

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.

“MAPATO ZAIDI KWA KUPITIA KILIMO BORA”

- **Thousands of smallholder farmers moving into horticulture for the first time**
- **National Investment Conference held in Mombasa features horticulture**
- **KenyaGAP set to revolutionize the standard of fresh produce sold on the local market**
- **Farm Concern promotes sweet potato in Nairobi groceries**
- **Kenyan smallholder flowers ordered by UK supermarkets**

KHDP NEWS

Thousands of smallholder farmers turned to horticulture in 2009 to generate income. As a result, there was a high demand for technical support from USAID-KHDP at the start of 2010, as many of these first-time growers looked for guidance.

Ongoing projects also continue to move forward at full speed. Outgrowers for Earthoil Extracts continued to plant toward their target of two million tea trees in Nanyuki and Naro Moru. Woni prepared their new export growers in Narok for GLOBALGAP certification. Sunripe recruited a new agronomist for Coast Province. Real IPM received a stream of visitors to their positive kitchen garden. And Bungoma farmers started harvesting the first of their sweet potato crop, which is slated to be ready for export market trials in February.

PPDC and Tana River mango growers met to assess the size of the next crop and prepare a strategy for improving market linkages and transportation systems for their fruit. FPEAK trained growers on KenyaGAP in Western Province. BISEP held field days in the dry, rain-fed regions of Ukambani.

Farm Concern International started sweet potato promotions in Nairobi grocery stores, including zucchini



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Komgoini Self Help Group in Murang'a District receives training on solar drying of mangoes and quality management from Kiburi Processors.

in ABC Plaza, zucchini at the Junction, cornershop at Yaya centre, cornershop at Diamond Plaza and Mutuku grocery in Zimmerman. Blue Rhino Consultants continued to train partners and farmer groups on business management systems.

FPEAK AND KENYAGAP NATIONAL NETWORKING GROUP (NTWG)

Sixty-three internal auditors, farmers and suppliers were trained on KenyaGAP in January. FPEAK is working with supermarkets and groceries to train personnel from among the grower groups who will be responsible for managing the certification process on members' farms. The aim is for local suppliers to attain their KenyaGAP certification by April 2010. This will be a major milestone in the domestic horticulture industry, providing safer, more traceable and higher quality vegetables for local consumers. More training is planned next month for growers in Kisumu, Kirinyaga and Kibwezi, who are regular suppliers to the local market.

Renovation of the new FPEAK/KARI training center, funded by the Netherlands Embassy, is on schedule. The center's opening is planned for June. Based at KARI Thika's Macadamia Center, it will provide a range of practical training programs for horticulture industry personnel. Courses will cater to employees of large-scale farms, smallholders and extension staff. The curriculum for the training center is being developed in collaboration with local industry stakeholders and Wanginjingu University in the Netherlands.

COPIC HOLDS INVESTMENT CONFERENCE

The first Coast Province Investment Conference (COPIC) 2010, was held at Travellers Beach Hotel,

Mombasa on January 22-23. The conference was set up to showcase opportunities across all economic sectors, including tourism, agriculture, mining and manufacturing. It was organized by the Kenya Investment Authority, the Coast Parliamentary Group and the Coast People's Forum.

Kenya Prime Minister Raila Odinga opened the conference and made the keynote address, contrasting the slow growth of Kenya to the rapid development of Singapore since independence. The prime minister praised the work ethic and creativity of coastal people and urged all stakeholders to work together to realize the potential of Coast Province. USAID-KHDP Director Dr. Steve New, gave a presentation on "Horticulture Investment Opportunities in Coast Province," which attracted great interest. He described the national, regional and global potential of under-utilized crops and products. Dr. New highlighted specific opportunities for investors in tropical fruit juice (mango, passion fruit, and pineapple), root crops (sweet potato, ginger), chili products and cashews.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Plans were finalized for the National Mango Conference, to be held on February 11–12 at KICC. The theme of the conference will be 'Unearthing the Gold in the Mango.' A wide range of speakers will cut across the horticulture subsector, including researchers, growers and specialists in standards and marketing.

In the Magarini District of Mombasa, a field day was organized. The theme was "Driving agribusiness towards attaining food sufficiency and vision 2030." It emphasized increasing incomes to increase food security, especially for maize production, cassava and sweet potatoes. The event was a great success, with farmers crowding around the stands set up by service providers.

CROPS AND PRODUCTS

The weather across the country was mainly dry in January, and many farmers benefited from the sale of crops planted during the rains in October. Various types of water collection, storage and small-scale irrigation systems were installed.

