



SPEECH FOR H E SUSAN KIIHIKA, NAKURU COUNTY GOVERNOR, DURING THE LAUNCH OF PYRETHRUM SEEDLINGS AND FIELD DAY HELD ON 7TH MAY, 2025 IN TURI, MOLO, NAKURU COUNTY

Mr Felix Koskei, Chief of Staff and Head of Public Service

Hon Mutahi Kagwe, Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries

H E Dr Moses Ndirangu Badilisha, Governor, Nyandarua County

H E Wesley Rotich, Governor, Elgeyo Marakwet County

H E Simon Kachapin, Governor, West Pokot County

Dr Kiprono Ronoh, Principal Secretary, State Department of Agriculture

Dr Bruno Linyiru, Director General, Agriculture and Food Authority

National Government officials

County Government officials

Distinguished Guests

Esteemed pyrethrum farmers

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honour to be here today on this auspicious field day as we launch the distribution of certified pyrethrum seedlings and other materials in a profound demonstration of our commitment to revive and promote pyrethrum farming in Kenya and more so Nakuru County.

I take this earliest opportunity to welcome all my fellow Governors from Nyandarua, Elgeyo Marakwet and West Pokot and their respective delegations to Nakuru, the County of Unlimited Opportunities.

With utmost sincerity, I thank the organizers of this event—the Agriculture Food Authority (AFA)—under whose aegis we are gathered here. To the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), pyrethrum companies both public and private, stakeholders, pyrethrum cooperative members and farmers groups, receive my special thanks for walking with us on this journey. I am humbled by your dedication to pyrethrum farming.

In Nakuru, pyrethrum is one of our flagship projects and we are on course to restore its lost glory, ensure the value chain regains its market value and the top income earner for our farmers. In yesteryears of glory, Nakuru County used to produce about 70 per cent of the country's pyrethrum production. Currently an estimated 10,000 farmers are growing pyrethrum in eight of

our 11 sub-counties—Molo, Kuresoi North, Kuresoi South, Njoro, Gilgil, Naivasha, Bahati, and Subukia. With an increased acreage to 3,884 acres, our farmers are now producing 1,273 metric tonnes fetching Kshs236.9 million. As significant as it looks, this is just 10 percent of our potential of 30,000 acres. To date, we have distributed more than 51 million seedlings to more than 9,000 farmers covering approximately 2,500 acres at a cost of Kshs147 million. This Financial Year (2024/25), we have distributed more than nine million seedlings to 1,653 farmers valued at Kshs31.8 million.

At this juncture, allow me to firstly acknowledge our partnership Pyrethrum Processing Company here in Nakuru and Kentegra Ltd which has constructed a processing factory in Naivasha. Secondly, we are partnering with KALRO, Molo to produce high yielding pyrethrum clones. Through this collaboration, we are distributing 700,000 seedlings to all pyrethrum growing wards with each seedling will producing five to six (5-6) splits, potentially generating up to 4.2 million plants from this initial distribution. Thirdly, KALRO Molo is establishing a tissue culture laboratory to ensure continuous production of high-quality planting materials. We are also supporting private sector-led licensed nurseries in all pyrethrum- growing sub-counties to meet the increasing demand. Through these efforts, we are now producing 330 kilograms per acre with each kilogram going for Kshs300—indicating substantial income for our farmers

In our quest to achieve a target of 30,000 acres, we are implementing a comprehensive approach which inter alia includes strengthening 204 Common Interest Groups in pyrethrum growing Sub Counties; supporting 10 registered pyrethrum nurseries in the County; working with processors such as PPCK, Kentegra, Osho Ltd, All Green, and Botanical Extracts to ensure market access; promoting pyrethrum-based products through workshops, field days, trade fairs and exhibitions; and streamlining industry policies and regulatory frameworks. The County has also in place a dedicated Processors Caucus, which meets on a quarterly basis to discuss achievements and challenges in pyrethrum sub sector. All efforts are being made to ensure that pyrethrum farmers are paid promptly based on the percentage of pyrethrin content after delivery.

Ladies and gentlemen

The journey towards revival of pyrethrum farming has not been without challenges namely post-harvest losses, quality of the pyrethrin, market access and value addition. To overcome these challenges, we are promoting the use of improved pyrethrum dryers and proper harvesting equipment. To this end, I am m pleased to announce that a stakeholder has volunteered to construct a large dryer that will also serve as an aggregation centre in the Kuresoi/Molo area. Also, with the support of AFA, we are establishing an independent standard reference laboratory within AFA premises to ensure fair assessment of pyrethrin's content. To improve market access, we are strengthening six existing pyrethrum cooperatives and mobilizing more producer organizations. We intend to establish fully-equipped aggregation centres in every sub-county, managed by farmer organizations, and ensure fair contracts between farmers and processors. To facilitate value addition, we are promoting cottage industries for pyrethrum-based products, including mosquito coils and other organic pesticides through the Nakuru Pyrethrum Growers Union.

Permit me to turn my focus to our farmers. In order to achieve high results in pyrethrum farming, I urge you to firstly embrace these clean certified planting materials and apply the recommended agronomic practise. Secondly, bargaining power lies in numbers—I am therefore asking you to either join or form pyrethrum cooperatives through which you'll be heard loudly and forcibly. Thirdly, you should utilize the expertise of our agricultural extension officers who the County Government of Nakuru has employed to assist you farm better. And lastly, I encourage you to diversify your products through value addition in your various producer organizations. To set the pace in value addition, we now have pyrethrum cooperatives, one here in Molo and another in Subukia which are working towards production of mosquito coils.

I want to dedicate this moment to our partners who have walked with us along this journey of reviving pyrethrum farming as we seek to restore it as the major income earner in Nakuru. My sincere gratitude to KALRO Molo for providing quality seeds; the National Government through the National Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (NAVCDP) for holding our hand and guiding us towards value addition; AFA for the immeasurable support you've given us; PPCK and all private processors and our development partners including NCCK, DanChurch Aid, and Good People International among others. We can't say enough thank you for your support and contribution.

In conclusion, today's occasion has marked a significant step towards our commitment to restore Nakuru's position as the pyrethrum capital of Kenya. The clean planting materials we are distributing today are not just seedlings, but seeds of economic transformation for our county. Even in the face of challenges like erratic rainfall, pest and disease pressure, and competition from other crops, our collective resolve remains stronger than ever. The pyrethrum revival is not just about nostalgia—it's about harnessing a crop perfectly suited to our county's conditions, with proven market demand and considerable value addition potential. We are on course to make pyrethrum our poster value chain crop.

Thank you

H E SUSAN KIIHIKA, EGH

GOVERNOR, NAKURU COUNTY