

1997

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Agricultural Transformation in Rural  
Western Kenya: The Maize Crop in the  
Mt. Elgon Region, 1930-1950

by

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RESEARCH PAPER 9717

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May 1997

**Abstract:** Between 1930 and 1950 the Kenyan colonial government began an experiment with maize by attempting to introduce it as a major cash crop in the Mt. Elgon geographical region of Western Kenya. Part of a larger campaign concerning African agriculture in general, the colonial government pursued various policies aimed at raising the price of African-grown maize and improving its production. Just as these policies began to provide an atmosphere favorable to African maize export growth, however, the colonial government reversed several of these policies. Using the case of maize in the Mt. Elgon region, this research illustrates how the failure of economic development policies in colonized or less-developed countries is often due to contradictory or unfit governmental policies. This is in contrast to standard perceptions regarding the inability of the colonized or less-developed peoples to adapt to the policies.

## **Agricultural Transformation in Rural Western Kenya:**

### **The Maize Crop in the Mt. Elgon region, 1930-1950**

The Kenyan colonial government's attempt to regulate maize and to introduce it as a major cash crop among the African population in the Mt. Elgon geographical region of Kenya was part of a larger campaign to increase and improve the production of African agriculture beginning in the 1930s. The motivation for this endeavor appears to have been threefold. First, by increasing the quality of African maize the colonial government believed it could improve the international reputation of Kenyan maize exports as a whole, thereby increasing the amount of foreign exchange entering the area. Price data and archival materials indeed reveal an improvement in the quality of, an increase in the production of, and a steady growth in the prices of African-grown maize. Market forces and encouragement by the colonial government fueled this growth. Secondly, the colonial government faced an increasing internal demand for maize among the African population as a result of locust infestation of crops, economic depression, and a rapidly increasing population. These factors contributed to a decline in the success of maize as an export as attention shifted to resolving the problems at hand. Stiffer regulations reduced the ability of market forces to control prices and production, keeping production very high. The high internal demand for and growing production of maize among the Africans led to the third area of the colonial government's maize campaign in the Mt. Elgon region. That is, the colonial government recognized the soil erosion brought about by increasing African farming and sought to prevent it through soil control measures. These later soil erosion policies were a reversal of the colonial government's previous expansionary actions and the necessity for such policies was a direct result of the first two factors mentioned. This research has revealed that the colonial government's campaign to increase and improve maize production in the Mt. Elgon region met

with some success. Ultimately, however, regulatory, administrative, as well as natural agricultural and economic forces, prevented the crop from realizing the major export potential it possessed.

Up to 1930, African maize cultivation in Western Kenya and indeed agriculture in general had been quite antiquated compared to European cultivation, making it almost impossible for the Africans to compete in the market. Before the arrival of the Europeans, subsistence agricultural economies served as the basis for the political and economic structure of the African community. With the arrival of the Europeans, fundamental changes occurred in the African agricultural system. Traditionally, the African male warrior left the home to fight while the female grew the crops. With the cessation of intertribal warfare through European mediation, the male was able to either devote time to his crops or work on the large European farms. As the European colonials began to experiment with new crops, it became evident that traditional African forms of land usage were unsuitable as foundations for the introduction of new agricultural methods and systems. Research facilities were first developed in the early 1900s for European growers, and it was not until the 1920s that they were applied to the African grower. Efforts to help the African grower up to this point had not been particularly successful, in part because the African grower relied on small-scale farming and lacked the economic incentives to grow any more than slightly above the subsistence level.<sup>1</sup> The amount of capital needed to initiate large-scale growing as well as the traditionally low return on African grown maize had proved to be discouraging to the growth and improvement of African-grown maize. The African growers furthermore lacked the ability to successfully market their maize and compete with wealthier European growers with much more capital. The African grower would need the economic incentive or the opportunity through better marketing to compete with European-grown maize in order to increase and improve his crop.

