



# Varsity to start fish farming courses next year

BY MURIMI MWANGI

A university plans to launch a fisheries curriculum to boost fish farming in Central Kenya.

The Karatina University College in Nyeri will admit the first batch of students in January next year for degree, diploma and certificate courses that will dwell on the practical, technological and market issues of commercial fish farming.

Plans for the curriculum emerged during a forum convened by the university, which brought together fishing industry stakeholders.

Speaking at the forum, the Karatina University Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Academics, Prof Peninah Aloo, noted that Nyeri's potential in fish farming was under-exploited.

"The Nyeri environs have such good ecological conditions for fish breeding, and the current level of production of fish is far below the ideal potential of this region," said Prof Aloo.

She said that to achieve the dream of sustainable food productivity, all stakeholders had to invest in realistic training objectives and the forthcoming curriculum was part of the strategy.

"Fish farmers need to be trained to maximise the productivity of fish from their ponds, not by using undersized nets but through proper fish-

keeping and healthy harvesting methods," she said.

Mwiria Kiama, a former politician turned full-time fish farmer, however said the curriculum should not be merely centred on academics, but also on forming a pool of potential employment creators.

## JOBLESS YOUTH

"We need not increase the desperation of our jobless youth, rather we should give the fisheries learners a reason to smile as they provide alternative employment," Kiama said.

He further cautioned that the programme would only succeed if fish

farmers were also considered for the training to furnish them with proper skills.

Dr Charles Gature, a fisheries consultant and developer of the ornamental fish breeding technique however, argued that fish farmers need to diversify their scope of business to cater for fish exports as well as sales on the local market.

"Currently, we have ornamental fish breeding, which would earn lots of foreign exchange for our country because it's a move from tradition," he said.

The fisheries programme will also receive funding from the county gov-

