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**NINTH PARLIAMENT-FOURTH SESSION**

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**DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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**REPORT ON THE TOUR OF KENYA BIXA LTD IN KWALE DISTRICT, COAST PROVINCE**

**(26<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2005)**

Clerk's chambers,  
National Assembly,  
**NAIROBI**

August, 2005

KENYA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Accession: 10013832

Call No: 328.365 KMA



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**REPORT ON THE COMMITTEE'S TOUR OF KENYA BIXA LTD IN KWALE, COAST PROVINCE**

**PREFACE**

**Hon. Speaker Sir,**

1. The Departmental Committee "A" on Agriculture, Lands and Natural Resources was constituted at the commencement of the Ninth Parliament pursuant to provisions of Standing Order 151; whose paragraph (4) mandates the Committee to carry out these functions:-
  - (a) *to investigate, inquire into and report on all matters relating to its mandate, management, activities, administration, operations and estimates of the assigned Ministries and Departments;*
  - (b) *to study the programme and policy objectives of ministries and departments and the effectiveness for the implementation;*
  - (c) *to study and review all legislation after the First Reading subject to the exemptions under Standing Order 101A(4);*
  - (d) *to study, assess and analyze the relative success of the Ministries and Departments as measured by the results obtained as compared with its stated objectives;*
  - (e) *to investigate and inquire into all matters relating to the assigned Ministries and departments as it deems necessary and as may be referred to it by the House or a Minister; and*

*(f) to make reports and recommendations to the House as often as possible including recommendation of proposed legislation.*

2. The subjects falling within the purview of the Committee are:-

- i. Crop and Livestock Production;
- ii. Marketing;
- iii. Lands and Settlement;
- iv. Natural Resources;
- v. Water Resources;
- vi. Land Reclamation and Irrigation; and
- vii. Co-operative Development.

3. The membership of the Committee comprise:-

- i. The Hon. Franklin Bett, M.P. - Chairperson
- ii. The Hon. Mwanicha S.N. Okioma, M.P.
- iii. The Hon. (Prof) Patrick A. Olweny, M.P.
- iv. The Hon. Mwangi Waithaka, M.P.
- v. The Hon. Julius Arunga, M.P.
- vi. The Hon. Patrick Muiruri, M.P.
- vii. The Hon. John Serut, M.P.
- viii. The Hon. Philip Rotino, M.P.
- ix. The Hon. P.G. Muriithi, M.P.
- x. The Hon. J.N. Gachagua, M.P; and
- xi. The Hon. Isaack Shaaban, M.P.

4. On 26<sup>th</sup> August 2005, the Committee made a fact-finding tour of Kenya Bixa Ltd in Kwale District, Coast Province.

5. The delegation comprised:-

- i. The Hon. Franklin Bett, M.P. - Chairperson
- ii. The Hon. Prof. Patrick A. Olweny, M.P.
- iii. The Hon. Mwangi Waithaka, M.P.
- iv. The Hon. Philip Rotino, M.P; and
- v. The Hon. Mwanicha S.N. Okioma, M.P.

- vi. The Hon. James N. Gachagua, M.P.
- vii. The Hon. Julius Arunga, M.P.
- viii. The Hon. Patrick Muiruri, M.P.
- ix. The Hon. John Serut, M.P.

Mr. George Gazemba was the Secretary to the delegation.

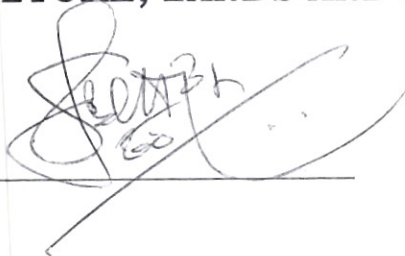
6. The Committee expresses gratitude to the Hon. Speaker and the Liaison Committee for sanctioning the tour, and the Clerk for providing technical support. The Committee also wishes to express gratitude to the Ministry of Agriculture for making appropriate arrangements on the ground without which the tour would not have been successful.

**Hon. Speaker Sir,**

7. On behalf of the Committee, I now wish to lay on the Table of the House the report of the Committee in respect of the visit, pursuant to provisions of Standing Order 162.

**THE HON. FRANKLIN BETT, M.P.**  
**CHAIRMAN, DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON**  
**AGRICULTURE, LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Sign** \_\_\_\_\_



**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

21/11/05

## **TOUR OF KENYA BIXA LTD IN KWALE, COAST PROVINCE**

### **Introduction**

8. Kenya Bixa Ltd was established in 1979 courtesy of technical collaboration between Kenyan entrepreneurs and a Japanese investor. The company was the first and remains the only one in Africa processing bixa seeds to norbixin and bixin powders. Peru Brazil and Ecuador are the other countries producing bixa.
9. Presently, the world's total production of Bixa is 14,500 metric tonnes of dried seed per annum. Peru is the leading producer followed by Brazil. World market prices range from US\$ 500 to 2500 per metric tonne.
10. Owing to lack of organized market structure and poor world market prices in the early 1990's, coupled with competition from synthetic substitutes, bixa production in Kenya went down and many farmers abandoned farming. The company experienced financial difficulties and was at one time on the verge of collapse. Operations had however improved and production was slowly picking up.

### **Application of norbixin and bixa powders**

11. *Annato* is a seed of the tropical bush *Bixa Orellana* from which the colour resinous coating is found surrounding the seed itself.
12. Kenya Bixa Ltd collects seeds from farmers in Kwale and Lamu districts, extracts colouring components and converts them into norbixin, which is water soluble. The norbixin is exported to Europe, USA and Japan where it is processed and used in the manufacture of:
  - i. dairy products;

- ii. flour and sugar confectionaries;
- iii. fish and meat products;
- iv. soft drinks; and
- v. snack foods.



A Bixa plant

13. Bixa extracts from leaves, roots and seeds are traditionally used as medicines by South American Indians for treatment of wounds, diarrhoea and asthma. Bixa waste is also used as animal food.

#### **Bixa farming**

14. There are about 2500 bixa farmers in Lamu and Kwale districts who earn about 50 million Kenya shillings per annum from bixa farming. Kenya Bixa Ltd distributes tested seedlings to farmers free of charge. The Company has nurseries for this purpose.

### **Product diversification**

15. Kenya Bixa Ltd had in the recent times diversified production for guaranteed sustainability. This was mainly because of the unpredictable production of bixa which had adversely affected returns making it difficult for the company to operate. Among the activities the company was undertaking to diversify production are:-

- i. manufacture of animal feeds;
- ii. poultry farming;
- iii. chilli and tumeric production;
- iv. production of coco peat, a hydroponic media used in green houses;
- v. production of desiccated coconut, a food ingredient.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

16. Having toured the company, the Committee recommends as follows:-

- i. The company should acquire the technology of using bixa powder in the manufacture of products so that some of the products are manufactured locally. In this regard the company will be required to invest heavily in equipment acquisition and personnel training.
- ii. The company should establish a nucleus estate to sustain production since reliance on supply from individual farmers was unpredictable.
- iii. The government in conjunction with the company should facilitate increased production by farmers for the survival of the industry.
- iv. Farmers should form Co-operative Societies to enable them carry out their activities effectively.

