

Agricultural Organisations

Agricultural organisations are agencies which, through their activities, promote agricultural development. These organisations are co-operatives and statutory boards.

Co-operatives

A co-operative is an organisation of people with a common aim of pooling their resources to achieve their objectives.

Functions of Co-operatives

A co-operative carries out the following functions:

1. Collecting and assembling members' produce.
2. Processing the farm produce after collection.
3. Transportation of members' produce to market points.
4. Negotiation of fair prices, with the purchasing agencies, for the members' produce.
5. Purchase and distribution to members, of farm inputs namely seeds, fertilisers, fuel, animal feeds, agro-chemicals and farm tools and equipment, on credit terms.
6. Storage of members' produce before transmission to market points.
7. Provision of credit facilities to members on easy terms.
8. Training and education of members on improved farming techniques.
9. Some co-operatives offer farm machinery services to their members on hire terms for farm operations.
10. Co-operatives may invest in other viable ventures and the profits realised are shared among members in form of dividends or bonuses.

Formation and Structure of Co-operatives

The formation of a co-operative takes the following stages:

- (a) Individuals with common interest collect together to form a primary co-operative society. At least ten (10) members qualify for registration. Each primary co-operative society elect their office bearers consisting of chairman, secretary and treasurer.
- (b) Several primary co-operative societies are usually amalgamated to form a district co-operative union.
- (c) Tertiary co-operative unions are nation-wide organisations to which the secondary co-operative unions are affiliated. Examples are Kenya Planters Co-operative Union, Kenya Grain Growers Co-operative Union, Kenya Co-operative Creameries, Co-operative Bank of Kenya, etc.
- (d) Apex organisations. This is represented in Kenya by the Kenya National Federation of Co-operatives which is an affiliate of the International Co-operative Alliance.

Laws Governing the Co-operative Movement in Kenya

The co-operative movement in Kenya is controlled by the following statutes.

- (a) By-laws which are formulated by each

- primary society according to its requirement.
- (b) Co-operative rules issued in accordance with the powers conferred by an Act of Parliament.
 - (c) Co-operative Societies Act of 1966 under which all the co-operative societies operate in Kenya.

Problems Facing Co-operatives

Co-operatives encounter the following problems in their operations:

- (a) Managerial problems arising from:
 - (i) Financial mismanagement due to poor accounting.
 - (ii) Corruption and misappropriation of co-operative resources by the personnel in the system.
 - (iii) Lack of advisory services on technical operations.
 - (iv) Inability to meet the set obligation of providing credit facilities due to malpractices.
- (b) The nature of agricultural products and associated problems
 - (i) Bulkiness hence difficulties in transportation and storage.
 - (ii) Perishability of produce hence difficult to sustain quality.
- (c) Inadequate capital to invest in the co-operative undertakings.
- (d) Transport problems due to poor roads. This hampers the produce getting to the market points in time.

Statutory Boards

A statutory board is a group of people established by an Act of Parliament and charged with the running or managing of a certain industry within the government sector.

1. Marketing Boards

Some of the statutory boards are charged with the marketing of certain farm produce and are thus called marketing boards. Examples are the Coffee Board, Pyrethrum Board, Cotton Seed and Lint Marketing

Board, Tea Board, National Cereals and Produce Board, Kenya Meat Commission, the Dairy Board of Kenya, etc.

Their marketing functions are to look for market and better prices.

2. Research Organisations

These are research centres which among other things, carry out research and trials on:

- (a) Development of new varieties and cultivars of crops.
- (b) Breeding disease and pest resistant varieties of crops and types of animal.
- (c) Adaptation of crop and livestock species to ecological conditions of certain areas.
- (d) Use of fertilisers and pesticides on crops in specific areas.
- (e) Development of early maturing and high yielding species.
- (f) Soil testing, crop analysis.
- (g) Advisory services on Agro-Economic aspects.

3. Other Organisations

- (a) Kenya National Farmers' Union negotiates for:
 - (i) Reasonable and affordable prices of farm inputs.
 - (ii) Better prices for farm produce.
 - (iii) Better credit facilities.
 - (iv) Better control of diseases and pests.
- (b) Agricultural Society of Kenya.
 - (i) Organises agricultural shows in the country.
 - (ii) Encourages improvement of livestock through exhibitions and educating farmers.
 - (iii) Organises the running of young farmers' clubs.
 - (iv) Organises and finances the ploughing contests during which farmers learn the modern techniques of seedbed preparation for planting crops.
 - (v) Publish Kenya Farmers' magazines.

- (c) Young Farmers and 4-K Clubs. These are student organisations whose objectives are:
- (i) To expose the young students and encourage them to appreciate agriculture as a profession in their future career.
 - (ii) To encourage the youth to develop leadership qualities through assignment of small farming projects.
 - (iii) Organising students exchange programmes with other club members both locally and abroad.
 - (iv) To develop better farming skills through judging competitions, annual rallies and camps.
2. Write short notes on the following:
 - (a) 4-K Clubs.
 - (b) Young farmers club.
 3. Name the stages followed in the formation of a co-operative society.
 4. What laws or statutes govern the co-operative movement in Kenya?
 5. How is a primary co-operative society constituted?
 6. What problems are faced by agricultural co-operative societies?
 7. What is a statutory board?
 8. What are the objectives of agricultural research centres?
 9. How does a farmer benefit from being a member of a co-operative society.?
 10. Describe the role of Agricultural Society of Kenya in the promotion of agricultural development.

WORK TO DO

1. What do you understand by the term co-operative society?