But increasing and improving his crop seemed almost impossible to the African grower by 1930, when the worldwide economic depression hit Kenya. The depression made it virtually impossible for the African grower to consider expanding his crop, as capital was extremely difficult to come by and even European growers were facing economic difficulties. In North Kavirondo Annual District Report for that year the District Commissioner reported that “maize has been unsaleable” due to “general trade depression.”<sup>2</sup> In that same report he declared that “maize at Kakamega would hardly bear the cost of transport.” Colonial officials were worried that this depression, which had hit African maize particularly hard, would impact the trade of European farmers in the world market as well. The Director of Agriculture reported that “...the reputation of produce from the native areas is bad, and wholesale buyers for export have been reluctant to handle these suppliers” who can grow produce of excellent quality, but frustrate middlemen who “continue to buy good and inferior produce at the same price.”<sup>3</sup>

Colonial officials thus set out to assess the condition of maize in Kenya and to find ways to improve it. A maize conference convened in December of 1930 to “inquire into the state of the maize industry with a view to ascertaining” some practicable measures for “assisting the industry during the present period of depression and, if so, to make recommendations accordingly.”<sup>4</sup> Censuses of maize fields taken at this time revealed that “poor seed, inferior planting, ragged stands, and bad cultivation have been responsible for substantial reductions in yield in most maize areas...”<sup>5</sup> At this particular conference it was decided that state assistance would be given to the producers of the 1930 maize crop, collectively, in the form of a loan subsidy on exports. Reiterating a 1922 government report, the Dual Policy of encouraging the African peasants “to produce quantities of foodstuffs beyond their own immediate personal needs and to market them as a means of obtaining cash” was to be continued aggressively.<sup>6</sup>

However, the arrival of locusts in the Mt. Elgon area in 1931 posed an additional and quite sizable obstacle in the colonial government's maize improvement campaign. The advent of the locust plague appears to have made agriculture an even more prominent issue in the colonial government. The locust plague, along with the slump caused by the depression, resulted in a continuation of low prices. At one point, prices were so low that African growers were encouraged not to bring their produce to market. Responding in true capitalist fashion, however, the European growers "directed their attention to lowering costs of production per acre to a minimum, not only by exercising economies on the farm, but by securing heavier yields."<sup>7</sup> African growers were not so quick to respond. Many became disheartened and ceased planting. Being accustomed to planting at certain times, it was difficult for them to overcome tradition and plant at other times.

Locusts continued to be a problem; production was stagnant and low prices persisted. The continuation of low export prices for Kenyan maize was seriously affecting the industry. The colonial government again addressed the issue of native agriculture, this time by developing programs for various set zones "in which the products, both for food and for sale, are scheduled for the concentration of work and propaganda upon these and for continuity in development policy..."<sup>8</sup> The government policy for African agricultural improvement was now in place.

Among the goals outlined by the colonial government were the betterment of the maize seed through African agricultural instruction, distribution of good seed, the cleaning of maize in dukas by passing it over screens, and by insisting on cement, tin, or wooden floors at market instead of earth. The problem was to be addressed in the North Kavirondo District of the Mt. Elgon area three ways:

Firstly, the natives were pressed very hard to select white seed for planting which gave a superior purity at harvest time. They were forced to pick over their sale samples, all containers had to be clean and free from cow dung and they had to dry their samples before marketing. Secondly, the Indian buyers were encouraged to cement their floors and verandahs, all had to own and use cleaning machines. Thirdly, no tax collections was to be carried out till the crops were ripe.<sup>9</sup>

The Director of Agriculture reported that the General Manager of the Kenya Farmers Association estimated an increase in the value of the maize leaving the native reserves would be “an average throughout of 50 cents per bag” as a result of seed and marketing improvements.<sup>10</sup>

A Co-operative Societies Ordinance was enacted in 1932 as another form of encouragement to increase export production of maize. A number of small European co-operative associations developed. The most notable European co-operative society was the already established Kenya Farmers Association, which was registered at this time. The membership of the Kenya Farmers Association comprised over 90 percent of all European maize growers. It originated as a marketing association, but extended its activities to co-operative purchases of supplies and seed. Several African societies were registered. The development of African co-operative societies was seen as a way for the African growers to pool their capital resources and to market their produce collectively, thereby improving the quality of their product. Many European growers and colonial officials, however, predicted their failure for incompetence and lack of organization.

Nevertheless, the colonial government’s policies toward increased and improved maize exports took effect and began to work, although the results were not immediate. Returns from the 1933 Agricultural Census demonstrated a 21 percent drop in the African area under maize.

