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## New rice farming system takes root in Mwea scheme

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Farmers planting rice in Mwea. Photo/JOSEPH KANYI

By NATION Correspondent  
Posted Wednesday, May 5 2010 at 17:07

A new rice farming method has been introduced in the country to enhance food security

The System Rice Intensification (SRI) project has already been on trial in the giant Mwea Irrigation Scheme in Kirinyaga South District.

It has worked well in Tanzania and other African countries and would even do better in Kenya, say officials.

### Very little

According to the project manager Prof Bancy Mati, the system involves the transplanting of well spaced rice seedlings into the fields and using very little water for irrigation.

She said that the method has many advantages over other farming practices in the area adding that farmers should take it seriously in order to reap maximum benefits.

“For rice growing, SRI has shown some impact on lowering the percentage of water required while increasing production,” she said.

Ms Mati said the new system has been successfully tried by 20 farmers and needs to be extended to other sections of the scheme and the country.

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The board's irrigation engineer Patrick Njiru said the new method would improve the living standards of farmers.

#### Spoke to us

"When they spoke to us about the new farming technology, we were very impressed and we worked together and succeeded," he said.

Mr Njiru said the scheme has been experiencing water shortage leading to reduced production noting that the new farming method would save the situation.

"Due to ever-expanding rice farming, we have been experiencing irrigation water shortage particularly during dry periods and this new method comes at the right time," he said.

The new scheme manager Hosea Wendot said the board would embark on an aggressive education of farmers so that they can all adopt the latest technology.

He said they will improve roads and irrigation canals which are currently in poor condition.

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