

UPDATED AFFAIRS ABOUT BKB ORGANIC DEMONSTRATION FARM (21/04/2016)

Introduction

BKB organic demonstration farm has continued to serve the community by providing many training opportunities to the community within the agricultural spheres. The farm has given rise to family gardens that are active in Kakiri and many people have learnt with us at this farm. Earlier reports show details of this. To date, there have been many activities which our stake holders need to learn about. All our activities are guided by the organic principles, despite the numerous challenges as discussed in the text.

Livestock

The dairy cow (Junior Ordry) successfully managed to calve one good looking male calf at Sunday night (10/04/2016). The uneconomical point to mention here is that male calves do not fetch good prices like their counterparts (female calves). When we keep it to mature, the value of milk it consumes in 4 months for example is 336,000 if it drinks 2 liters of milk per day in 120 days. At this age the calf can be sold between 200,000/= and 220,000/=. For this reason we intend to sell it off as early as possible.



We also have 4 pregnant sows whose farrowing dates differ. The first one to farrow is expected at the end of this month. Our senior boar Henry was replaced with a new boar because Henry was aging and had started developing weakness especially at mating. This also has one younger standby replacement in case of any problem. So we have two boars now. One sow gave birth to 9 piglets of which 6 are males and 3 are females. We have four other pigs of which one is a sow, 2 replacement gilts and 1 castrated pig. (Total is 11 pigs + 09 piglets).

Our goats have shown good adaptation to the local environment except the Billy who has a low carcass and weight gain. We intend to cull it and replace it with one of the proven kids from the existing nanny.

Crops

We are making use of the green house with crops like tomatoes, green pepper and leek. In other fields of the farm we have a diversity of crops such as celery, coriander, onions, lettuce, beet root, spinach, squash, carrots, several legumes, vitamin A fortified potatoes, okra, lima beans, fruit trees (lemons, oranges paw paws, mangoes, jackfruits, cocoa, avocado etc), bananas and many others.



Pastures

We have planted two new pasture grasses. These are Kikuyu grass and Congo signal grass. These will be important forages to feed our lactating cow, the goats and the excess provide ingredients for our compost. Having a variety of pastures will also be a good approach during trainings on pasture establishment and management. These two pastures are both good for grazing and fodder.



Soil and water

We have tried to conserve soils by using mulches, cover crops such as comfrey, beans and pumpkins. Keyhole gardens are also used to prevent surface run off. Cut off drainage channels are also common on the farm to prevent soil erosion. All these are supported by water tanks which supply water for irrigation during dry spells.

The bees

Our apiary works well with 3 bee hives that are colonized by bees. We hope to harvest honey in July this year. Last year we harvested 5 liters of honey. Due to limited space and above all in a

densely populated area, we do not intend to expand the apiary. This unit is limited by other factors like absence of an open water source to feed the bees. Many neighbors also use broad-spectrum insecticides in their gardens which kill many of beneficial insects including bees.

Security

The new askari (security personnel) has tried to create a good security environment together with the farm workers especially those residing at the farm. They are all security alert after a detailed briefing from the project administration. The 2 dogs also help to beef up security within a fenced area of the farm.

Visitors

During the last 3 months, the number of visitors has reduced due to reasons below:

Gardeners had too much friction among themselves to an extent of doing too little work. Once this was realized they were all sent away. We now have new farm workers.

The dry spell which has just ended made many crops less attractive hence reducing visitors.

Many visiting schools make such trips in term three at the end of the year not at the beginning of the year.

Limited teaching/learning materials to outcompete centers like Kabanyoro which are our competitors in the same field.

Challenges

- Fluctuations of labor supply especially during the rainy season
- Pests and diseases reduce our yields especially viral diseases in oranges. Bananas are also affected by nematodes which are difficult to kill since they are soil based.
- Unreliable rainfall put us at losses as we have to use a lot of water for irrigation.
- High costs of inputs. These include costs for seeds, off farm manure, animal feeds and equipment

Way forward

- Expand the income generating projects such as the poultry and the piggery so as to raise enough funds and employ armed security personnel
- Stocking more farm tools, machinery, old engine parts which are so important in training agricultural mechanization to both secondary and tertiary students. This will make us a viable substitute to Kabanyoro which is a giant center for mechanization needed by schools.
- Partner with agricultural training schools which can send their students to our farm, already Mbuye farm school has shown interest.
- Promoting biodiversity to enhance natural enemies will make pest and disease control easy.

- Buying another dairy cow with traits different from the existing cow. This might be New Jersey breed which is smaller in size but with more milk yield.
- Periodical training of staff on issues of organic farming.