trees started to bear nuts four to five years later, these nuts could not be marketed, since no processing facilities existed in the country. The company that had originally sold the seedlings had offered to process, but this offer was turned down by the Ministry on the grounds of potential monopoly control of the industry. The co-operative societies were unable to assist owing to expense and their inexperience of installing suitable machinery. Many farmers have inevitably been very disappointed. The ultimate disillusionment came when a visiting FAO macademia expert reported that, in any case, Kenya was producing the wrong variety of nut for the high quality export market and that new seedlings should be developed. A macademia processing unit has since been developed by the original company who were granted a short-term authority by the Ministry to process nuts bought from co-operative societies, and these are currently being sold on the local Kenyan market.

## Poor research communication

The applicability and relevance of the Ministry of Agriculture's research services to the country's farming community depend to a large extent on the channels which exist to relay research findings from the research stations down to the farm level where they may be applied. At present such channels are poor.

It is interesting to look at the experience of hybrid maize — the country's major subsistence crop — and its adoption by different types of farmer since its introduction in 1964. As Table 8 below indicates, the initial adoption was almost entirely restricted to large-scale farms. Hybrid maize on large farms today represents something in the region of 70% of total maize produced by this category of farmer. However, despite the apparently significant strides in adoption which have been made in the smallholder areas, the 1971 figure of 386,600 acres of hybrid grown represents only 18.7% of the total maize acreage of these

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farmers. There is, therefore, much that still has to be done to provide the smallholder farming areas with the necessary information and advice on the new varieties and the improved techniques by which such varieties should be cultivated.

**Table 8. Hybrid maize acreages in Kenya 1964-1972**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Large-scale farmers (more than 20 acres)</i>	<i>Small-scale farmers (less than 20 acres)</i>	<i>Total</i>
1964	28,100	1,750	29,000
1965	54,700	20,050	74,750
1966	62,900	37,700	100,600
1967	137,100	115,250	252,350
1968	100,100	129,200	229,300
1969	97,600	158,900	256,500
1970	102,500	272,600	375,100
1971	112,400	386,600	499,000
1972	130,000 approx.	520,000 approx.	650,000 app.

Source: Crop Production Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Nairobi.

The main elements of the problem of poor research communication and feedback can be summarised as follows:

- (i) The present machinery for the dissemination of research results is inadequate and lacks financial and personnel support to give it effective impetus.
- (ii) The facilities available to the Agricultural Information Centre, as the main institution responsible for the dissemination of agricultural information, are totally inadequate and only allow the Centre to undertake a fraction of its potential commitments.
- (iii) There are lengthy delays in the publication of research findings and such findings are frequently released in a form which is not readily comprehensible to field staff or farmers. No intermediary editorial unit exists at present to reproduce technical recommendations in readily understandable English and Swahili.
- (iv) Current research work lacks economic analysis of production techniques.
- (v) Research stations, as the source of small farm innovations and new technology, are considered by many farmers to be unrealistic and inappropriate examples of how to achieve improved production. Farmers are sceptical of being able to reproduce the expensive techniques employed by government research stations from their own meagre resources on their own farms.

A good example of this last point was provided in Eastern Province in a recent survey undertaken there. Farmers who lived near Embu

and Katumani research stations were found to have lower adoption rates of hybrid-synthetic maize (the main research crop of the two stations) than those who lived 20-100 miles away. Farmers associated the research programmes of the two stations with techniques which were only relevant for large-scale, rich farmers utilising fertilizer and mechanical implements which they either had no access to or could not afford. They further noted that the research station fields were overcrowded with labourers at planting and weeding times, when they could not find adequate hands to plant and weed their own crops. A follow-up on some of the farmers who attended a field day at one of the stations showed that they keenly felt the lack of relevance to their small farms of the scale of operations at the research station. They considered that what they were shown was not really for their farms and the programmes were not divisible or adaptable, as the research officers emphasised optimal combinations of resources to maximise output, without taking into account the chronic scarcity of some resources at the small farm level.

