



MINISTRY OF MINING, BLUE ECONOMY AND MARITIME AFFAIRS

STATE DEPARTMENT FOR THE BLUE ECONOMY AND FISHERIES

AQUACULTURE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Fish Marketing at ABDP Office Eatery – Tharaka Nithi County

Introductions

In T. Nithi County, the program started in FY 2020-21. The county is among the second cohort of ABDP-implementing counties. It has 975 fish farmers. 646 males, 329 females, 174 youths, and 10 PWDs. In the baseline survey at the county, ABDP noted the following challenges; prolonged droughts, porous soils, predators, unavailable and costly feeds, scarcity of quality fingerlings and an unstructured fish market. To mitigate the aforementioned limitations, ABDP provided the following interventions; 658 pond liners to reduce seepage of water, 325,000 quality fingerlings whereby each beneficiary received 1000 fingerlings, 23 predator control kits and 69,500 kg of quality fish feeds. In the last FY 2021-22 National stakeholder review workshop, the county was celebrated as the most improved in performance among the implementing counties. The first batch of beneficiaries that stocked either tilapia or catfish have harvested, and others are in the process of harvesting. A total of 218 tilapia and 140 catfish farmers have harvested resulting in a cumulative production of 20,038 Kg of both tilapia and catfish. Like some of the counties, many beneficiaries from the county are facing marketing obstacles. To address post-harvest losses and marketing challenges, the program is in the advanced stages of building fresh fish markets with cold storage.

The Problem

The fish market in Kenya is intrinsically competitive, unpredictable and associated with shortages (KMFRI, 2021). Like most counties, Tharaka Nithi's fish market infrastructure is poorly developed. In addition, the county was not originally a fish-eating county. As such, the demand for fish and fish products was low. The program activities of fish fairs and social behavior change and communication (SBCC) have promoted fish consumption thus a gradual increase in demand of fish and fish products. Further, many beneficiaries delayed harvesting due to unstructured fish markets and exploitation. This discouraged many farmers who prolonged keeping the fish in the ponds despite achieving the required table size. As a result, the cost of maintaining the fish in the pond increased which in the end will affect profits.



Figure 1: Advertising the fish eatery in Chuka town

How was the problem solved?

To ensure that farmers do not keep feeding already table-sized fish due to lack of market, the ABDP county office developed a temporary eatery at their offices. The county engaged two casuals who cook fresh catfish and tilapia that are served with kachumbari and ugali. The temporary eatery opens from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. The county has advertised the eatery through posters in strategic places within government offices and Chuka town. Since the exercise started, the demand for fresh and cooked fish has been increasing and farmers are unable to meet the daily demands. Due to the higher demands, the county allows two farmers to harvest per week and supply the eatery. Testimonies from beneficiaries' reveals that they are now fetching more profits as compared to selling through brokers and without value addition.



Figure 2; Eatery staff explaining to visitors on what they offer

Output

The county has eliminated marketing challenges for many farmers, as there is a ready market for two fish farmers per week. Further, the demand for fish is now higher in the eatery than what they can provide thus the county is setting up a fully established eatery that works all days of the weekdays. This will increase the number of beneficiaries marketing their fish per week. In addition, farmers are reaping more due to the value addition thus encouraging them to continue in production. This has given confidence to others to expand their production



Figure 3: Customers eating catfish and Ugali at the eatery

knowing the county has their support in marketing.

Relevance to ABDP goals

The main goal of the program was to reduce poverty and increase food security and nutrition in rural communities. The eatery has helped beneficiaries to earn an income and has promoted the consumption of nutrient-rich fish. Many people in the county are appreciating the role of fish in nutrition thus improving their nutritional security.

Conclusion

The case study presents a marketing challenge as it is in some of the implementing counties. However, the temporary solution provided by Tharaka Nithi County provides a glimpse of the immense potential marketing holds to deliver multiple benefits for poor women, youth and men and the nutritional security on which their livelihoods depend.