The Director of Agriculture asserted, however, that it was no doubt in part “due to the very low prices which were realized for the 1932-33 crop” and to dry planting conditions.<sup>11</sup>

One area of progress was cited by the District Commissioner of North Kavirondo in his 1933 annual report which perhaps was the result of increased government encouragement of native maize farming. He reported that progress was made in a township in the Mt. Elgon area called Kimillili towards real small farms. Farms called *shambas* “of 20 to 25 acres are not uncommon and an output of from this location alone of over 10,000 bags is confidently expected, and this from one crop in a year.”<sup>12</sup> Aside from colonial government policies, the development of small collective farms such as the one in Kimillili were perhaps the result of African growers’ desires to capitalize on increased return through the pooling of resources and larger-scale production processes. In short, they were beginning to see the benefits of utilizing economies of scale production.

In 1934, moreover, favorable trends in the Mt. Elgon area were quite evident. The North Kavirondo District Commissioner declared that “no crop has improved more in quality than maize...” The approximate number of bags of maize railed from the Broderick Falls station more than doubled. The quality of the majority of maize produced throughout the North Kavirondo district was reported to be up to K2 standard, the highest quality. In the then North Kitosh location the exports increased from 4,600 bags in 1932 to 15,000 bags in 1934. An up-to-date Posho Mill was erected at Kakamega capable of turning out 40 bags of maize meal in eight hours. The District Commissioner reported that “it [the mill] has had a stimulating effect on the local price of maize.”<sup>13</sup> The end of 1934 saw a slight decrease in prices, but by early 1935 prices began to climb again. (See Appendix 1).

**TABLE 1****NUMBER OF BAGS OF MAIZE RAILED  
FROM BRODERICK FALLS STATION**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Bags</b>
1933	4,600
1934	10,500
1935	23,620
1936	23,207 (13,370 of maize meal)

Sources: North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Reports, 1933-36, KNA: AGR/KSM/1/801.

Improved yield among African growers in Mt. Elgon, despite unfavorable climactic conditions, was no doubt due to improved husbandry. The Director of Agriculture reported favorable results from the “investigational work and propaganda in connection with improved cultural methods and seed selection carried out by the department.” Prices also remained steady as a result of a pool price declared by the increasingly influential Kenya Farmers Association. The pool price was set at 5/68 shilling F.O.R. per bag. Substantial sales to Canada at “a figure above export parity” also helped strengthen price of the crop.<sup>14</sup>

At about this time, the Local Native Council in North Kavirondo became active in the improvement of the production and marketing of maize. The Councils were set up in the districts to hand more responsibility for the normal processes of government over to Africans. Among the immediate responsibilities of the Council were the provision of markets, the regulation of the use of land, and agricultural education. Much of the revenue for the councils came from a Native Trust Fund established in 1921.<sup>15</sup>

The North Kavirondo Local Native Council established a seed farm in Kakamega. The farm was comprised of 40 acres of land which was used for bulking maize and for experimentation by the Agricultural Officer. In 1934, the Local Native Council issued 300 bags

of seed from the Kakamega seed farm. The seed issues helped to improve the quality of the maize in the region and contributed to consistency of quality of maize exported from the area.<sup>16</sup>

Higher internal demand for maize in the areas in and around Mt. Elgon also became a factor in the increased production and improved prices of maize. Population data shows that the African population of North Kavirondo had grown by more than 20,000 people between 1930 and 1935. Supply of maize needed in the mining developments in surrounding areas greatly affected the amount of maize grown in North Kavirondo. Regarding the maize sold in the mining areas, the Director of Agriculture reported “the quality of the maize showed much improvement.”<sup>17</sup> The number of agricultural trading centers, which had fallen in recent years due to low prices, were increasing. Broderick Falls in particular had gained four plots since 1930. The 1934-35 harvest in the North Kitosh area, “where maize is grown on a comparatively large scale by natives ‘companies’ using large ox-drawn implements, was a record one.” The number of bags railed from the Broderick Falls station once again more than doubled.<sup>18</sup> Production was definitely increasing, but the maize produced was feeding internal demand rather than earning foreign exchange through export.

