



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA
COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF
NYANDARUA**



OFFICE OF H.E THE GOVERNOR

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY GOVERNOR FRANCIS KIMEMIA,
E.G.H., C.B.S., DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE CROPS (IRISH
POTATOES) REGULATIONS 2019, AT THE COUNTY
HEADQUARTERS, OL'KALOU, ON 8TH AUGUST 2019**

The Deputy Governor, Her Excellency Cecilia Mbutia;

The County Commissioner, Mr. Boaz Cherutich;

The Speaker of the County Assembly, Hon. Ndegwa Wahome;

Representatives of the AFA;

County Executive Committee Members present;

Members of the County Assembly present;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Nyandarua, the number one potato producer in the country.

Indeed, no other place would have been more appropriate to launch these Regulations than at the home of Kenyan potatoes – Nyandarua County!

What more gratification can I find than being a witness to this launch of the Crops (Irish Potatoes) Regulations 2019; what more can the Nyandarua potato farmers ask for than this statutory protection against systemic exploitation which has left them poorer one season after another; and, what better way to fulfil my pledge of ending this pain and unscrupulous market distortion than being here to launch these Regulations.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Irish potato is a critical and the leading cash crop in Nyandarua. As a County, we are the number one potatoes producer in the country; our annual produce from about 36,500 hectares cultivated in the County averages 500,000 tonnes, and worth about Ksh. 9 – 10 billion.

Yet, even with produce running into billions of shillings, our people – over 100,000 families involved in potatoes production – do not adequately benefit from this wealth.

Today, with the launch of these Regulations, which form part of our County value chain improvement strategy, brighter days for our farmers beckon. We bring to an end a market distorted by actors who never toil for their stock, and a system that lacked a legal regime or framework to protect them. This is a great milestone for Nyandarua, and all other partner counties producing potatoes.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

These Regulations we launch here today will have no meaning if we work at cross-purposes. All potatoes producing counties, and stakeholders – including the National Police Service and related enforcement agencies, have a duty to our farmers to jointly enforce these Regulations and ensure full compliance.

That, as I had promised in the Manifesto and in every other intervention subsequent to my election, is a binding social contract I pledge to honor for the farmers who bestowed the responsibility on me. I assure you, here today, that this will be enforced to the letter.

Some of the enforcement interventions to ensure compliance and benefit to our farmers in the County include:

- 1) Enhanced awareness creation and sensitization of all stakeholders on the Regulations (handling, packaging and transportation);
- 2) Realigning the relevant finance laws and regulations to anchor these regulatory changes;
- 3) Training and deployment of enforcement officers at all levels – from harvesting, collection and marketing;
- 4) Working with stakeholders to ensure quick and effective prosecution of offenders who wish to rig the market against farmers;
- 5) e-registration of farmers and other actors in the value chain; and,

6) Establishment and improvement of collection centers across the County.

However, it is not enough to just protect the farmer through such noble laws. As a County, as part of the Economic Revival Strategy contained in our guiding documents – the Manifesto and the CIDP 2 – we have established supporting infrastructure and facilities to help in maximizing output, reduce post-harvest losses and value addition.

Some of these programmes, and contained in the Potato Production and Marketing Strategy 2018-2022, include:

- 1) Establishment of clean seeds production units in OljoroOrok and Njabini ATC (tissue culture technology) and collaboration with the National Government in Tumaini seeds multiplication unit to provide farmers with clean and certified seeds;
- 2) Establishment of a potatoes' cold storage facility in partnership with the German chemicals' manufacturer BASF in Ol'Kalou and within the five sub-counties, including operationalization of the Murungaru cold storage facility;
- 3) Promotion of agricultural mechanization including decentralization of the Agriculture Mechanization Services (AMS) to Njabini and other sub-counties – this includes procurement of hand-held mechanized tools;
- 4) Diversification of potato varieties to correspond with regional soils and climatic conditions (some of the varieties include Markies, Jelly, Rudolf, Unica, Panamella and Sagita);

- 5) Revamping of extension services and extending partnerships with organizations like GIZ and IFDC. This includes training farmers on market creation, identification and establishing linkages;
- 6) Provision of subsidized farm inputs like Subsidized fertilizer (the County Government provided 6190 bags during the Financial Year 2018-2019);
- 7) Soil testing equipment at the ATCs and partnership with the Digi-Farm on portable soil testing equipment and extensive soil management training;
- 8) Collaboration with the relevant state agencies and Ministries to construct new water pans, des-silt existing dams and pans for small-scale irrigation;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The above strategies and interventions are all intended not just to streamline the market, but ensure that we create wealth for our farmers, create sustainable income generation streams for our youth and women – who are the majority in the farms, and value chain actors, and above all ensure food security.

Again, I want to assure you of my unwavering commitment to ensuring that these Regulations, which we lobbied and worked hard to realize, become enablers of wealth creation and herald a new dawn for our farmers.

Thank you very much and God bless Nyandarua. God bless Kenya.

