



SPEECH BY H E SUSAN KIHKA, NAKURU COUNTY GOVERNOR, DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 2026 NATIONAL ASK SHOW, NAKURU COUNTY

Your Excellency Dr. William Samoei Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya
and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces;
Hon Mutahi Kagwe, Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries
Dr Paul Ronoh, Principal Secretary, State Department of Agriculture
Ms Annabelle Kiriinya, the Chairperson of the Agricultural Society of Kenya;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
National and County Government Leaders;
Development Partners;
Distinguished Exhibitors;
Our Farmers;
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning.

1. It is my great honour and privilege to welcome you all to Nakuru County for the 2026 National ASK Show.
2. Your Excellency, your presence here today is a great encouragement to our farmers and a clear demonstration of your Government's unwavering commitment to agriculture as the foundation of Kenya's economic transformation.
3. This year's theme, *"Promoting Climate Smart Agriculture and Trade Initiatives for Sustainable Economic Growth,"* could not be more timely. Across the world, agriculture is facing new realities brought about by climate change, changing markets and rapid technological advancement. Yet, these challenges also present an opportunity for us to innovate, adapt and build a more resilient agricultural sector.
4. For Nakuru County, agriculture is much more than an economic activity. It is the heartbeat of our people. It feeds our families, creates jobs, drives our industries and sustains thousands of livelihoods.
5. As Kenya's second-largest county economy, contributing nearly six percent of the national Gross Domestic Product, agriculture remains the engine of our growth. More than eighty percent of households derive their livelihoods directly or indirectly from farming, while about seventy percent of our land is suitable for agricultural production.
6. From the fertile plains of Molo and Kuresoi to the dairy farms of Bahati, the potato fields of Nyandarua border, the flower farms of Naivasha, the wheat belts of Rongai and Subukia, and the livestock enterprises across our county,

Nakuru continues to demonstrate why it remains one of Kenya's foremost agricultural counties.

Ladies and gentlemen

7. The progress we celebrate today, Your Excellency, is the result of deliberate investments, strong partnerships and, above all, the resilience and hard work of our farmers. Our dairy sector continues to grow from strength to strength. Last year alone, Nakuru produced over **326 million litres of milk** valued at approximately **Sh14.6 billion**. More than **27 active dairy cooperatives**, bringing together over **54,000 members**, continue to strengthen milk collection, value addition and farmer incomes.
8. To support this growth, we have equipped dairy cooperatives with milk coolers and backup generators while expanding our subsidized Artificial Insemination Programme. Since 2023, the County Government has invested KSh25 million in livestock improvement, reaching thousands of farmers through quality breeding services that continue to improve livestock genetics and productivity.
9. Your Excellency, Nakuru also proudly remains Kenya's leading potato-producing county. More than **150,000 farmers** cultivate potatoes across our county, producing more than **580,000 metric tonnes annually**, valued at over **Sh15 billion**. Even more importantly, Nakuru now produces more than **70 percent of Kenya's certified seed potatoes**, firmly positioning our county as the country's seed potato capital.
10. Our commitment to crop diversification has equally produced remarkable results. Since 2022, we have distributed nearly **279,000 grafted avocado seedlings** worth over **Sh110 million**, benefiting more than **22,000 farmers** and expanding avocado production across 11,000 acres. We have revived pyrethrum farming by distributing more than **33 million seedlings** to over **11,000 farmers**, restoring more than **5,000 acres** under cultivation and once again positioning Nakuru as the national leader in pyrethrum revival.
11. Coffee farming is steadily expanding through improved seedlings, while our edible oil crops programme has made Nakuru Kenya's leading county in sunflower promotion. Working closely with the National Government, over **13,000 farmers** have received sunflower and canola seed, opening up new income opportunities while supporting the country's edible oil manufacturing industry.
12. Your Excellency, one of the most impactful interventions by your Government has been the subsidized fertilizer programme. Working closely with the National Government and the National Cereals and Produce Board, Nakuru ranked among the country's top-performing counties in fertilizer distribution.

Through seventeen fertilizer satellite stores established across the county, six farmer cooperative distribution centres and five NCPB depots, hundreds of thousands of bags of subsidized fertilizer have reached our farmers on time and closer to where they live.

This partnership has significantly lowered production costs and improved food production across our county.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

13. Agriculture today must be driven by knowledge and technology. Through the National Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (NAVCDP), we have deployed **278 agripreneurs** across all the fifty wards to provide digital extension services, market information and technical support to farmers. Nearly **300,000 farmers** have already been registered under the Know Your Farmer digital platform, giving us one of the most comprehensive farmer databases in Kenya and enabling more efficient planning and service delivery. To improve financial inclusion, we have also established agricultural SACCOs in every ward, enabling farmers to access affordable credit, invest in modern technologies and expand their enterprises.
14. Your Excellency, climate change remains one of the greatest threats facing agriculture. Our farmers continue to experience prolonged droughts, erratic rainfall, emerging pests and declining soil fertility. Recognizing this reality, Nakuru became one of the first counties in Kenya to launch a comprehensive Agroecology Policy in December last year. This landmark framework is guiding our transition towards climate-smart agriculture through sustainable land management, soil restoration, biodiversity conservation, efficient water use and environmentally responsible farming practices.
15. In the coming weeks, we shall also launch our Agricultural Extension Policy to strengthen extension services, improve coordination among stakeholders and ensure that every farmer has access to timely and quality agricultural information. These policies are laying a strong foundation for resilient and sustainable food systems.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

16. Agricultural transformation cannot happen in isolation. It requires partnerships. I am proud that Nakuru's County Agricultural Sector Steering and Coordinating Mechanism has been recognised nationally as one of the best-performing agricultural coordination platforms in Kenya. Our collaboration with the

National Government, research institutions, universities, development partners, cooperatives and the private sector continues to produce remarkable results. We recently hosted the National Research Festival at Egerton University, bringing together scientists, innovators, policymakers and farmers to bridge the gap between research and practical farming.

Later this year, Nakuru will once again make history when Naivasha hosts the World Potato Congress, placing Kenya firmly on the global agricultural stage.

17. Your Excellency, as a county, we remain committed to ensuring that agriculture benefits everyone. Women, youth and vulnerable households continue to benefit from kitchen garden programmes, improved indigenous poultry, dairy goats, sheep improvement projects, fisheries development and livestock commercialization initiatives. Thousands of households have received improved chicks, dairy goats, sheep and fish fingerlings, improving household nutrition, creating employment and increasing incomes. Our mechanization agenda, irrigation expansion, agro-processing, value addition and market access initiatives remain central to our vision of building a modern and competitive agricultural economy.
18. Finally, allow me to express my sincere appreciation to Your Excellency and the National Government for the continued partnership that has enabled many of these achievements. Together, we are demonstrating that when the two levels of government work hand in hand, our farmers are the greatest beneficiaries. To our development partners, research institutions, financial institutions, cooperatives, exhibitors and private sector players, thank you for walking this journey with us. And above all, to our hardworking farmers, thank you. Your resilience, determination and commitment continue to make Nakuru one of Kenya's greatest agricultural success stories.
19. As we officially open this year's ASK Show, I encourage every visitor to engage with the exhibitors, embrace innovation, learn new technologies and build partnerships that will transform agriculture into an even greater source of prosperity.

Thank you

H E SUSAN KIIHIKA, EGH

GOVERNOR, NAKURU COUNTY