

Moi University revives cotton farming in Kericho County



Moi University owned textile plant, Rivatex East Africa Limited, has revived cotton farming in the South Rift County of Kericho following signing of a landmark Memorandum of Understanding with the County administration on Monday May 27, 2018.

The MoU was signed by Moi University Vice Chancellor, Prof. Isaac S. Kosgey, Rivatex Managing Director, Prof. Thomas Kipkurgat and Kericho County Governor, H.E Prof. Paul Chepkwony.



The areas of cooperation in the MoU include production and supply of quality textile materials, training and research in areas of mutual interest, attachment and internship, allocation of space to sell textile products and production of cotton seeds.

The cash crop is being re-introduced in the area that is predominantly a tea growing zone, having last been planted there over 30 years ago before Kisumu Cotton Mills (Kicomi) collapsed.

The new crop will be grown in Soin area, that has the favourable black cotton soil, on over 2000 hectares by 2500 farmers, providing an alternative source of income to farmers.

Prof. Kipkurgat said Rivatex will inject over Ksh50m in the project to supply farmers with free seeds and other inputs.

“We shall do contractual agreement with farmers to form cooperative societies that will engage Rivatex by supplying raw materials. We shall buy the farmers' produce at very competitive prices,” said Prof. Kipkurgat.

Prof. Chepkwony hailed Prof. Kosgey for the choice of Kericho County, noting that the project will boost his constituents in their efforts towards wealth creation.

The County Chief, who is a former Professor of Moi University, said the revival of cotton growing in the County will go a long way in boosting the national Government's pillar of manufacturing that is key in President Uhuru Kenyatta's second term.

“The County Government will provide farmers with extension officers to ensure that cotton is produced in large quantities to supply Rivatex with raw materials. The partnership between Moi University and Kericho County will also involve the health and education sectors,” said Prof. Chepkwony.

He added that soil testing will be conducted in more regions of the County to establish their favourability to grow the crop.

Prof. Kosgey said Moi University is focused on transforming society through income generating activities and training of manpower.

“Being one of the best Universities in this region, we want to work with the community with the aim of fully utilising our factory, Rivatex. Currently, Rivatex mills all the cotton produced locally and even imports from

Uganda. The extension of cotton growing to Kericho County will make our factory to reach its optimum production,” said Prof. Kosgey.

Prof. Kosgey acknowledged the visionary leadership of former Moi University Vice Chancellor, Prof. Richard Mibey, who spearheaded the revival of Rivatex and invention of Tami Dye that is used in dying of fabrics at Rivatex.

Prof. Mibey is now the Economic Advisor of Kericho County Governor. He was the VC of Moi University from 2006 to 2016. He was also present at the MoU signing ceremony.