While a large number of institutions exist within the Kenya government and the East African Community for the development and testing of new production techniques and the introduction and trials of new crop and livestock varieties, there is little co-ordination of programmes and, although proposed in the current Development Plan, a National Scientific and Research Council has not yet been created to try to improve the position. What is in fact required is an institution which will take responsibility for research brokerage, evaluation, experimentation and training to ensure an efficient system of research dissemination. The present absence of such an institution has consequences, which have already been mentioned or which are already familiar: extension staff are not trained in communication skills; FTC trainers have no teacher training; knowledge produced by research stations is badly disseminated or remains irrelevant; the dissemination of available information remains slow relative to the very favourable extension/farmer ratio in the country; dissemination efforts remain partial and thus preclude implementation by farmers; crops such as wheat and macademia are promoted without consideration for transport, marketing and processing; new innovations such as intensive stall-feeding of dairy cattle are not professionally packaged into units combining information, credit and inputs which can be readily adopted by farmers; the amount of information and the number of innovations remains small and the target groups who benefit limited; the methods used for dissemination are archaic in that they rely mainly on the individual farm visit and neglect group methods and the increasing literacy of the rural masses; innovations continue to be promoted without regard to farmers' needs and problems; and many useful innovations which are available remain on the shelves.

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Furthermore little has so far been done to undertake research trials based on localised research programmes. Admittedly, several of the larger research stations have sub-stations in outlying areas, which present different conditions, but actual research trials and programmes based on individual farmer plots under realistic conditions are rare.

### Potential improvements

Fortunately, there is a recognition of many of the above shortcomings both within government and in institutions such as the University, which have access to means of influencing policy and organisational decisions within government. Details of some of the most interesting proposals and schemes which have been either attempted recently or examined are included below. The significant feature common to nearly all these approaches is the acceptance of a given state of advancement, either of farmers or of government extension staff, and of the need to devise administrative institutions and procedures which take account of features such as poor literacy levels, undeveloped communication techniques, and limited access to supporting facilities. It is the acknowledgement of these factors in devising new approaches to rural development which is the key to success, as other parts of this study have tried to show.

#### **The Agricultural Extension Management system<sup>1</sup>**

The Agricultural Extension Management system was instigated under the auspices of the Special Rural Development Programme in Eastern Province, and is designed to improve the effectiveness of existing agricultural staff. The approach is based on better operational control and improved knowledge of what staff actually do with their time, by way of a monthly meeting where individual work plans and reports are submitted and discussed. These work plans and reports have been devised in the simplest form to minimise time spent in their preparation. Simultaneously field staff motivation is improved through better supervision and by encouragement to decide part of their own work programme and to set their own targets for the following month. Agricultural planning at the lowest levels is also improved by an accumulation of records of farm visits and by streamlining and standardising other data collection and reporting procedures.

Slightly different systems have been devised for crop and livestock production staff, but the principles behind the two systems remain the same. Each depend upon:

- (i) a monthly management meeting held in each administrative location

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<sup>1</sup> This scheme which was initiated by R. Chambers and D. Belshaw in Mbere Division of Embu District, Eastern Province is described in *Managing Rural Development-Lessons and Methods from Eastern Africa* (forthcoming).



- (ii) supervision through individual detailed discussion with junior staff of their work performance and experience through the preceding month
- (iii) a general discussion with all staff at the meeting
- (iv) individual planning of work targets, with priorities for the coming month within the constraint of the work time available to each staff member.
- (v) a form kept by each staff member which records the work targets agreed at the monthly meeting and actual performance day by day, during the month
- (vi) the involvement of junior staff, as responsible officers, in the discussion and setting of work targets and work programmes.

While there is still considerable work to be done in finalising details of format of the reporting and planning procedures for different areas of the country, the initiative undertaken in Eastern Province has indicated clearly the benefits of such a system. In the first place staff performance should improve. Since supervisors are forced by the system into seeing that there is a meaningful set of programmes of work, the sense of isolation of field staff should be reduced and realistic work ceilings introduced. Motivation to work should be improved and staff should feel that the debriefing system gives them an opportunity to explain to their supervisors in some detail the difficulties they experience in carrying out their work.

Secondly, operational control of staff should be improved. New priority setting can be fed directly into the work-planning meeting and at the next meeting there can be a report on what is feasible, so that adjustments can be made where relevant. The chances of actions in the field diverging from intentions higher up should be reduced.

