

# 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”

- Greenhouse revolution sweeps the country with 453 new greenhouses built new in Nyanza, Western and Rift Valley this year
- KARI launches its second strategic plan, implementation framework and service charter
- PAN African food safety and traceability conference held in Nairobi
- Passion fruit stakeholders workshop held at KARI Thika
- KEPHIS and KASS FM start a one hour program for smallholder export growers
- National evaluation by European Commission Food and Veterinary Office imminent

## KHDP NEWS

KHDP offices in the regions are doing a lot of new business as smallholders rush to get into high value fast-maturing vegetables now that the rains are in full swing. Demand for information and technical assistance on greenhouse production is high (see below). David Juma, KHDP's new Field Manager in Kibwezi has embarked on a heavy program of on-farm demonstrations and trials with pigeon pea, green gram and other pulse crops to help bridge the technology gap between research and commercialisation.

## FPEAK

FPEAK announced that certification audits for KenyaGAP will start soon. The fee schedule has been circulated to all FPEAK members. A Standards Management Committee was formed which comprises company representatives for vegetables, flowers, fruits, SPS issues (KEPHIS), Kenyan standards (KEBS), MOA/Governments authority, (HCDA), FPEAK and KFC. It will coordinate the audit program; the process of re-benchmarking KENYAGAP to GLOBALGAP version 3.1; and the implementation/synchronization of KenyaGAP Flower and Ornamental Scope and the KFC Scheme (benchmarked flower scope). After competitive bidding Africert was appointed as the certification body. The National Technical Working Group (NTWG) will give



Photos by Fintrac Incs.

Geoffrey Nyamota, KHDP Manager in Eldoret, explains how to plant passion fruit to members of Soteni CBO in Bungoma.

feed back to industry stakeholders through the normal communication channels of the member associations (FPEAK and KFC) and government agencies (HCDA and KEPHIS).

## MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (MOA)

Stakeholders in Agriculture held several field days and workshops to educate the farmers on the best seed to plant and other business services available to boost production of food and cash crops. MOA was overwhelmed, distributing seeds and other planting material to ensure farmers in food insecure regions planted on time to take advantage of the rains. The MOA office at Yatta, Eastern province organized a stakeholder's field day on 13<sup>th</sup> October attracting over 700 smallholder farmers. Exhibitors included KARI Katumani, Seminis, KHDP, HCDA, Dryland seed limited, Kenya Commercial Bank and Equity bank.

Consultations on the national mango conference continued. A provisional programme was agreed and major speakers selected who cut across the horticultural subsector from production to end markets. The conference will be an opportunity for growers, extension workers, input suppliers and other stakeholders to get a clear picture of the varieties that are demanded by the market, their uses, value, production and availability of planting stock.

The Ministry also joined with KARI and KHDP to organise a series of training workshops for passion fruit growers to explain the different techniques needed for growing yellow and purple varieties (see below).

## KEPHIS

KEPHIS is planning to receive the EC Food and Veterinary Officers (FVOs) for an evaluation starting November 28<sup>th</sup> to December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009. This is a follow – up on the evaluation carried out in July 2007. A series of meetings between industry leaders have been held to discuss and find ways of preparing the industry for the visit. In October an explanatory letter on the importance of the FVO evaluation was circulated from KEPHIS to all the stake holders. A Pre – mission questionnaire was filled and sent back to the evaluation team. It is likely that any farm that has had an interception of its produce in Europe will be visited to check the corrective actions taken.

## CROPS AND PRODUCTS

Rains started in most parts of the country in mid October to the joy of farmers who had already prepared their land for planting. The rains enabled growers to transplant passion fruit and vegetables in parts of Rift Valley and Western regions.

### Passion fruit

KHDP and KARI Thika organized a one-day passion fruit stakeholder's workshop to discuss the current status of passion fruit and agree a strategy to commercialize yellow varieties in Central and Eastern Kenya to meet the ever-growing market demand. Thirty five participants from Ministry of Agriculture, KHDP, Equity Bank, Technoserve, and farmer group leaders from Embu, Mbeere, Murang'a, Kirinyaga, Thika and Yatta were present. KARI scientists made presentations on the new lines of passion fruit available and their commercial potential, following KHDP-supported research trials and seed multiplication. Equity bank presented their micro-finance package aimed at supporting passion fruit farmers. The new passion fruit lines are high yielding, tolerant to most soil borne diseases and drought. The crop is most suited for low altitude areas below 1500m above sea level (from Thika to the Coast). Following this a series of workshops were conducted between 27<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> October by MOA in partnership with KARI Thika and KHDP to mobilize and sensitize farmers to grow yellow passion fruit for direct sale to processors. Eight workshops were held in parts of Central and Eastern Provinces reaching over 300 lead farmers. The farmers expressed great interest in the crop and endorsed it as a viable cash crop in the regions.

At the Coast, competition increased for purchase of passion fruit as supplies dropped in response to the prolonged drought. Due to competition for the fruit, the prices went from Ksh 12/kg to 50/kg. In the Shimba hills area, sales by KHDP-assisted farmers were Ksh 4.4 million for the month. Flowering has started again with the onset of the rains. In Nyanza and parts of Western Province, KHDP-partners ADPP and RSP gave technical assistance to groups in Gucha, Migori, Suba and Lugari. The passion fruit availability also decreased in these areas causing prices to escalate from Kshs16 to 50Kshs



Photos by Fintrac Incs.

