

UPDATE ON KENYAN HORTICULTURE

Brought to you by the Kenya Horticultural Development Program (KHDP) — a USAID-funded project aimed at increasing incomes through smallholder production and employment in the horticulture industry. USAID-KHDP works with public and private sector agencies to provide technical and marketing assistance to growers throughout Kenya. USAID-KHDP's main agribusiness partners include grower associations, input suppliers, processors, exporters, research institutions and trade associations.

“MAP ATO ZAIDI KWA KUPITIA KILIMO BORA”

- **18 New KHDP partnerships move into top gear**
- **EC-FVO evaluation team impressed with Kenya's plant health systems**
- **FPEAK takes on the domestic market**
- **New training center for the horticulture industry under construction with Dutch assistance**
- **Kenyan growers adopting new technologies in response to climate change**

USAID-KHDP NEWS

18 new USAID-KHDP partnerships moved forward in November. Blue Rhino Consultants (BRC) is managing a program-wide delivery of management and institutional training for all USAID-KHDP partners, while Market Economies Development (MED) is carrying out studies of regional trade in horticultural products and the competitiveness of Kenyan producers and stakeholders. The studies will support the drafting of a new national horticulture policy being carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture through the Agriculture Sector Coordination Unit (ASCU) and the National Taskforce on Horticulture.

The Kenya National Federation of Agricultural Producers (KENFAP) will oversee technical assistance to smallholder potato, grain legume and vegetable production groups across the country. Additionally, Farm Concern International is managing a national sweet potato promotion and carrying out various domestic market analyses.

Input suppliers Kenya Highland Seeds, Scotts (Kenya) and Real IPM are managing more than 50 on-farm demonstrations on new seed varieties, integrated pest management, soil management and fertilizer application. Real IPM is also training HIV-affected families and health service providers to establish positive kitchen gardens for home production of fresh fruit and vegetables.

In Coast Province, new partner Business Initiatives for Survival and Eradication of Poverty (BISEP) is providing a wide range of extension services to smallholders in



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Joash Boit, of Lessos in Rift Valley, was able to buy this cow from with his profit from passion fruit sales.

Ukambani, and Good Neighbours Community Program is doing the same for passion fruit and potato growers in Rift Valley. Pwani Projects Development Consultants (PPDC) and Sunripe are training thousands of smallholder growers in horticulture techniques and business development. Earth Oil Extracts have taken on 400 additional growers to supply their organic tea tree oil distillation unit in Naro Moru. Finally, Mace Foods of Eldoret, famous for their African Bird's Eye (ABE) chili products, are diversifying into dried African indigenous vegetables for the US market.

Animal Draft Power Program (ADPP) is spearheading extension services in Nyanza Province, and Rural Service Program (RSP) is doing the same in Western province. Nature Grown Flowers is giving special technical assistance to smallholder flower growers in Central Province, Rift Valley and Western regions. Woni is training new export groups in Narok on standards of compliance and postharvest technologies for export vegetables. Kiburi Food Processors is launching a new focus on solar drying of fruits and vegetables with the help of USAID-KHDP.

FRESH PRODUCE EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION OF KENYA

The certification process for KenyaGAP started with the training of internal auditors, farmers and suppliers, and will continue through January 2010. The first series of four-day trainings started on November 31, targeting mainly local supermarket suppliers based in Kiambu, Mwea, Matuu and Bungoma. The main objective was to train lead growers who will be responsible for managing

the certification process on farms. A one-week training on food safety and internal auditing skills was held for 32 internal auditors and implementers of KenyaGAP from various export companies and local supermarkets.

In November the Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya (FPEAK) held their AGM. The group resolved to widen their role and include horticultural production for the domestic market. Consequently, the name of the association was modified from 'Fresh Produce Exporters Association' to 'Fresh Produce and Exporter Association of Kenya'. The acronym FPEAK will remain, but the new name will allow the association to represent domestic market traders and growers as well as exporters and processors. A Domestic Horticulture Board was created as a subset to the association. Board members will hold office for a renewable period of three years.

Work on renovation of the KARI Thika macadamia center for conversion to the Netherlands-funded horticulture industry training center started in December and is expected to be complete by the end of January. It will provide practical courses and vocational training, customized for the horticulture industry in Kenya.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Plans were finalized for the National Mango Conference to be held on February 11-12 at KICC. Scheduled speakers come from across the horticultural subsector and are to include researchers, growers, and marketing and standards compliance specialists. The invited participants will include more than 200 small, medium and large-scale growers, extension workers, input suppliers, policy-makers and researchers. Topics under discussion will cover mango variety selection, production factors, processing opportunities and market access.

KENYA PLANT HEALTH INSPECTORATE (KEPHIS)

KEPHIS received the EC Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) team for an evaluation in December. The aim was to evaluate the national systems for certification of plant products for export to the European Union. The inspection covered control of quarantine pests and risk-analysis systems carried out by growers and the National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO) which is KEPHIS. After the evaluation there was a stakeholder meeting where the evaluators gave their preliminary report.