A third related benefit should be improved knowledge of what staff actually do. A better knowledge of implementation capacity at the field level should improve the future programme planning procedure. All in all, the system allows a closer relationship between the centre and the field and thus improved procedures for formulating and implementing relevant plans and programmes.

### **Farmer training for different levels of progressiveness**

A new approach to the selection of farmers for training courses has been developed in Nyeri District — again as part of the Special Rural Development Programme. The principal objective has been to select farmers from the lowest levels of progressiveness, who have received least benefits from training programmes organised in the District in the past. These farmers are then offered courses at the local Farmers' Training Centre, which are appropriately simplified to acknowledge



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the participants' relative lack of advancement and which additionally concentrate on simple demonstration techniques, which maximise farmer participation. Supplies of agricultural inputs have been provided to farmers at the end of the courses on a credit basis, to enable them to implement on their own farms the techniques which they have learnt, utilising proper inputs. Courses are followed by extension follow-up, utilising a group approach for comprehensive coverage of all farmers involved in the courses.

Earlier surveys in Nyeri District had shown that the majority of farmers who were categorised as the least progressive, in terms of new innovative techniques they had adopted over the past years, had not benefited either from extension staff visits or from training courses offered at the local Farmers' Training Centre. By devising a simple questionnaire, it was possible for extension staff to identify these backward farmers and offer them special courses arranged at the Farmers' Training Centres.

The effect of replicating this approach in other parts of the country would provide for a more equitable distribution of benefits of adopting improved farming techniques and would be in line with the policy of including the 'poorest 40%' in the process of development, as stated in the country's new Development Plan. Another feature is that, at present, courses offered at Training Centres elsewhere in the country do not acknowledge different levels of advancement among participants. No differentiation is made between farmers who have just embarked upon a certain enterprise and those who have been farming for years and who are looking for ways to improve the marginal output of their existing enterprises. Thus, courses which are aimed at beginners are of little value to more progressive farmers and vice versa.

A frequent criticism of present farmer training techniques is that FTC staff are neither properly informed of what they are trying to communicate to farmers nor adequately trained in communication techniques to be able to put across what they have to say in an acceptable and intelligible manner. The Nyeri training approach, in acknowledging these shortcomings, arranged a short course for FTC staff, prior to embarking on the farmer training programme. At this course, staff went over the main features of hybrid maize production and were taught the principles of basic communication techniques.

A final aspect of the Nyeri initiative, which recommends itself to improved extension productivity and thus is relevant for replication elsewhere, is the group extension approach utilised. Junior Agricultural Assistants from the sub-locations from which the participants were selected attended the training courses on a pre-arranged date, and met with farmers from their respective areas. This was both for familiarisation purposes and to arrange to meet farmers in a group on a given date on the farm of one of the participants to undertake a demonstra-

tion of a recommended practice. Any farmer who did not attend would not benefit from a demonstration of a separate practice (ie land preparation, sowing, dusting, fertilizing etc.) on his farm at a later date. Consequently there was a healthy element of group pressure on farmers to attend demonstrations and implement recommended practices in consultation with the agricultural staff and one another.

### **Agricultural service centres**

Accessibility is one of the major problems of providing an extension service to a mass of small-scale farmers, with only a limited number of extension staff, who lack proper transportation facilities and supplies. Even in areas where the road network is good, where the extension staff/farmer ratio is high and where public transport and other developed facilities exist, the problem remains of making contact with all farmers in the vicinity. In many of the less developed regions of Kenya, lack of housing precludes extension staff living in the sub-location in which they work and they consequently spend up to four hours per day solely on travel to and from work.

A proposal which acknowledges this inability of the Ministry's extension staff to provide an adequate service to individual farmers has been developed in Nyanza Province, as part of the Special Rural Development Programme there. Problems in this part of the country are similar to those experienced by field staff elsewhere and direct farmer/extension worker contact is impeded by lack of transport, inadequate staff numbers and inaccessibility of many rural areas. Also, because of growing specialisation among different extension staff working for individual technical divisions of the Ministry, an individual farmer may have to rely on more than one extension worker for advice on his variety of enterprises, particularly as his production techniques themselves get more sophisticated and market orientated. The main elements of the proposal are as follows.

