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## Council and UMB Visit Chemeron DRTEC

On 21 May 2021, the Dryland Research Training and Ecotourism Centre (DRTEC) hosted the Egerton University Council and the University Management Board (UMB). This was a rare opportunity for the DRT staff that saw the visitors get exposed to the infrastructure and facilities as well as the various activities that take place at the Centre. The visiting team toured the Chemeron DRTEC tree nursery, hostels, livestock unit, the apiary, and the nature park that houses the botanic garden, the tortoise park, the crocodile park, the aloe garden, the lizard park, and the snake park.





*The Chairman of the Egerton University Council, Amb. Dr Luka Hukka Wario, addresses Members of the Council, UME DRTEC staff on water storage and conservation during a visit to the Centre on 21 May, 2021*



The visitors interacted with the Chemeron staff and offered various pieces of advice on how to efficiently deliver on the University's key mandate relating to research and extension. The Council and UMB members planted various dryland tree species in commemoration of their visit as well as to mark the World Bee Day, which was celebrated on 20 May 2021. They also launched a beekeeping project funded by the Council which involves the Queen Bee Technology that will be implemented by DRTEC and the Agro- Science Park. Through this project, beehive colonisation and honey production in Kenya will be enhanced.

Among the key challenges facing beekeepers in the country is the low colonisation of beehives which the University intends to solve using this Queen Bee Technology. The project will also include the construction of a modern bee-house that will accommodate 100 hives.


The Council and UMB members were shown the various tree species (*Leuceana leucocephala*, *Azadiracta indica*, *Senna siamea*, and *Delonix regia*) and grass species (*Cenchrus ciliaris*, *Enteropogon macrostachyus* and *Eragrostis superba*) being used for rangeland rehabilitation at Chemeron. They learnt that uptake of these tree and grass technologies by communities within Baringo has already taken place, and that there is considerable progress especially with the establishment of pastures and tree nurseries under enclosure


conditions. The said pasture technology has found wider acceptance owing to the prevailing climatic conditions and the local community's cultural attachment to goats and cattle, hence the increased demand for pastures during the dry period.

The Council pledged to mobilise their personal resources and those from well-wishers to complete the construction of the snake park located at the DRTEC nature park. Completion of the snake park will enable the University to operationalise the nature park and thus enhance education and research opportunities for students, researchers, and other stakeholders. Finally, the Council and UMB pledged to support the construction of an elevated tank and water kiosk to enable the surrounding community access clean and reliable water from DRTEC.


### ***Director, Dryland Research Training and Ecotourism Centre.***

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