**TABLE 2**  
**NORTH KAVIRONDO AFRICAN POPULATION**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>
1930	341,235
1935	364,191
1938	368,625
1939	378,365
1944	415,244
1945	419,279
1946	444,498
1947	468,856
1948	465,200
1949	469,836
1950	631,864

Sources: North Kavirondo Annual District Reports,  
1930-50, KNA.

The 'companies,' otherwise known as co-operative societies or syndicates, were eventually encouraged by the colonial government with the idea of developing a group system of holdings, with enclosed communal grazing for livestock and a mixed farming system on the land. The plan was that eventually the members of the African companies would adopt a co-operative system of buying and selling farm products, implements, and seeds. A report of the Provincial Agricultural Officer upon a visit to the above-mentioned Kimilili stated that the co-operative farms, or syndicates, were the "boldest form of farming in the province." He continued, "They have syndicates and these employ laborers, use three-furrow and other plows, transplant with carts and wagons, build large grain stores, and in every way behave themselves like farmers." The hope was that co-operative growing and marketing would contribute to consistently higher qualities and yields of maize.<sup>19</sup>

African co-operatives began to take effect and gained some control in the Mt. Elgon area. In December 1935 a group of African maize growers representing growers from Broderick Falls, Kimillili, and Butere, with the support of the Kenya Farmers Association, lobbied the District Commissioner at Kitale for permission to sell their collective crop of roughly 30,000 bags of maize to the Kenya Farmers Association. The growers felt that they would be getting an inadequate return of 2 shilling per bag from the Indian traders to whom they had sold in the past. The Kenya Farmers Association was willing to buy the maize at a negotiated price and to use its European and American connections to market it. The Association agreed to pay 4/42 shilling per bag to the African growers. The scheme was given the full support of the Agricultural Department.<sup>20</sup>

**TABLE 3**  
**NUMBER OF ESTABLISHED AGRICULTURAL TRADING CENTERS**

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
<b>Broderick Falls</b>	6 plots	6 plots	7 plots	7 plots	9 plots	10 plots
<b>Kakamega</b>	13 plots	13 plots	20 plots	20 plots	21 plots	20 plots
<b>Kimilili</b>	15 plots	16 plots	16 plots	14 plots	13 plots	13 plots
<b>Bungoma</b>	18 plots	19 plots	16 plots	13 plots	11 plots	12 plots

Sources: North Kavirondo Annual District Reports, 1930-35, KNA.

In 1936, the Local Native Council set out to construct two go-downs, or produce storage sheds, near railway depots. One was to be built at Broderick Falls and the other at Butere. The object of the construction of these go-downs was to encourage bulk marketing to drive up the prices for native maize. The company of growers from Broderick Falls was allowed to use the Broderick Falls station rent-free for one year. This company continued to work fairly well with the Kenya Farmers Association, selling their maize to the Association at set price for them to market it.<sup>21</sup>

For the 1936-37 season, the upward trend in prices and production in North Kitosh in the Mt. Elgon area continued. The pay-out by the Kenya Farmers Association to the co-operative African growers increased to 7/20 shilling a bag. The number of bags sold in the Mt. Elgon region reached 36,577. Higher prices for exported maize also had an impact on the local economy. Increased revenues were reported for shops in North Kavirondo. Such success was attributed to three primary factors.

Firstly, there was the ability to export to overseas markets all maize which was surplus to local needs; secondly, there was the steadying influence of the buying by the Kenya Farmers Association; thirdly, there was an increase in the wealth of producers which allowed them to dispose of their crop over a longer period than has been customary in the past...<sup>22</sup>

However, in the district report for North Kavirondo, the District Commissioner for the first time expressed concern over the enormous dependence of the growers upon a single crop. He declared that, “the success or failure” of a crop could “completely change their financial prospects.”<sup>23</sup> The colonial administration feared the development of an agricultural monoculture, completely dependent upon the maize market. This issue, however, was set aside as the priority remained the continued improvement of the crop for increased export revenues.