A number of key centres are selected, where a comprehensive package of inputs, advice, credit and marketing facilities could be made available to farmers visiting the centres. In much the same way as the local dispensary has become the centre for acquiring remedies for physical ailments, so the agricultural service centres would represent places where farmers could come for a variety of agricultural requirements. An early principle has to be that centres should be selected within a radius of 10 miles of the farmers they serve, to limit the distance which any farmer has to cover for a single visit.

It is not intended that these centres should involve heavy capital expenditure. Existing village centres, market places, sub-chief's camps, police posts, trading centres etc would be identified in strategic positions and full support given to existing *dukas*, traders and stockists, who are already operating at these centres. It is not intended to inter-

## CHANGE IN ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

ferre with existing private enterprise in the stocking and provision of essential agricultural inputs, but rather to bolster the services already being provided.

Among the services which could be provided from these centres might be the following:

- (i) An advisory service by agricultural extension staff on the spot
- (ii) Supplies of inputs, such as fertilizers, seeds, insecticide etc
- (iii) Supplies of agricultural implements such as jembes, hoes, pangas
- (iv) Veterinary services by the local Animal Health Assistant or veterinary scout, supplying drugs, providing artificial insemination services and assisting with bull castrations
- (v) Credit to stockists at the centres to ensure adequate and timely supplies and assistance to improve storage facilities
- (vi) Mechanical repair facilities for minor equipment, such as farm implements, oxen tool bars, ploughs
- (vii) Storage facilities for surplus quantities of food crops produced locally, either for sale later outside the location or for local consumption
- (viii) The official marketing outlet or buying centre for such cash crops as would be bought from buyers from outside the area
- (ix) Possible site of the local dairy or milk-buying centre
- (x) In addition to technical advice, farmers could collect and be assisted in completing loan application forms for seasonal crop credit
- (xi) Distribution centre for agricultural leaflets and handouts in support of agricultural extension
- (xii) Contractor service centre.

It is obviously not envisaged that all service centres provide all the above services, but emphasis will be given to providing one or two such services in the initial stages.

If this service centre approach were to be adopted on a wider scale, it would represent a quite new approach to agricultural extension in Kenya and a departure from conventional attempts to improve the extension worker/farmer relationship. Among some of the advantages of this approach is that it would reduce the need to provide transportation for the extension staff right down to the field level, although certain services such as artificial insemination and the establishment of demonstration plots would still require field staff to go out to outlying areas. Secondly, the institutional facilities servicing the rural areas would be improved, since commercial firms would have specific outlets through which to distribute their goods to the smallholder areas. Thirdly, it would bring considerable savings in the overall recurrent

budget, which could be utilised to improve the centres or as grants and subsidies to commercial initiative in these centres. Finally, the move would represent a significant improvement in the overall co-ordination of agricultural services right down to the ground level. Individual centres would also readily adapt to the needs and conditions of the local farming community, a point which this study has attempted to stress.

### **Other aspects**

Other signs of the growing recognition of the shortcomings of operation of the research and advisory services in Kenya include a considerable improvement in the service provided by farm management staff to both large and small-scale farming areas. The number of trained farm management staff in the Districts and Provinces has increased and attempts have been made to provide field staff with basic farm record sheets, so that at least a start can be made to drawing up model farm budgets to assist extension staff and on which to base simple farm plans. These moves represent an increasing awareness of the need to look at the overall farm system in both large and small-scale circumstances (in spite of the difficulties involved) and improve the extension advice based on the interrelation of several enterprises and variable input factors — as opposed to concentrating on single crops or livestock improvement programmes in isolation.

Another positive development has started in Eastern Province, under the auspices of the Special Rural Development Programme there, in the establishment of a local research committee. This might be a model for similar arrangements in other parts of the country. The committee, which includes representation from the local research station, the District Agricultural Office and local field staff, is intended to set priorities for locally-based research according to needs defined by field staff. While complementing national research programmes, the approach taken by this research committee is quite an innovation and acknowledges the shortcomings of centrally determined research priorities.

A handbook for extension staff was recently completed and is currently being updated, containing standard recommendations for individual crop and livestock enterprises. To date, no such comprehensive manual has existed and consequently different sources have offered varying recommendations to farmers, often causing more confusion than help. The need for basic and uniform recommendations (however much they may have to differ between different ecological zones) must be acknowledged, particularly in the early stages of development, when farmers are being initiated in new production techniques.

