

Rearing and processing crickets (*achita domestica*) at household level for food security

Acceptance of certain edible insects as human food among different communities of the world differs widely. When one insect is eaten as a delicacy in a village, the same is not acceptable in another community. In Kenya, there are several species of crickets which can be reared for consumption and the locals are gradually embracing the insect as a mini-livestock. This research project was designed to introduce *Achita domestica* as a mini-livestock to farmers around the Lake Victoria region in Kenya. Convenient sample selection was used to identify 25 farmers as a pilot group. After training the farmers on cricket rearing, they were then each supplied with starter kits. The farmers were instructed on how to build secure cricket houses to carry at least 8 cricket cages. Clean cricket breeding stock (eggs or pinheads), were supplied from Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology demonstration project. The farmers were also trained on harvesting and post-harvesting skills. From the pioneering project, there are now more than 40 farmers producing crickets, trading with neighbors and able to serve cricket dishes at family meals. It was concluded that farmers are readily available to adopt innovative food security ideas, be creative with feed options and ready to learn simple home processing methods and serving cricket-based dishes. Cricket production for market has steadily reached maturity in Kenya. Strategic largescale production and processing for a market chain development is in order. Meanwhile, the available smallscale farmers can sustain small entrepreneurship projects in the rural areas with limited support from trained extension agents.