As the quality of the crop continued to improve, by 1938 the steady upward trend in prices in Mt. Elgon had begun to level off, at one point declining. The decline in prices was believed to have been caused by the previous year’s high prices which caused an increase in production and eventually drove the price back down. The marketing of the crop went well in spite of African dissatisfaction and discouragement over a fall to 5 shilling per bag. However, the Agricultural Officer cited a change in African growers’ responses to the unfavorable price. Whereas before they would simply cease planting, they were now asking for assistance and information from the Agricultural Office and the Kakamega seed farm. Despite falling prices, the quality and quantity of the maize produced continued to improve. The Agricultural Officer reported that “the maize from the Broderick Falls area is the best native maize in Kenya.”<sup>24</sup> The bulk of this maize was sent to the fairly new nearby Kisumu Posho Mills for gristing. The gristed maize was then shipped to Uganda for consumption and export. The Officer reported that this mill helped to steady the price of maize. The Agricultural Officer’s 1938 report concluded that “the people are worse off financially in the previous year although their agricultural methods are better.”<sup>25</sup>

Better or worse financially, the efforts to increase and improve maize production were working. It was at this time, though, that the colonial government decided to institute a maize cess throughout the area. There were several primary reasons for the measure. One reason was soil exhaustion. As the production of maize rapidly increased, so too did the land under cultivation. Some European growers, familiar with the practice of replacing in the soil the fertility which had been lost by cropping, had factored soil conservation and replenishment into their production methods and costs. To African growers, however, the soil had always been plentiful. They had been accustomed to simply moving when the soil became exhausted. The District Agricultural Officer saw the exhaustion of arable land reaching a dangerous point and enacted the cess. The District Commissioner wrote in his 1939 report that although “in the areas of Malakisi, Kitosh, and Kabras a record crop is in course of harvesting” of some 60,000 bags for export, “the farming industry in these areas is developing with dangerous rapidity.” The North Kavirondo Chamber of Commerce, an association of growers from the Kimillili-Broderick Falls neighborhood had gotten permission to raise subscriptions, but co-operated with the Agricultural staff’s soil conservation measures. Despite earlier predictions, the District Commissioner declared that they had become “a useful co-operative body.”<sup>26</sup>

A second reason for the institution of the maize cess was increasing demand brought on by a rising African population and by the Second World War. As demonstrated in Table 2, the population was steadily increasing while the European population was steadily decreasing. Increasing populations made shifting cultivation no longer possible among the African growers. But the growing cash economy made the production of maize ever more attractive to native growers. The incentive to expand production which the African grower had previously lacked was now a realization. However, the colonial government now sought to prevent what it

perceived as the dangers of a monoculture based upon maize production and increased soil infertility. Adding to the equation, the high short-term demand for maize exports resulting from the war, the government had to find a way to discourage native farmers from capitalizing on the current high demand at the expense of future land fertility. Hence the maize cess.

Therefore, at the urging of the colonial government, the North Kavirondo Local Native Council passed a resolution “desiring legislation for imposing a cess of 10 cents per bag on all maize exported from the Malakisi, South Kitosh, and Kimillili locations, the proceeds to be funded for the purpose of carrying out soil control work in those locations”<sup>27</sup> The main result was to establish a District Betterment Fund, or a system of deferred payments which would “hold back a portion of African spending power until such a time as consumer goods were more plentiful.” The recent inflation resulting from shortages caused by the war worried colonial official who feared African growers’ frustrations over the unequal amount of capital held by the European growers. The payments from the betterment fund were to be made in such a way that they could be used for capital investments in the land, such as farming education and further development of soil fertility measures. However, local politics interfered and a majority of the betterment funds were used for local capital expenditure affecting the general welfare of the population.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the cess, production in 1941 was slightly in excess of the previous year. The crop suffered somewhat from excessive rainfall, however. In 1942, the rainfall continued and was too heavy for the maize crop. Appendix 2 demonstrates the marked evidence of the influence of the excessive rainfall upon overall production. However, the District Commissioner cited the continuing development of African co-operative farming as a positive result of colonial state policies. He declared that the fact that “the advantages of the system are beginning to sink home

is evident” and several land holders in the Mt. Elgon area established small holdings had “requested the assistance of the Agricultural Officer in laying out land on these lines and his subsequent supervision of their methods.”<sup>29</sup> The District Commissioner’s assertions about the success of African co-operative farming resulting from colonial government policies may be a bit presumptuous. The advantages of a co-operative system became evident to the African growers just as they had to the European growers. The African economic developments associated with co-operative land and capital use as well as collective marketing ventures were a result of the African growers’ capitalistic responses to the market. The incentives associated with greater production and lower land and capital costs more than the colonial government’s encouragements served to increase the incidence of African co-operative growing.