The general impression of the EC mission team was positive. The team travelled to various regions visiting many stakeholders, including three cut flower producers, three companies growing plant cuttings for propagation, two packhouses, one fumigation facility, one major vegetable exporter, HCDA, KEPHIS and KFC.

The FVO team reported that the systems in place are comprehensive and provide good internal controls. The National Early Warning System was noted for contributing to improved scouting and forecasting, which



was proof of the successful collaboration between KEPHIS and growers. The fumigation process was found to be as effective as similar systems in the EU. The building of a new analytical laboratory at KEPHIS has increased the capability for residue testing, the farms have competent personnel, and their implementation of standards such as GLOBALGAP is a plus. The team concluded that systems have generally improved since the last mission and they will complete their report by May 2010.

CROPS AND PRODUCTS

Rainfall was intermittent or absent in most parts of the country in November and December. The unpredictability and general reduction in rainfall has created a new interest and investment in greenhouses, irrigation and water storage. Kenyan growers of all sizes are also investing in hybrid seeds as another way of adapting. These adaptations are increasing average yields and reducing costs of production significantly.

Passion Fruit

USAID-KHDP-assisted growers in Central Province produced 676 tons of passion fruit in November/December, with farm gate prices holding at Ksh 40-80/kilo depending on grade. In Rift Valley, prices reached a high of Ksh 65/kilo for top quality. The high demand for seedlings continued, with many grower groups keen on establishing their own nurseries. Twenty nurseries will benefit from the USAID-KHDP technology fund in the next quarter. Growers received passion fruit training through USAID-KHDP partnerships with Good Neighbours, ADPP, Rural Service Providers and others.

Flowers and Foliage

Partner Nature Grown Flowers held meetings with a major UK supermarket buyer to develop a smallholder bouquet line. Designs were agreed upon, samples were sent, and commercial bouquet supplies will commence

in March 2010. Some of the new flower varieties introduced to growers in the previous USAID-KHDP/Nature Grown partnership were included in the final bouquet designs and will be contracted from more than 200 smallholder growers to meet the new order.

African Bird's Eye (ABE) Chili

On the Coast, ABE was in full production with exporters competing to buy from USAID-KHDP-assisted smallholders. Harvesting started on the ABE experimental farms in Kilifi, where Moi University researchers are selecting plants for improved performance and bulking up the seed. After three generations of selection, they have segregated seeds into two basic types. The types have a similar average size and strong red color, but differ in plant canopy architecture and rate of maturity. More trials in Kwale, Nyanza and Western regions will be harvested over the next two months to provide more data and seed stock.

Cashews

Some farmers have already started harvesting cashews in parts of Malindi, Lamu and Kilifi, but storms in December caused a lot of flower to drop and affected the quality of immature nuts. The young nuts have developed a dark coat that reduces quality and size. A second flush of new leaves and flowers are expected in the next month. To protect this crop, a spray program is being organized and coordinated by USAID-KHDP partners PPDC and Bayer East Africa. PPDC is also working closely with cashew groups to improve their market access. New collection points are being established in rural areas for cashew, moringa and other crops. This will make it more economical for buyers to collect nuts and other products in these regions. PPDC will link collectors to new buyers to increase their year-round income and reduce risk for smallholders who have only a few trees of each crop.

Irish potatoes and pulses for food security

USAID-KHDP visited Irish potato-producing areas with several partners for a needs assessment. Discussions with growers, the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC), buyers and researchers indicated a massive interest in raising production levels. The ADC facilities and farms in Molo were recently rehabilitated, and there is public/private cooperation underway between KARI and tissue culture companies to improve and increase the availability of potato seeds. A partnership between USAID-KHDP, KENFAP and the Kenya National Potato Producers Association (KENAPOPA) was developed. This will fast-track more than 40 demonstration plots to pilot a national effort to raise production by at least 100 percent in the next five years.

Local market vegetables

Vegetable prices were generally good on the domestic market. On the Coast, growers took advantage of heavy rains to plant tomatoes, brinjal and okra for home consumption and local sales. USAID-KHDP trials with partners Sunripe and KARI Matuga produced positive



Butternut squash from the Nyando Rural Agribusiness group at Ahero in Nyanza.

results in the production of sweet potatoes and tropical vegetable varieties.

In Central province, cabbages, tomatoes, kale, Irish potatoes and sweet peppers were in good supply. Tomato prices on the local market fell in December with a 6 kg crate selling for Ksh 800 at the farm gate. This probably signals a decline in tomato prices.

Production of watermelon, squash and indigenous vegetables grew rapidly and contributed to food security in many households. In Nyanza, the volume of LMVs (tomato, onion, cabbage, AIVs) sold by USAID-KHDP-assisted growers increased. Market demand and relative prices remained high in various towns in the region. Butternut squash consumption has peaked, however, so growers are working with processors and exporters to develop export market opportunities.

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