Kenyan Farmers are Struggling

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Nairobi, Kenya: 9th September 2020
– Nearly nine out of ten Kenyan farmers said their financial situation has gotten worse during the coronavirus pandemic. According to recent data released by 60 Decibels, Kenyan farmers are being economically squeezed by decreasing demand for their produce and livestock, falling prices, and increasing costs for raw materials and supplies.

"The situation has rapidly deteriorated for many Kenyan farmers," according to Venu Aggarwal, Agriculture Director at 60 Decibels, Inc. "Since agriculture dominates the Kenyan economy and employs approximately 75% of Kenya's workforce, the ability of farmers to weather the pandemic storm is vital to Kenya's future economic outlook."

According to 60 Decibels' research, Kenyan farmers are being forced to make adjustments to cope with the pandemic's economic fallout. Approximately 90% of farmers have reduced the number of people hired to work on their farms. As a result, many farmers said they and family members are spending more time working on their farms.

These adjustments are critical due to Kenyan farmers' diminishing non-farm incomes and increasing food prices. 17% of farmers reported a decrease in at least one income source compared to this time last year. Only 15% of farmers currently have income from a salaried job, compared with 25% of farmers in 2019.

The economic pressure on Kenyan farmers may have longer-term impacts. Nearly six out of ten farmers told 60 Decibels they have made unplanned withdrawals from their savings, and over 40% recently borrowed money to cover shortfalls in income due to the pandemic. 18% of farmers reduced payments on their loans, and 15% have sold or pawned assets they own.

While it is challenging to predict how long the economic downturn will last, the short-term consequences are striking. As many as one-third of Kenya's farming households are in economic distress, according to 60 Decibels' Vulnerability Index.

"When we see a large number of households entering economic distress, we worry about the consequences for those individuals, but also the broader economic consequences for Kenya. It is certainly a call to action within the public and private sectors," according to Nilah Mitchell, Head of East Africa at 60 Decibels.

60 Decibels' research results are based on a telephone survey completed across June and July 2020. The research was drawn from a stratified random sample of 1,000 Kenyan crop and livestock farmers living in agrarian areas in 45 of the 47 counties in Kenya, excluding Nairobi and Mombasa, and equally weighted between men and women. Two-thirds of the sample are small Kenyan farmers working on 1.2 or fewer acres, with the balance working on larger farms.

The data in the study does not necessarily reflect views of what is going on across Kenya more generally.

For more information about the economic impact of COVID-19 on Kenyan farmers visit: https://app.60decibels.com/covid-19/agriculture

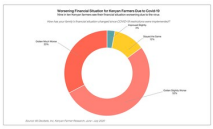
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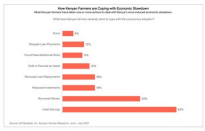
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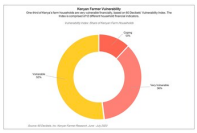
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Note: 3 charts to follow

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