

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”

- 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 centre for the horticulture industry under construction with Dutch assistance
- Kenyan growers adopting new technologies in response to climate change

KHDP NEWS

KHDP activities accelerated in November as 18 new partnerships moved into top gear. Animal Draft Power Program (ADPP) is spearheading extension services in Nyanza province while Rural Service Program (RSP) is covering Western province. Nature Grown Flowers is giving specialty technical assistance to smallholder flower growers in Central, Rift Valley and Western regions. Woni is training new export groups in Narok on standards compliance and post-harvest technologies for export vegetables.

In Coast province 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. Mace Foods of Eldoret, famous for their African bird's eye chilli products, are diversifying into dried African indigenous vegetables for the US market. New partner BISEP (Business Initiatives for Survival and Eradication of Poverty) is providing a wide range of extension services to smallholders in Ukambani, and Good Neighbours Community Program is doing the same for passion fruit and potato growers in Rift Valley.

Input suppliers Kenya Highland Seeds, Scotts (Kenya) and Real IPM are managing more than fifty on-farm demonstrations of new seed varieties, integrated pest control, soil management and fertiliser application. Real IPM is also training HIV-affected families and health



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Joash Boit of Lessos in Rift Valley passionately admiring a cow he bought from passion fruit sales proceeds

service providers to establish “Positive Kitchen Gardens” for home production of fresh fruits and vegetables. Kiburi Food Processors is launching a new KHDP focus on solar drying of fruits and vegetables.

KENFAP (the Kenya National Federation of Agricultural Producers) 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.

Blue Rhino Consultants (BRC) is managing a program-wide delivery of management and institutional training to all KHDP partners. Market Economies Development (MED) is carrying out studies of regional trade in horticultural products and the competitiveness of Kenyan producers and stakeholders, to 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.

FRESH PRODUCE EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION OF KENYA

The certification process for KenyaGAP started with training of internal auditors, farmers and suppliers which will continue through January 2010. The first series of 4-day trainings began on 31st November 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 also held for 32 internal auditors and implementers of KenyaGAP from various export companies and local supermarkets.

The FPEAK AGM, held in November, resolved to widen the Association's role to include horticultural production for the domestic market. Consequently, the name of the Association was modified from 'Fresh Produce Exporters Association' to 'Fresh Produce and Exporters Association of Kenya'. The acronym FPEAK will remain. 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 whose board members will hold office for a renewable period of 3 years.

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

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Plans and programme were finalized for the National Mango Conference to be held on 11th – 12th February at KICC. Speakers come from across the horticultural subsector and include researchers, growers, 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 received the EC Food and Veterinary Office 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. It 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. Many stakeholders were visited in various regions which included 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 and proof of the good collaboration between KEPHIS and



growers. The fumigation process was found to be as good 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 will complete their report by May 2010.

CROPS AND PRODUCTS

Rainfall was intermittent or absent in most parts of the country. The unpredictability and general reduction in rainfall has created a new interest and investment in greenhouses, irrigation and water storage. It seems that Kenyan growers, large-scale and small, are adapting to climate change.

Passion Fruit

KHDP-assisted growers in Central province produced 676 tonnes of passion fruit in November-December with farm gate prices holding at Ksh40-80/kilo depending on grade. In Rift Valley, prices reached a high of Kshs 65 per Kilo for top quality fruit. The high demand for seedlings continued with many grower groups keen on establishing their own nurseries. Twenty nurseries will benefit from the KHDP technology fund during the next quarter. Growers received passion fruit training through KHDP partnerships with Good Neighbours, Animal Draft Power Programme, 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, samples sent and commercial bouquet supplies will commence in March 2010. Some of the new flower varieties introduced to growers in the previous 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) Chilli

At the Coast, ABE was in full production with exporters competing to buy from 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 managed to segregate the seed into two basic types. These are similar in terms of having good average size and strong red colour, 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 cashew in parts of Malindi, Lamu and Kilifi but heavy rains in December caused a lot of flower drop and affected the quality of immature nuts. The young nuts have developed a dark coat which greatly reduces their 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 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 economic for buyers to collect nuts and other products. PPDC will link collectors to new buyers in order 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

KHDP visited Irish potato producing areas together with several partners to carry out a brief needs assessment. Discussions with growers, the Agricultural Development Corporation, 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 seed. A partnership between KHDP, KENFAP and the Kenya National Potato Producers Association (KENAPOPA) was agreed. These will fast-track more than 40 demonstrations to pilot a national effort to raise production by at least 100% over the next five years.

Local market vegetables

Prices were generally good on the domestic market. On the Coast, growers took advantage of heavy rains to plant tomato, brinjal and okra for home consumption and local sales. KHDP trials with partners Sunripe and KARI Matuga produced good results on production of sweet potato and tropical vegetable varieties.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

A fantastic butternut squash for Nyando Rural Agribusiness group at Ahero in Nyanza.

In Central province, cabbage, tomato, kale, Irish potato and sweet pepper were in good supply. Tomato prices on the local market fell in December with a 6-kg crate selling for Kshs800 at the farm gate. It is probably the start of a downward drift in tomato prices. Many growers have responded to climatic changes by investing in greenhouse production, irrigation and adoption of hybrid varieties. This is increasing their average yields and reducing costs of production significantly.

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 KHDP-assisted growers increased. Market demand and relative prices remained high in various towns in the region although butternut squash consumption has peaked and growers are working with processors and exporters to develop export market opportunities.

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