Again, despite improved production 1943 saw continued decline in export production. Partly a result of a famine in East Africa, maize produced for export again fell markedly. At one point it became necessary for colonial administrators to import 1,000 bags of maize from Kitale for low cost sale, and in some cases free issue, in densely populated areas south of Kakamega. Colonial officials did not predict much trouble in the North Kavirondo district, except for a further fall in export production. The Agricultural Officer stated the North Kavirondo Local Native Council is “wealthy, and can finance undertakings beyond the capacity of any other local native council.” The existence of large stores maize at the Broderick Falls station enabled the Maize Controller to put 5,000 bags of surplus maize at the disposal of colonial officials.<sup>30</sup>

In 1944, production and general prices once again began to rise. Surpluses from the 1944-45 crop were estimated to be about 500,000 bags for all of North Kavirondo. Large acreages were prepared by confident growers and ideal weather conditions contributed to the

increase in production from 1943 to 1944 of 150,961 bags in North Kavirondo. The overall price in the district rose to 5/40 shilling per bag.<sup>31</sup>

With the famine over and production and prices stabilized, the issues of control of native production and soil conservation once again came to the fore. The current marketing of produce was controlled under defense regulations, which provided for a guaranteed return to the producer. In a further effort to conserve soil, a flat price system in Nyanza was instituted to give producers the same price at all markets, irrespective of distance from railway stations. This system spread the incidence of increased production, but it spread it more thinly throughout various zones. The highly productive Mt. Elgon region no longer had the competitive edge.

Ever-increasing internal demand for maize throughout the area added to the colonial administration's push for soil conservation measures. Maize was by far now the staple food. The Director of Agriculture reported that demands were "so high that relatively fertile native reserves had to be drained of their fertility to meet the needs of those districts which are now not in a position to feed themselves." He further stated that the only alternative from an agricultural perspective must be to institute "a drastic reduction, in the native areas, of acreage annually planted with maize..."<sup>32</sup> In response, during the first quarter of 1946 construction began in Kimillili and South Kitosh on broad-based terraces for planting to be used for soil conservation. The increasing soil exhaustion in this area resulted in only a slight increase in the area planted with maize. The surpluses available for export sale were not expected to be any larger than they were in 1945.<sup>33</sup>

With the continued necessity for the maximum production of foodstuffs, the agricultural policy had to remain virtually the same as during the war period. In the Bukusu area of Mt. Elgon, little soil conservation work was possible; stress was placed primarily on manuring, crop

rotation, and grass leys. Extremely wet weather throughout 1947 hampered cultivation and caused a delay in planting. The maize crops yields were generally poor in quality and export production fell slightly.<sup>34</sup>

The district report for 1948 revealed that “every effort is being made to broaden the basis of agriculture, which, owing to wartime emergencies, had narrowed itself almost entirely to the production of cereals, and in particular maize...”<sup>35</sup> There were some food shortages in the area as a result of the poor 1947-48 season. This led to a serious reduction in exports from the entire province but also led to great planting activity during the long rains of 1948.<sup>36</sup>

The year 1949 saw fundamental changes in maize cultivation and agriculture in general. The Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture showed that exports of maize had dropped sharply. This was an indication that home consumption was extremely high. Just ten years earlier, there was substantially more maize exported than any other commodity. Propaganda was “aimed at higher yields from smaller acreages, and a cessation of the monoculture of maize with its consequent impoverishment of the soil.” The desire was for increased maize production in the native reserves as a result of better farming methods, not by increased acreage under cultivation.<sup>37</sup>

By 1950, the colonial government’s policy regarding maize cultivation in Mt. Elgon was clear. The District Commissioner declared that “while maize is still easily the most commonly planted crop in the long rains, considerable increases in acreages under other crops is reported, especially legumes.” In North Kavirondo a campaign was launched to broaden the basis of agriculture and reduce the risk of low food supplies. In particular, a campaign to introduce ground nut as an African crops, both for food and export was begun. Major maize expansion was no longer the focus. In fact, efforts were to be made to eliminate maize planting in the short rains

altogether, as experiences over the past several seasons had proven short rains maize crops to be fairly unsuccessful.<sup>38</sup>

