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## Relief Over Low Fertiliser Cost

The Nation (Nairobi)

NEWS  
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By Lucas Barasa  
Nairobi

Farmers in areas that rely on short rains for crop production have a reason to smile following the Government's move to buy 80,000 tonnes of fertiliser to reduce its prices.

Agriculture minister William Ruto said the supplies, bought from local dealers, will be available in all the National Cereals and Produce Board depots from Friday.

Farmers will buy the fertiliser at Sh4,000 per bag of DAP. Currently, a bag of DAP is retailing at Sh6,400.

High cost of farm inputs, including fertiliser and diesel, made many farmers in major maize growing areas to abandon production early this year.

The price of a bag of fertiliser like double ammonium phosphate (DAP) increased from Sh2,600 to Sh4,000 before shooting up to the current Sh6,400.

The high prices were blamed on increased oil prices in the international market then.

### Planting season

"We have cleared the purchase of local DAP and planting fertiliser for the short rains," Mr Ruto told the Nation in an interview in Nairobi.

The fertiliser is meant for farmers in Eastern, Central and South Rift regions, which are now having short rains.

"We have intervened to save farmers from much suffering," the minister said.

He said that the Government had decided to buy the fertiliser locally to beat the planting season deadline as importing would have taken at least six weeks for it to reach the country.

Farmers in Eastern and Central have complained over failure by the Government to subsidise the cost of the input, saying, crop yields will be hampered.

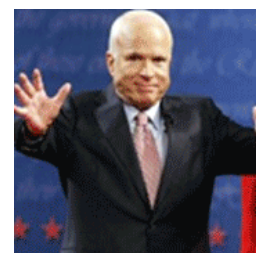
Help farmers Another 150,000 tonnes of fertiliser will be imported up to April to cushion growers from high prices during long rains.

The Government was to sign a contract with manufacturers for the supply of the fertiliser for the long rains on Tuesday.

The fertiliser, Mr Ruto said, will help farmers break even and boost food security.

"Our mitigation efforts are on course, and will see prices of fertiliser drop by 40 per cent. We are committing government money to ensure farm inputs are affordable," he said.

The lower costs of inputs will further help stabilise the price of maize flour.



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