Demand for low-cost greenhouse technology remained high, but USAID-KHDP partners reported mixed results as some growers lacked the necessary experience to produce tomatoes under plastic. In Central, farmers received training and technical assistance in green house construction and crop management. Nairobi and Thika offices received calls from "briefcase growers" who invested in greenhouses following media publicity but lack the expertise to recover their investment.

Fine beans from Narok

USAID-KHDP partner Woni exporters have successfully introduced export crops to a group of pastoralists in the



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Irish Potato seeds are "chitted" at the Ripgaa women's group in Keiyo South.

Ewaso Ngiro region. The group, comprised of fourteen young Masai farmers, including four women, has come together to improve their livelihood by planting fine beans and baby corn. Production significantly improved during January with the availability of water after the rains in the Mau area. The group produced 32 tons of export quality produce for the month, which they sold for KSh 1,374,000. USAID-KHDP has provided support for the construction of a holding shed, storage, toilet and washing facilities. The growers received training in good agricultural practices (GAPs), food safety, traceability, recordkeeping and personal hygiene in preparation for GLOBALGAP certification.

Pulses from Ukambani

Pulses, or grain legumes (beans, cow peas, pigeon peas and green gram), have two to three times the protein of maize and are a critical part of the Kenyan diet. Pigeon peas in particular are a multiple purpose drought-tolerant food security crop for millions of low income families. During the 2009/2010 short rain season in October 2009, USAID-KHDP partners set up 31 pigeon pea demonstrations in Ukambani – nine rain-fed with medium duration varieties and 22 under irrigation with medium duration and short duration types.

Nine rain-fed demonstrations were established with green gram variety N26 – an early maturing (3-4 months), drought-tolerant variety that has strong yields and demand because of its shiny appearance and ease of cooking. To date, more than 2,000 farmers have received training to improve their production techniques. Nine field days were held in rain-fed regions during January, attended by 866 farmers and representatives from the MOA, input suppliers and buyers. The crops were inspected and methods of increasing yields were discussed with farmers.

Passion Fruit

On the coast, yellow passion fruit production increased in January and demand was strong. Farmers assisted by USAID-KHDP Kwale sold 98 tons of fruit with a gross sales value of KSh 2,450,000. The average price across the country for purple passion fruit in 2009 was KSh 42 per kilo. At this high price fruit juice manufacturers cannot afford to buy fruit for processing. In Rift Valley, particularly around Eldoret where production is escalating, the prices dropped from KSh 65 to KSh 42 per kilo for grade 1 passion fruit. To supply existing demand from both fresh fruit distributors and processors, production must be at least doubled. This requires an increase in the number of nurseries producing high quality grafted seedlings. USAID-KHDP partners Good Neighbours are pioneering the mass production of seedlings and more service providers will be identified and supported by USAID-KHDP.

Flowers and Foliage

USAID-KHDP partner Nature Grown Flowers received confirmation of an order for summer flower bouquets with a leading UK supermarket chain. To meet the order, selected groups of smallholder growers need to increase their production and improve their management practices to meet the Rainforest Alliance Standard. USAID-KHDP provided technical assistance to Nature Grown to start this process. Key concerns include safe use of pesticides, workers' welfare, traceability and environmental conservation. The farmers are due for audit on February 15. USAID-KHDP also formed an alliance with the International Institute for the Environment (IIED) in the UK to provide marketing support through the New Business Model for Sustainable Trading Relationships, a new initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

African Bird's Eye (ABE) Chili

High levels of ABE chili harvesting continued through January on the coast and in western areas, though some areas were affected by the dry spell. Three containers of dried chili (21 tons) were exported. Market demand exceeded supply and exporters competed heavily for the product. Despite coming into production late, the Coast Province, particularly the Mpeketoni region, is emerging as the main production base.

Mango

USAID-KHDP partner PPDC and Tana River mango groups met to discuss market opportunities and design a strategy for improving market access, net prices and transportation costs. During the next season, PPDC will be working with the farmers to organize the collection and transportation of the mangos. In Central Province, Kiburi processors trained supplier groups on solar drying and quality control systems to improve the quality of dried mango produced for the local market.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

ABE chili ready for harvest in Busia.

Irish potato and other vegetables

Twenty demonstrations were set up for Irish potatoes in Bomet and Buret by USAID-KHDP partners with more to come in other areas. USAID-KHDP and partner KENFAP are focusing on short-term interventions to increase productivity but a lot of work needs to be done to establish postharvest systems for handling potatoes.

In Ukambani, demonstrations of butternut squash, watermelon and sweet potato production have been instantly adopted by many growers. The crops are mainly grown in the warmer areas of the region as an additional food source for home consumption. They have some drought tolerance and are yielding well. In Rift Valley, growers were encouraged to grow common pumpkin as a commercial food crop since supermarkets need a year-round supply.

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