In assessing the maize campaign in the Mt. Elgon geographical area over the twenty years between 1930 and 1950 it can be said that it was met with some successes. The system had, in particular, helped the African grower and the African co-operative societies to improve their cultivation techniques, to market their crops more effectively, and to raise the standard of their product so that it could command higher prices. These successes are evident in price data collected and documented accounts co-operative farming growth. Further, the market atmosphere had proven a favorable incentive to the growth and improvement of African maize production and marketing. Higher prices resulting from improved quality encouraged more growers to enter the market. The growers took the opportunity to pool their resources and produce more for lower production costs. The African grower had responded to the capitalistic incentives of economies of scale and had allowed market forces to guide his participation in the maize market.

But what is also evident in this research is the eventual decline in the emphasis upon maize as an important export. The rapid increase in maize exports which had occurred in the later 1930s and early 1940s began to level off. Much of this was due to natural cycles of heavy rain and rising population and demand. However, as the colonial administration began increasing regulations during World War II and continued after, export production began to fall. The regulations and controls were aimed at preventing the development of a monoculture of maize and decreasing the rate of soil erosion. Efforts were to be placed upon the gaining the highest possible yield from the smallest amount of land. Maize was no longer to be a target for export expansion. The focus was placed upon the development of other crops and the export expansion policies of the maize crop

in the Mt. Elgon region were placed aside. Just as the African grower had gotten a strong hold upon the maize market and drastically improved his potential for great export production, the colonial government reversed its policies and left the campaign for maize export production out to dry.

Therefore, while some would say that the maize crop in Mt. Elgon failed as a major export crop because of a lack of entrepreneurial motivation or growing skills among African growers, this writer disagrees. The lack of export success of the maize crop was precisely the result of contradictory and overbearing colonial government policies and regulations. Just as the expansionary policies which the government had instituted in the 1930s began to have favorable effects, those policies were reversed. While the policies toward soil erosion were necessary and virtually inescapable, the decision to shift focus almost entirely away from the crop left the maize crop little prospect for realizing the export potential that it had.

<b>APPENDIX 1</b>				
<b>Maize Price Data</b>				
	<b>PRICE AT:</b>			
	<b>Kakamega</b>	<b>Broderick Falls</b>	<b>Butere</b>	<b>North Kavirondo(general)</b>
Jul 30				5\55
1931				4\ to 8\
Sep-34	6\75		5\	
Oct-34	4\25			
Nov-34	4\			
Dec-34	3\25			
Mar-34	7\	4\		3\
Apr-35	4\50		3\50	
May-35	4\50	3\		
Jul-35			2\25	
Aug-35	2\		1\30	
Oct--1935	2\		1\	
Nov-35	2\		1\50	
Dec-35	2\50			
Jan-July-36	3\			
Apr-37	8\			
May-37	10\			
Jun-July-37	9\			
Aug-37	6\			
Sep-37-Jul-38	6\ to 7\			
Aug-38	5\			
Sep-38	4\50			
Oct-38	4\50	4\50		
Dec-38		4\75		
Jan-39	5\25			
Feb-39	5\	5\25		
Sep-39	4\50			
Nov-39	5\	5\25		
Dec-39	5\ to 6\	5\25		
Jan-Feb-40	6\ to 6\75	7\ to 7\25		
Mar-40				7\ to 7\25
Apr-40				8\ to 8\50
May-40				6\50 to 7\
Jun-40				5\ to 6\25
Jul-40	5\50			
Aug-40	4\			
Sep-40	3\50			
Oct-40	4\	3\75		
Nov-40	3\50	3\75 to 4\		
Dec-40	3\	3\25 to 3\50		
Jan-41	3\75	3\25 to 3\50		
Mar-41	5\	4\50		
Apr-41	3\50	4\		
May-Jun-41				3\50
Jul-41	4\50	3\50		
Aug-41	3\			
Sep-41	3\25			
Oct-Nov-41	3\			
Dec-41	3\50			
	<b>PRICE AT:</b>			
	<b>Kakamega</b>	<b>Broderick Falls</b>	<b>Butere</b>	<b>North Kavirondo(general)</b>
Dec-41	3\50			
Jan-42	3\80			
Feb-42	4\	4\75		
Mar-Apr-42	4\50			
May-42	6\			
Aug-42				5\60
Oct-42				6\20
Jan-43				7\
1945				8\40
1947				15\50-17\50
1948				16\50
1949				11\50
1950				12\20