Henry Tanui's fantastic passion fruit crop in Lessos – Nandi South district.

per Kilo. In Rift Valley, plans to increase the number of nurseries in different parts of the region were put in place before the rains started. Twenty farmer groups will be trained in nursery techniques by KHDP partners, to increase the supply of high quality seedlings.

### Sweet Potatoes

The rains stimulated vegetative growth of sweet potato vines and KHDP-assisted demonstrations established across the country recovered quickly. Trials being carried out at the coast by KARI Matuga indicated that the Tainung variety can withstand stress from drought better than CIP440015. Growers in Western and Nyanza areas harvested 43 tons and earned over Kshs 455,000. In Ukambani, two varieties (Salyboro and Nyawo) developed by KARI Kakamega are being tested for domestic and export market potential.

### Watermelons

Demand remained strong in Western and Nyanza areas. Growers met orders from their main markets despite difficult weather conditions. KHDP partners ADP & RSP linked producers to buyers from Nairobi, Eldoret, Kisii, Kisumu and Nakuru. Grower groups marketed collectively a total of 95 tons to earn over Kshs 870,000.

### Butternut squash

Production grew to a level that could not be fully marketed and some growers are storing large volumes until supply falls and prices increase. In South Nyanza,

growers sold a total of 97 tons to buyers from Nairobi earning Kshs 824,000. There is interest from fresh produce exporters who can market orange-fleshed sweet potato in Europe but need very high quality with no skin damage. There is a strong export market for frozen sweet potato but processors need specific varieties which retain their orange color after freezing.

### African Bird's Eye (ABE) Chili

In Nyanza and parts of Western region about 1.3 tons of dried ABE chilli was delivered to Mace Foods earning growers an income of Kshs130, 000. At the coast, harvesting of ABE was ongoing; the peak season of harvesting is expected from next month through into early January. Farmers sold 15 tons of fresh chilli in October giving an income of Kshs 870,000. In Kilifi, the improved types selected by KHDP-partner Moi University, have started flowering on farmers' trial sites. Harvesting is expected to start in the November.

### Mangoes

In some areas of Coast Province, particularly around Hola, mango trees have started bearing young fruits and small quantities of mangoes are being produced. The greater Tana area is expected to start harvesting in November with the main crop coming in December in time for growers to benefit from Christmas demand.

### Moringa

The Moringa tree is becoming popular across Kenya among local people due to its much-publicised medicinal qualities. Commercial marketing remains problematic due to the high costs of consolidating large enough quantities from thousands of scattered trees. This will ease as new trees come into production in 2010.

### Cashews

Young cashew nuts were observed in Kwale, Kilifi and Malindi districts, so harvesting is expected to start in late November to early December if the rains do not interfere with maturation of the nuts. Demand is strong for local consumption and export.

### Irish potatoes

KHDP started new Irish potato activities in Marakwet, Timboroa, Keiyo, Mt. Elgon, Nandi South, Trans-Nzoia and Molo. We will work with the Agricultural Development Corporation in Molo to assess the needs of potato farmers and demonstrate improved techniques for production of the common varieties including Asante, Tigoni, Dutch Robjin and Kenya Karibu. ADC and approved out growers obtain yields of up to 24,000 kgs/ha whereas the average yield obtained by other farmers is 5-6,000kgs/ha.

### Pulses

Trials and rain-fed demonstrations started in Ukambani with various pulse ("grain legume") crops. Green gram has excellent market growth potential as a highly nutritious and popular staple food supplement (25%



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Henry Tanui with his new pick up, bought with passion fruit profits.

protein). Pigeon pea is also in demand on the local market and popular with growers because of its drought tolerance. KARI Mbaazi has a range of high-performing varieties under trial which KHDP partners will demonstrate to growers through on-farm demonstrations in 2010.

### Local market vegetables

Growers were busy transplanting vegetable seedlings with the availability of rains. Market prices for vegetables in Rift Valley and parts of Western remained stable with onion, tomato and indigenous vegetables getting the highest prices. At the coast, tomatoes, brinjals, and okra were in demand. A survey of KHDP-assisted growers showed that they have invested in a total of 453 greenhouses in the past year, mainly for production of tomato and sweet pepper for the local market. Uptake of hybrid seed and drip irrigation is also high, contributing to a general increase in yields and reduction in costs of production for local market produce.

### CONTACT KHDP

#### Kenya Horticultural Development Program

MPPS Building  
Mombasa Road  
P.O. Box 3074-00506  
Nyayo Stadium, Nairobi

**Phone:** +254 20 2121838/ +254 02 2121839

**Fax:** +254 20 2121837

**E-mail:** [khdp@fintrac.com](mailto:khdp@fintrac.com)

**Web:** <http://www.kenyaag.org>

#### Field Offices

Thika, Kisumu, Eldoret, Mombasa, Nanyuki.

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