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A recent increase in the support of the 4-K club youth movement and in assistance to Young Farmers' clubs is a further indication of attempts to diversify the extension effort and to tackle the problem of poor husbandry techniques through particular groupings of the rural community. Experience has shown that youth groups, if properly instructed, can play a useful demonstration role if they are permitted to cultivate a small patch on the family plot, in accordance with recommendations provided by 4-K officers and using inputs and tools also provided on loan from project resources. It is still too early to evaluate the success of this new initiative but the potential is high.

### Summary

The extension services have considerable shortcomings. Since extension is the major method of reaching the farming community and of implementing programmes of improved crop and livestock husbandry, it is surprising that improvement of this service has not been given greater priority and that more has not been done to increase the returns to the annual investment made in staff salaries, upkeep of vehicles and buildings, equipment purchase etc.

Extension staff continue to complain of poor conditions of work, and their attempts to promote new crop and livestock programmes are thwarted by the lack of supporting facilities. Promotion is poor and supervision is rudimentary, with little organised instruction on how to improve staff output. Emphasis is on production techniques, and marketing is only recognised as a problem when surpluses start to accrue. The machinery for research dissemination is poor and results take a long time to filter down to the field in a comprehensible form. Field days on research stations are of little relevance to small-scale farmers and are not orientated to convincing such farmers that they can reproduce the procedures. The usefulness of research itself is compromised by a lack of economic analysis of different production programmes.

All these factors directly reduce the effectiveness of extension and thus slow the progress of rural development. Less direct, but as significant, is the lack of consideration of the farm management aspects of crop and livestock promotion programmes. By promoting particular crop or animal programmes and trying to increase acreage targets accordingly for whole Districts, the implications for the individual farm plan are ignored. The same is true of the single crop approach of many statutory Boards. Possibly in the early stages of development, not very much can be done about this and the effects are less significant. But as the smallholding develops and production techniques improve, so there is a need for a more sophisticated farm management approach by general extension and specialised crop staff.



As to priorities at different stages of advancement, the simple single-enterprise approach may be the most effective in terms of farmer response and in view of the low levels of extension staff training. However, the process of improvement implies a better control and understanding of the different factors influencing production and of production techniques, and thus there must be a growing concentration on overall farm problems and improved farm management techniques. A distinction can be drawn between 'first steps of innovation', when a single profitable crop or enterprise is promoted as the extension staff's major priority and 'advanced programmes of innovation,' when more involved farm management decisions are included in the extension officer's training and consequently the farmer is made aware of a series of alternative enterprise choices.

The effects of providing an indiscriminate extension service to farmers of differing levels of advancement are well illustrated. Improving the service to cater for different levels will require a considerable training input and close supervision during implementation; possibly increased investment in extension aids will be needed. These costs must be accepted if the objective of providing a relevant service for different types of farmers is pursued.

Once again, the 'agricultural extension management' system provides an example of a fairly straightforward way of improving the service's productivity. Too often a more drastic re-organisation is proposed which involves increased expenditure and an initial reduction in efficiency. With a large and inflexible organisation such as the extension service, it is invariably more productive to improve output by minor innovations, such as this, rather than to embark on large-scale upheavals.

As yet there is no evidence of successful implementation of the Agricultural Service Centre approach, but the principle is sound. As with providing credit to a whole mass of smallholders, it is infinitely easier and more effective to work through appropriately situated institutions than to try to make contact with individual farmers.



## Chapter 6

### Concluding Remarks

The various problems outlined in the foregoing chapters, and the hopeful signs of change and improvement described, demonstrate the need for appropriate adaptation of institutions and systems, for adequate support of the field services, for proper marketing outlets and for local representation in the decentralised planning process. The examples are far from exhaustive but represent the key areas of concern for those involved with agricultural development in Kenya.

Certain features of the present development administration in Kenya may be considered unique. The system still incorporates elements of the structure built up in colonial times, when agricultural production, institutions and facilitating organisations served a very different community from today. However, there is still a lot that can be learnt from the Kenyan experience. The problems presented in this study are relevant to parallel situations in other developing countries, particularly in Africa, where the development of the small-scale farming communities is a priority concern.

