

SEED CO KENYA ADVISORY · AUGUST 2026

PREPARING FARMERS
FOR EL NIÑO

A season of too much water, arriving after a season of far too little.



The Seed Co family extends warm greetings to all Kenyan farmers. As the country braces for the El Niño phenomenon, it is vital to understand the challenges ahead and prepare accordingly. El Niño is widely recognised as a season of **above normal rainfall**, affecting crops, livestock and human activities across many regions. In Kenya, **eighteen counties** have already been flagged as high-risk areas, facing severe flooding that threatens infrastructure and crop production.

18	90%	30%	3.3m
counties flagged as high flood risk	crop losses in some areas from the dry spell since March	of seed lost, per the Chief Administrative Secretary	Kenyans may face starvation due to failed harvests

Why this season is different

Drought, then deluge

This year's El Niño comes after a prolonged dry spell that began in March, leading to devastating crop losses of up to 90 percent in some areas. Against this backdrop, Seed Co has mobilised its agronomy team to train lead farmers nationwide, focusing on best maize farming practices **before, during and after** the rains.

SEED CO RESPONSE

60,000 lead farmers trained, with an estimated impact on 300,000 farmers nationwide.

El Niño seasons bring **excess rainfall, waterlogging and heightened disease pressure**. Farmers must adapt by selecting maize varieties suited to their ecological zones and altitudes, and by getting water off the field before it sits on the crop.

The rainfall calendar

August 2026 — first quarter 2027

Weather forecasts indicate a season that builds slowly, peaks hard and then lets go gradually. Plan your planting, your drainage and your storage against this calendar.

Aug – Sep

2026



DRY TO NEAR AVERAGE

Mostly dry or near-average conditions. The El Niño signal is intensifying, but heavy rains are not yet widespread. **This is your preparation window;** drainage, land preparation and seed purchase.

October

2026



ABOVE NORMAL

Onset of the short rains season, with above-normal rainfall expected countrywide. Early and ultra-early varieties planted now stand the best chance of escaping the peak.

November

PEAK MONTH



HEAVY · FLOOD RISK

The projected peak: widespread heavy downpours with flooding risks in **Western, Coastal and Central Kenya**. Trenches and ridges must already be in place before this month arrives.

December

2026



HEAVY, EASING

Heavy rains continue, though slightly reduced. Disease scouting and waterproof storage become the priorities as the earliest crops approach harvest.

Jan – Mar

2027



LINGERING WET

Wet conditions are expected to linger into the first quarter. Grain moisture management and secure storage determine how much of the harvest actually reaches the market.

Eighteen counties are already flagged as high risk. In a flood season, **drainage not drought tolerance**, is the first decision on the farm.

Western, Coastal and Central Kenya carry the highest November exposure. Farmers in these areas should treat October as the last practical month for earthworks.

What the season demands

Three pressures to manage

01 · EXCESS RAINFALL

Water must be moved off the field quickly. Standing water suffocates roots and stalls nutrient uptake at exactly the wrong growth stage.

02 · WATERLOGGING

Saturated soils reduce germination and root development. Ridging and trenching protect the plant population you paid for.

03 · DISEASE PRESSURE

Warm, wet conditions favour foliar disease. Scout regularly and act early rather than treating a crop that is already lost.

Choose the variety for your zone

The Seed Co Kenya portfolio

Seed Co offers a wide portfolio across different maturity groups. Africa's largest seed house has the capacity to offer a complete portfolio for all zones in Kenya the task for each farmer is to match maturity to altitude, zone and flood exposure.

SC 301

ULTRA-EARLY

Matures quickly, helping farmers **escape peak floods**. The first choice where November exposure is highest.

Fastest maturity group

SC Duma 403

DROUGHT TOLERANT

A superior drought-tolerant variety, **widely adaptable** to varying conditions across zones.

Wide adaptability

SC 419

IMPROVED EXECUTIVE

An improved executive variety delivering high yields within **90 to 100 days**.

40 bags · 90–100 days

SC 555

STABILITY · STORAGE

Known for stability, excellent grain size and long shelf life — ideal for both **green mealie and post-harvest storage**.

Long shelf life

SC 657

MEDIUM ZONES

For medium zones such as **Western, Central Rift and Nyanza**, offering very high yields.

45 bags per acre

SC Tembo

HIGH-RAINFALL TEMPERATE

Super-executive genetics for **Mt. Kenya, Meru, Tharaka and parts of Embu**, with long, dense cobs.

58 bags per acre

Grain that keeps

In a wet season the harvest is only half the job. Grain size, shelling quality and shelf life decide how much of the crop survives the months of humidity that follow the rains.

Match the variety to the store you have, not only to the field you plant.



MATCHING MATURITY TO EXPOSURE

High flood exposure

Ultra-early and early: SC301, SC Duma 403, SC 419.

Medium zones

Western, Central Rift, Nyanza: SC 555, SC 657.

High-rainfall temperate

Mt. Kenya, Meru, Tharaka, parts of Embu: SC Tembo.

Five actions before the rains

Farmer preparedness checklist

- ☐ **Dig trenches and ridges**
Channel excess water away from the crop. Earthworks must be finished before October, while the ground is still workable and machinery can move.
- ☐ **Favour ultra-early and early maturing varieties**
Shorter maturity groups escape the peak floods of November. Where flood exposure is highest, speed to harvest is worth more than yield potential on paper.
- ☐ **Stagger your planting**
Mix early and medium varieties across your fields to spread risk. A single planting date is a single point of failure in an unpredictable season.
- ☐ **Ready waterproof storage**
Prepare storage facilities for harvested grain before the crop comes off the field. Wet season grain that is stored badly is lost as surely as grain left standing in water.
- ☐ **Work with local authorities**
Communities should stay close to local authorities on flood alerts and dam monitoring. Early warning only helps the farmers who are connected to it.

El Niño presents significant challenges, but with Seed Co's resilient genetics and agronomic guidance, farmers can safeguard yields and strengthen food security. **Preparedness today will ensure resilience tomorrow.**

Seed Co remains committed to standing with Kenyan farmers through every season.



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SEED CO - Growing Prosperity Together

Visit your nearest SeedCo outlet or stockist for certified seed and zone level guidance ahead of the short rains. Speak to a Seed Co agronomist about variety selection, drainage and post-harvest storage for your area.