Sources: North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Reports, 1930-50, KNA

<b>APPENDIX 2</b>				
<b>Maize Production Data</b>				
	<b>NUMBER OF BAGS SOLD AT:</b>			
	<b>North Kavirondo (general)</b>	<b>Kimilili</b>	<b>Kabras/Kitosh</b>	<b>Kitale/Kimilili/Broderick Falls</b>
<b>1933</b>		20,000		
<b>1936</b>	36,577			
<b>1937</b>	122,000			
<b>1938</b>	132,000			
<b>1939</b>	135,614			
<b>1940</b>	286,591			70,000
<b>1941</b>	309,718		280,000	
<b>1942</b>	287,116			
<b>1943</b>	182,646			
<b>1944</b>	333,607			
<b>1945</b>	316,264			
<b>1946</b>	365,734			
<b>1947</b>	327,406			
<b>1948</b>	465,200			
<b>1949</b>	34,720			
<b>1950</b>	738,310			

Sources: North Kavirondo Annual Agricultural Reports, 1930-1950, KNA.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup>L. Winston Cone and J.F. Lipscomb, *The History of Kenya Agriculture*. (Nairobi: UP of Africa, 1972), 25-6.
- <sup>2</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1930, KNA: DC/NN/1/11.
- <sup>3</sup>*Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture*, (1930).
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup>Cone and Lipscomb, *The History of Kenya Agriculture*, 61.
- <sup>7</sup>*Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture*, (1931).
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1931, KNA: DC/NN/1/12.
- <sup>10</sup>*Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture*, (1932).
- <sup>11</sup>*Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture*, (1933).
- <sup>12</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1933, KNA: DC/NN/1/14.
- <sup>13</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1934, KNA: DC/NN/1/15.
- <sup>14</sup>*Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture*, (1934).
- <sup>15</sup>Cone and Lipscomb, *The History of Kenya Agriculture*, 64.
- <sup>16</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1935, KNA: DC/NN/1/16.
- <sup>17</sup>*Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture*, (1934).
- <sup>18</sup>*Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture*, (1935).
- <sup>19</sup>Central Kavirondo Monthly Agricultural Report, September 1934, KNA: AGR/KSM/1/838
- <sup>20</sup>H. Wolfe, Department of Agriculture in Nairobi to G.D. Griffiths, General Manager of the Kenya Farmers Association, 6 January 1936, KNA: PC/NZA/3/2/196.
- <sup>21</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1936, KNA: DC/NN/1/18.
- <sup>22</sup>*Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture*, (1935).
- <sup>23</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1937, KNA: DC/NN/1/19.
- <sup>24</sup>*Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture*, (1935).
- <sup>25</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1938, KNA: DC/NN/1/20.
- <sup>26</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1939, KNA: DC/NN/1/21.
- <sup>27</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1941, KNA: DC/NN/1/23.
- <sup>28</sup>Cone and Lipscomb, *The History of Kenya Agriculture*, 89-90.
- <sup>29</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1941, KNA: DC/NN/1/23.
- <sup>30</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Reports, 1943 and 1944, KNA: DC/NN/1/25 and DC/NN/1/26.
- <sup>31</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1944, KNA: DC/NN/1/26.
- <sup>32</sup>*Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture*, (1945).
- <sup>33</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1946, KNA: DC/NN/1/28.
- <sup>34</sup>*Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture*, (1947).
- <sup>35</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1948, KNA: DC/NN/1/30.
- <sup>36</sup>*Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture*, (1948).
- <sup>37</sup>*Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture*, (1949).
- <sup>38</sup>North Kavirondo Annual District Report, 1950, KNA: DC/NN/1/32.

