

## SLARI Chief Research Officer Tours SLARI Centres

The Chief Research Officer who doubles as Director General (DG) of the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI) Dr. Joseph M. Kargbo has successfully completed a



**Dr. Joseph M. Kargbo**

familiarization tour of the Teko Livestock Research Centre (TLRC) in Makeni, discussed with stake holders of the Horticulture sub sector in Kabala and the Musaia Livestock Research Station at Musaia in Folosaba Dembelia Chiefdom, Koinadugu district.

Welcoming and apprising Dr. Kargbo of the situation on the ground at the TLRC, Officer in –Charge (OIC) of the Centre including the Musaia Livestock Research Station Dr. Saidu Khanu gave a brief history of the Centre. “Teko and Musaia did not only play pivotal role in meeting the protein needs of the country and made handsome

contribution to the economy, but served as a heritage and means of livelihood of our farmers in the Bombali and Koinadugu districts who form the bulk of the population there, but also, the country as a whole”, he said.

He however lamented that as a result of several factors including deteriorating level of funding and the long standing civil conflict, the physical infrastructure and manpower, the two stations of the Livestock Centre were unable in effectively and efficiently providing the needed services, regrettably contributing to widespread malnutrition, loss of livelihood and the rich heritage of our farmers as well as degrading poverty. He however optimistically added that all is not lost, as with support of the government and other development partners, frantic efforts are being made to restore the efficient and effective provision of these vital services.

The Officer In- charge (OIC) Dr. Khanu told SLARI Chief Research Officer and his entourage about a 109,000 US dollar project proposal submitted to and approved by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).”The overall objective of the proposed project is to improve livestock productivity through the utilization of Artificial Insemination (A/I) services and the management of animal health and nutrition”, he revealed, adding that the expected outputs include capacity development of both laboratories and human personnel, improvement in

animal diseases diagnosis and improved animal health, and at the same time incorporating improved animal nutrition.

Power point presentations were made explaining the efforts made to steadily and progressively restore the needed services. TLRC Administrative Officer Kombo Osaio Kamara in his presentation catalogued SLARI interventions including the construction of an ultra modern office complex, two guest houses and a store, rehabilitation of the diagnostic laboratory, construction of a small ruminant shelter, a piggery and shelter for rabbits already stocked; rehabilitation of staff quarters already completed and the provision of 100 square meters fencing around the small ruminants shed.

Young scientists of the Centre also presented project proposals which included The effect of improved nutrition (feed supplements) on the performance of N'dama cattle and their crosses under different production system, Population dynamics of tse fly *Glossina* species in small



**One of the Dilapidated Buildings in Teko**

holder extensive cattle farms in selected districts in Sierra Leone and the Construction of solar tent dryers. The presentations also took into account development projects of the Center which included Extension of fence around goats and sheep shelter to form additional two paddocks at Teko, Completion of fencing for cattle and goats at Musaia as well as The rehabilitation of the Musaia livestock station.

On the Kabala Horticultural Research Centre in Kabala, SLARI visiting team and stake holders there discussed the dire need to begin making the Centre fully functional especially by providing the immediate and needed materials, equipment and infrastructure including offices and staff quarters. The importance and need to promote horticultural development was highlighted and underscored particularly including improving the quality of life of women who dominate the sub sector and earning foreign exchange for the country through the export of quality horticultural products. Paramount chief Allie Balasama Marah of Sengbeh chiefdom expressed profound appreciation for the development initiative saying: “the key occupation and livelihood of my people is vegetable and livestock production and therefore any such meaningful intervention is a booster and a welcome idea and will get our fullest support”.

At the Musaia Livestock Station, SLARI Chief Research Officer and Director General Dr. Kargbo together with his entourage was briefed about the background to the station. It is a station of six miles square area with facilities capable of raising up to 5,000 cattle as well as goats and sheep. "It used to be a hub for milk and meat production", Farm Manager of Musaia Livestock station Mohamed Barrie explained. He also disclosed what the outreach station has accomplished in a way of progressively restarting and giving out to farmers the former services of the station.

"We have done some work within the means of the limited available resources including under taking artificial insemination of some number of cows and heifers as well as monitoring the performance of the offspring", he disclosed. He further explained that the rehabilitation of the perimeter fence and the paddocks were on-going while purchase of twenty goats for multiplication has been done and construction and completion of the pen for them and rehabilitation of the laboratory and a senior staff quarters also completed. He added that two hand pump wells have also been rehabilitated with the planting of maize and other vegetable feed as well as the erection of a metal gate to prevent the cattle from leaving and entering the station.



### **Presentations of Project Proposals**

Barrie also told Dr. Kargbo and his team the challenges the station was facing. These, he said included the need to rehabilitate for livestock the dipping facilities, the guest house and the piggery; provision of a generator and a freezer for storing needed items, among others.

Responding to what has been accomplished by the Centre to restore vitally needed livestock services to our farmers, SLARI Chief Research Officer and Director General gave a standing ovation to the workers and stake holders for the progressive achievements they are making."As somebody who was brought up here and did some research work at the time the two stations were fully operational before I went abroad for further study, I can fully understand and appreciate the contrast between those hey days and the magnitude of work now involved in normalizing those needed services following the devastating civil war and other

constraining factors”, Dr. Kargbo said. He told the researchers that the reality of human life is that there are always problems and challenges and the preoccupation of the researcher is to think hard about them and find ways to solve them, adding that the human brain should be put into positive use and can perform wonders.

Dr. Kargbo also disclosed that while he was ready to provide support from the limited government funding to address some of the issues raised and will go out the extra mile for partners to open their doors to SLARI, he encouraged the scientists to first think out of the box by identifying the problems and challenges affecting their respective Centres and develop winnable proposals for funding. In this respect, he implored them to work as a team as nobody is a monopoly of knowledge. He also laid emphasis on coming up with and beefing income generating activities so as to reduce over reliance on the government and other partners in dealing with the issues facing their respective Centres.