Briefly, the study set out to look at how well the present machinery serving the agricultural sector has adapted to small-scale farmers and how sensitive the institutions and methods utilised by the government are to:

- (i) different levels of advancement of farmers
- (ii) the large numbers of farmers and the scale of production at which the majority of these operate
- (iii) the levels of training and competence of the manpower available to staff the development administration
- (iv) different market outlets for different enterprises
- (v) the growing need for political representation.

In the light of the examples presented in the study, the implications of failing to take adequate account of the above five points can now be more closely identified.

Point (i) relates to the need to acknowledge different levels of advancement and customary patterns of behaviour, with consequent implications for organisation of government services. These include differences between communities and individuals within those communities.

In the extension field particularly, the broad-fronted approach of field staff to farmers from diverse backgrounds and of differing levels of advancement has tended to favour the more progressive farmers. This, in turn, has led to an increasing disparity between the more and less progressive members of the rural community and a consequent

growing social inequality in the rural areas. If this tendency continues, the cumulative effects will deprive a large proportion of farmers of a chance to benefit from development, with accompanying unemployment, hardship and internal jealousies.

In the farmer-training field, particularly, the failure to adapt to differing levels of advancement wastes energy and resources and reduces extension effectiveness. While the system of general education recognises differences between students of varying levels of training, the system of farmer education does not. The two are clearly comparable and the recognition of differing levels is fully justified. A major consequence of accepting the principle of adaptation to different levels of advancement would be an increase in investment in the extension services, since diversification to different levels implies better trained staff, better methods of communication and closer follow-up and support. But it should also mean a greatly increased return on the investment.

The case of group development on Kajiado and West Pokot demonstrated clearly the effects of failing to acknowledge the value of established customary patterns of behaviour in relation to land use and the importance of the natural ecological conditions in preparing development proposals. The Kaputiei example reflected a lack of adequate local knowledge and misinterpretation of such evidence as was available. This links with more general problems of adapting centrally prepared plans to local conditions.

The need to improve the involvement of local committees in the preparation of local plans does seem to be appreciated at present, although ways of successfully undertaking this exercise have not been properly identified. The Narok example demonstrated some of the pitfalls and problems likely to confront local committees. It endorsed the need for adequate detail of policy guidelines to be passed down to the District to assist local committees to produce realistic plans. Additionally, owing to limited numbers of qualified staff, the processes of preparation and implementation of District plans must follow one another closely. It is a waste of time to go ahead with plan preparation if the field co-ordinating staff are not involved in the planning process or not aware of the implications for implementation.

Point (ii) emphasises the organisational and administrative requirements for different scales of production and different production techniques.

The change of emphasis in the formal government machinery and the institutions serving the farming community over the past 10-15 years has been described at some length. The first question which arises is whether the complex number of organisations, built up to serve large-scale European farmers, are suited to the requirements of

the small-scale African community. Without adaptation, they clearly would not have been. Even though branches have been expanded in the smaller urban centres and agents have been appointed away from Nairobi, there still exist gaps between the farmer and many statutory bodies, where an intermediary role has to be filled. If such gaps could be filled by efficient co-operatives or traders acting as agents for the major marketing Boards, for example, then a lot more could be said in favour of such Boards. But with the exception of the Pyrethrum Board and the Kenya Tea Development Authority, the roots of the other producer and marketing Boards do not go deep enough to serve the smallholder farming areas. In the absence of alternatives (the Ministry's services are clearly not adequate for this work), this function will remain poorly executed.

The problem of the present institutional approach to providing services to over a million smallholdings is probably best illustrated in the sections on credit and extension. While a number of methods have been attempted for improving the direct extension worker/farmer relationship or the credit institution/farmer relationship, it is clear that the most successful method of improving these relationships rests a little further up the scale. The administrative costs and frustrations of trying to make direct contact with smallholders can be relieved if the focus of contact is redirected to improving existing institutions and developing new ones, which then become points of farmer contact. Hence, the utilisation of existing stockists and co-operatives in appropriate circumstances, and the proposal to use strategic agricultural service centres as channels for providing basic agricultural services are strongly supported as practical solutions.

