

SELLING FODDER HAS GIVEN ME AN ALTERNATIVE SOURCE OF LIVELIHOOD

by VSF-Suisse Kenya

Adan Ali Halake, an agro-pastoralist from Konegallo-Rapsu, in Garbatulla district of North Eastern Kenya, had never imagined he could make a living from growing fodder.

“I had never seen or heard of a Boran selling pasture to make a living,” admits the 57 year old father of five.

Halake currently owns eight heads of cattle and three goats. He has also been farming maize for the last ten years despite security problems in his area. After being trained in fodder production by Veterinaires Sans Frontieres-Suisse (VSF-Suisse) he cleared some land and started producing fodder.



Adan Adan Kalake assessing his fodder crops

“I was the last trainee to establish the farm as I didn’t have the capital to plough an area of my farm that had never been cultivated before,” says Halake, “however, once the farm was established, I produced 26 bales of *Sudan grass* and 114 bales of natural pasture, part of which I sold to the government for relief intervention, each at Kshs. 200 per bale (about USD 3) generating a total income of Ksh. 27,000 (USD. 350).”

From his proceeds, Halake bought a kilo of onion seeds for Ksh1, 200 (USD 16) with the intention of starting an onion nursery and expanding his onion and pepper production.

He also bought pesticides, kept aside part of the money for domestic use and further expanded his farming area.

In addition, Halake harvested 46kgs of *Sudan grass* seeds and four kilograms of *Mucuna* seeds which he plans to use for up scaling his fodder production and sell the surplus.

“I intend to invest the balance when the drought situation improves,” says Halake.

The health of Halake’s livestock also improved leading to an increase in their milk production compared to before they were given fodder.

“I used to get an average of two glasses of milk from my cattle before but now I get up-to seven glasses because I feed my cattle with this fodder.” Halake adds, “As a community, we have benefited greatly from the training.”

Traditionally, pasture was viewed to be of little value in this village and was mostly burned. This has since changed.

“My fodder production has generated a lot of interest among my neighbours, six of them borrowed my hay while others have asked for my hay box to bale their own,” he adds “it has also created interest among the pastoralists who migrated into the area from the neighbouring communities of Modogashe and Sericho. Many people have asked me for seeds so that they can try for themselves and some have inquired about how they can be recruited as ELMT contact farmers.”

Halake believes that he can sell his fodder to individuals since the market has expanded.

“Because the fodder can last up to six years when properly stored, I can store mine until the next drought period and now I know the benefit, I will promote fodder production throughout the entire community. My vision is to expand fodder for my own use in future and for sale.” He concludes.