# Mercy Jerop leads regenerative agriculture revolution in Elgeyo Marakwet



In the heart of Elgeyo Marakwet County, smallholder farmer Mercy Jerop has embarked on a transformative journey by adopting regenerative agriculture techniques. Confronted with the harsh realities of climate variability—manifested in erratic rainfall and declining soil fertility—she has implemented practices such as organic composting, minimal tillage, crop rotation, and cover cropping. These methods not only bolster her maize and bean production but also enhance soil health and water retention, vital assets given the increasing frequency of droughts linked to climate change.

Jerop's practical solutions stand as a beacon of resilience in a region severely impacted by shifting weather patterns. Before embracing regenerative techniques, she faced the grim reality of crop failures during dry seasons. "I used to lose a lot of produce during the dry seasons," she recalls. However, through innovative practices like recycling crop waste and planting cover crops, her land now holds more water, allowing her crops to endure even the most challenging conditions. This shift has resulted in improved yields, with her neighbours now keen to replicate her success.

The agricultural landscape in Elgeyo Marakwet is changing as more farmers recognise the potential of regenerative agriculture. In a recent statement, Raymond Cheboi, an Agriculture Officer in Marakwet West, reaffirmed the efficacy of these methods: “Regenerative practices help rebuild soil health and conserve water. Farmers like Jerop are proof that these methods work and can be scaled up.” Such endorsements highlight a growing consensus among agricultural experts that regenerative agriculture may provide one of the most effective responses to the environmental challenges that farmers face today.

Beyond improving agricultural output, Jerop's practices also encompass agroforestry and contour farming—strategies designed to prevent soil erosion and enhance biodiversity. By planting indigenous trees and shrubs around her plot, she is not only creating a microclimate that favours crop growth but also returning nutrients to the soil, thereby participating in the broader ecological restoration process. Her approach serves as a blueprint for sustainability, demonstrating that effective farming is reliant on nurturing the land rather than exploiting it.

Jerop's success has made her a local champion for sustainable farming practices. She frequently hosts workshops for women’s groups and young farmers, disseminating her knowledge about composting and sustainable planting techniques. “I tell them it’s not about a large piece of land or expensive inputs; it’s about how you treat the soil,” she emphasises. This shift in mindset underscores the essence of regenerative agriculture: it is about fostering a relationship with the land that prioritises ecological balance.

The implications of Jerop's farming methods extend beyond personal gain, contributing to a larger narrative of resilience in the face of climate change. Regenerative agriculture not only offers solutions for individual farmers but also plays a critical role in ensuring food security and sustainable livelihoods in a setting where the majority rely on rain-fed farming. "Regenerative agriculture is more than just a farming method; it’s a mindset shift," explains Cheboi. If adopted widely, these practices could mitigate the impacts of climate shocks and help communities build a sustainable future.

This evolution in farming practices reflects a growing awareness of the urgent need to adapt to climate challenges. With its focus on rebuilding ecosystems and enhancing agricultural resilience, regenerative agriculture stands poised to become a standard facet of farming in regions like Elgeyo Marakwet, potentially providing a template for similar agricultural communities facing the same environmental uncertainties. Jerop, filled with optimism that the land will reciprocate care and stewardship, is intent on ensuring that the values of regenerative agriculture are not just a temporary response but a lasting legacy for future generations.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/regenerative-agriculture-builds-farmer-resilience-to-climate-change/), [[2]](https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/regenerative-agriculture-builds-farmer-resilience-to-climate-change/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/regenerative-agriculture-builds-farmer-resilience-to-climate-change/), [[5]](https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-priorities/provide-food-and-water-sustainably/food-and-water-stories/climate-friendly-food-faqs-regenerative-ag-101/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.akf.org.uk/how-regenerative-farming-is-helping-kenyan-farmers-combat-climate-change/), [[4]](https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/11/regenerative-agriculture-climate-solutions-resilient/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/regenerative-agriculture-builds-farmer-resilience-to-climate-change/), [[6]](https://www.nrdc.org/bio/arohi-sharma/regenerative-agriculture-part-4-benefits)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/regenerative-agriculture-builds-farmer-resilience-to-climate-change/), [[7]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/land-use-biodiversity/comment-tackle-climate-change-we-need-make-regenerative-agriculture-norm-not-2024-09-23/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/regenerative-agriculture-builds-farmer-resilience-to-climate-change/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/regenerative-agriculture-builds-farmer-resilience-to-climate-change/> - This article highlights how Mercy Jerop, a smallholder farmer in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya, has adopted regenerative agriculture techniques to combat climate variability affecting her maize and bean production. By implementing practices such as organic composting, minimal tillage, crop rotation, and cover cropping, she has enhanced soil health, improved water retention, and increased her farm's resilience to prolonged dry spells and erratic rainfall patterns linked to climate change. These methods have led to stronger yields and healthier soil, with many of her neighbours now seeking to replicate her success.
3. <https://www.akf.org.uk/how-regenerative-farming-is-helping-kenyan-farmers-combat-climate-change/> - This article discusses the impact of regenerative farming on Kenyan farmers, focusing on the experiences of Teresia and Simon. Teresia has seen improved plant health and increased coffee yields, while Simon has saved money by no longer purchasing chemical sprays and has experienced better soil and crop health. The article highlights how regenerative farming practices, supported by the Aga Khan Foundation, are helping farmers adapt to climate change and improve their livelihoods.
4. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/11/regenerative-agriculture-climate-solutions-resilient/> - This article from the World Economic Forum discusses the impact of regenerative agriculture on climate change mitigation and adaptation. It highlights how practices such as no-till farming, agroforestry, crop rotation, and cover cropping can restore soil health, sequester carbon, and increase biodiversity. The article also notes that regenerative agriculture can build resilience to climate impacts by improving water retention, increasing biodiversity, and creating healthier ecosystems.
5. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-priorities/provide-food-and-water-sustainably/food-and-water-stories/climate-friendly-food-faqs-regenerative-ag-101/> - This FAQ from The Nature Conservancy explains how regenerative agriculture can enhance climate resilience compared to conventional agriculture. It discusses how regenerative practices, such as improving soil health, increasing crop diversity, and enhancing water retention, can help farmers adapt to extreme weather events like droughts and heavy storms. The FAQ also highlights how regenerative agriculture can provide multiple sources of income and security for farmers.
6. <https://www.nrdc.org/bio/arohi-sharma/regenerative-agriculture-part-4-benefits> - This article from the Natural Resources Defense Council discusses the benefits of regenerative agriculture, including improved water efficiency. It explains how better soil health leads to increased water retention and groundwater recharge, as well as more water conserved on the farm or ranch, enhancing resilience to flood and drought. The article also highlights how regenerative agriculture can help mitigate climate change by sequestering carbon dioxide in the soil.
7. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/land-use-biodiversity/comment-tackle-climate-change-we-need-make-regenerative-agriculture-norm-not-2024-09-23/> - This Reuters article discusses the critical need to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and socio-economic instability through regenerative agriculture. It emphasizes that regenerative practices can restore ecosystems, optimise water use, increase resilience to extreme weather, and support farming communities while promoting carbon sequestration and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The article also highlights the need for substantial investments and collective action from financiers, policymakers, and businesses to support this transition.