Point (iii) stresses the need to match the administrative structure to the levels of manpower available. Several examples have been given of the poorly facilitated extension service, responsible for making contact with a multitude of farmers, but able to rely on only meagre support services. Little effective contribution can be made until this is improved.

The present organisation tends to leave individual extension staff to get on with the job with a minimum of supervision and management. Given the poor system of promotion incentives, the low level of training of most staff, and poor support services, it is not surprising that so little appears to be achieved by the service. In colonial times, the same system probably worked more efficiently in those areas where extension was provided, because European staff were better trained and more aware of what was required of them. Additionally, farmers were inclined to complain to the District Agricultural Office if advisory staff were not available or could not visit them.

The use of simple management systems for staff has been mentioned as one method of improving the present levels of effectiveness. If this

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were accompanied by far-reaching improvements in the supporting services and terms of service, the commitments of field staff in the rural areas would be considerably increased.

The excessive number of formal bodies and statutory Boards in Kenya may represent an area where the adequacy of manpower available has not been taken into account. Such Boards require highly qualified staff to function smoothly and thus deprive other sectors of such manpower. The case for the employment of high-level manpower by these Boards can only be judged in terms of the service which they supply to the farming community.

One of the major reservations to future decentralised planning falls under this category also. Experience in Kenya, particularly of the Special Rural Development Programme, has shown that the lack of personnel qualified to undertake plan preparation and implementation has been a major constraint. Hence proposals for the use of central teams of qualified and experienced planning staff, to visit individual Districts and draw up local plans in conjunction with local Development Committees, may be the correct short-term answer. The problem of satisfactory plan implementation is still not resolved.

Point (iv), relating to the need for appropriate types of marketing channels, has not been covered in depth. Four features which favour the use of intermediary marketing agencies and which have been partly responsible for some of the success of Kenyan marketing boards, have been identified:

- (i) The price of the final product must be adequate to enable an acceptable price to be paid to the farmer, after meeting overheads.
- (ii) The collection and marketing structure must be accessible to individual farmers or farmers' organisations (co-operatives etc).
- (iii) Credit should be limited to those enterprises where there is a readily identifiable marketing outlet.
- (iv) Daily management decisions should not be interfered with from outside sources such as the Ministry of Agriculture, although broader policy issues may be subject to supervision.

Point (v) emphasises the need to acknowledge the role of local representation in the development process and to try to maintain a balance between political and administrative objectives.

The Kenyan administration has grown in influence both at the centre and at Provincial and District level. The case for strong centralised administration can be endorsed if the objective is to provide a basic structure within which development can take place without interference. Kenya could probably point to experience in neighbouring African territories to support its case for strengthening the powers of the administration to ensure security and a stable environment in the rural areas. But the process of political representation must be given

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more encouragement if growing political unrest is to be stemmed. If politicians are kept well informed at the planning stage and their views are expressed and taken into account, there is a positive role which they can play. Not only can they represent popular views as non-civil servants on local Development Committees, but they can also use their influence at the centre to get things done. If they spend all their time trying to decry the administration, then their potential is wasted.

The slow development of the Central Agricultural Board structure, to provide an improved medium for farmer representation in the decision-making process, has been described. The system of decentralised committees might well be improved if they were less monopolised by government servants and given greater freedom and increased non-official membership and participation. This may be a later development for the less developed areas. So far, the only areas where farmers have spontaneously supported these committees and regularly attend meetings have been the more progressive areas of large-scale farming. The committees only continue to function in other areas because of official participation and a sense of duty among civil servants. In due course this may change.

In conclusion, it is clear that there are many discrepancies in the present approach to development of the Kenyan rural areas. The implications of a failure to acknowledge different stages of advancement, particularly in the extension and training field, have been well illustrated. The failure of the conventional approach to farmer contact and provision of credit has been demonstrated, as has the need for modified and new approaches for dealing with a multitude of small-scale farmers. Likewise, the problems of delegating financial and planning responsibility down to the field level and the need for involvement of the rural community in representation in the decision-making process has been stressed. At the same time there are strong indications of change and improvements and above all there is evidence of an ability by the Kenyan government to change in mid-stream when indications suggest that a policy is faulty. This flexibility is a precondition for a realistic approach to rural development.







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