

NARO takes fish to Karamoja

KARAMOJA

By Olandason Wanyama

The National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) is working on a plan to commence cage fish farming in the Arecek and Kobebe dam waters in Karamoja region.

The two multi-purpose water reservoirs are located in Napak and Moroto districts.

An aquacultural scientist working with NARO Buginyanya Zonal Agricultural Research Institute, Constantine Ondhoro Chobet, said the research aims at increasing food production.

Chobet said Karamoja has been relying on cattle as the main stay, but with climate change, land for grazing is getting depleted.

"To diversify the economic livelihoods, we have introduced cage fish farming in the region," he said.

Chobet, who stocked fish in Arecek dam, said NARO had anchored two cages with each carrying a holding capacity of eight cubic metres.

He explained that the production of natural water bodies was no longer viable, and meeting the demands of the ever growing population.

Chobet, therefore, said NARO's intervention in the research into Kobebe and



NARO officials make final touches on a fish cage at Arecek dam in Napak district. Photo by Olandason Wanyama

the Government's efforts to increase fish production.

Similarly, the move is aimed at answering the nutrition question of the people in a region once characterised

Chobet said once the research is conducted successfully, the initiative will provide jobs.

Dr Paul Boma, a livestock scientist attached to Nabuin Research Institute in Karamoja,

the two dams by the fisheries ministry and the districts of Napak and Moroto.

A research technician, Stephen Olinga, said the project is about determining the stock density and growth

"So, we shall be collecting data for a period of six months. It will involve the length, gained weight and survival rate," he noted.

The four-year project is being funded by the World Bank

advisory services department in the agriculture ministry by NARO.

The district production officer for Napak, John Lodungokol, said one of the national and local priorities is water for production. "The district has liaised with the Nabuin research institute to assess the viability of fish farming in Arecek dam," he noted.

Lodungokol added that a fish farming plan is being processed between Matany sub-county, where the dam is located, and the district.

He however, said maintenance of the dam, recruitment of a fisheries officer and building the capacity of the personnel around the dam, remain a big challenge.

Lodungokol appealed to the communities to appreciate the intervention by the Government, saying this would help improve the nutrition of the people.

"The intervention could link Napak to begin practising ecotourism, turning the venture into a tourist attraction.

Kobebe dam, which was built by the water and environment ministry at a cost of sh6.7b in 2010, has a total storage of 2.5 billion litres.

Whereas Arecek has a storage capacity of over three billion, another multi-purpose dam, identified as Longoromit,