



**“Keeping Smallholders in Business”**

**The HDC is a USAID-funded programme, managed by the agribusiness firm Fintrac Inc. Our mission is to increase and sustain smallholder sales and incomes through crop diversification, improvements in production and postharvest technologies, and market linkages.**



Nigel Garbutt, EUREPGAP Chairman, and Steve Homer of Flamingo Holdings (UK) admire the expertise of small-scale growers in Kenya



## This month

February was another hot month for the horticulture industry in more ways than one! The MOA held a national conference on its new Strategy for Revitalising Agriculture (SRA), which included horticulture as one of the major sub-sectors for growth. Kenya’s EUREPGAP efforts received a major boost with a visit from the EUREPGAP Chairman, Nigel Garbutt who was duly impressed by the high standards of both small and large-scale farms which he visited. The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality held a one day seminar on “Challenges for the Export of Flowers, Fruits and Vegetables from East Africa to Europe” attended by Ministers from both countries and a Dutch trade delegation. A major international nutrition conference also took place which featured many scientific papers on the health benefits of fresh produce. These events are covered in more detail below. Sadly, in February we said goodbye to the USAID Country Director, Dr Kiert Toh. Kiert was a big supporter of horticulture, to the extent that he made field visits with HDC in January, and gave his approval for several new initiatives for USAID assistance to the horticulture industry during his last few days in post. We wish Kiert a long, happy and busy retirement.

*Steve New, Director, HDC*

## Local Market Fruits and Vegetables

The collaborative Animal Draft Power Programme (ADPP)-HDC extension project for Nyanza Province was officially launched at a colourful ceremony presided over by the Homa Bay District Agricultural Officer (DAO), Mr Nathan Soire. According to Mr Soire, “The initiative is timely and in line with the overall objective of the SRA, which is to raise household incomes, create employment and ensure food and nutrition security. Farmers must stop regarding farming as a hobby, and begin taking a commercial approach to it through investing in good quality inputs, extension services and market linkages.” Growers were especially interested in the chilli and butternut squash combination, first introduced in the area by HDC for income generation and food security. According to Margaret Okendo, one of the members of the Ngura Rangwena Group, “From the sale of butternut planted on just a quarter acre plot, I have managed to buy a new water pump and send four children to school. Also since butternut can be eaten at any meal time, we have not experienced hunger!” Margaret made a total of KSh 53 000 from 4.4 tons of the crop. Gary Tomlins, HDC consultant continued his work on seedling production and bio-controls in Thika and Eldoret areas. This time he introduced hot mustard, a very good biofumigant which also produces excellent organic matter. Gary told farmers that “If we fertilise the mustard crop and correct the soil acidity with lime, we will have great impact on the quality of the

seedlings produced". Because HDC trials mean nothing until our clients increase their incomes, we were also pleased to hear from, Bernard Maina, one of HDC's client farmers in Mwea, that he has sold his tomato crop to Uchumi Supermarkets.

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## Passion Fruit

The recent hot, dry weather has highlighted the need for irrigation in passion fruit production. So we have intensified our efforts in Central and Western areas to demonstrate the benefits of drip irrigation. This is catching on fast in Central Province, where one of Lydia Njuguna's first clients, the Gatanga Horticultural Growers have signed a contract to supply Myner Exporters. As well as increasing their passion fruit sales, this means they will receive technical support for EUREPGAP compliance. Growers at Mbari ya Mboce are also doing well. According to the farmers, the technical assistance received in adoption of drip irrigation technology; provision of better crop nutrition (after soil analysis) and establishment of a scion house for improved planting material, have greatly increased production. They have an assured market for their passion fruit with local buyers for fresh and juice markets.

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## Chilli Products

Production of African birds eye chilli (piri piri) has caught on fast in Western Kenya, and HDC agronomist Fred Ochieng' is determined to turn the area into the best production site in Africa. All reports are that the Kenyan crop compares well in quality to that from other countries. So far, 1052 kg of dried ABE have been delivered to Mace Foods in Eldoret, from the first batch of trials. Exporters have also expressed an interest in the fresh product with requirements of up to 400 kgs per week. This is definitely good news for the HDC-assisted growers, who will soon be able to meet this demand on a regular basis.

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## Vanilla and Spices

Slowly but surely the vanilla is growing! Latest reports from Umran Kaggwa and Steve New, the well-known Ugandan vanilla experts, suggest that trials in Busia, Kisumu and Malindi are producing the best vines. Although the vines are two years away from the first crop of vanilla beans, the growers are keen to know about marketing arrangements. Fortunately, Umran can guarantee the market since he is leading a very successful smallholder vanilla programme in Kasese, in western Uganda, which is well-known to buyers in the US and Europe for the excellent quality of beans produced.

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## Smallholder Flowers

The HDC smallholder flower survey report was sent out to stakeholders in February after including the 2004 export figures. We are already receiving comments and will hold a stakeholders' workshop in May to discuss possible HDC interventions. To receive a copy of the report and



Jacob Otieno in his new tie and crash helmet, at the launch of the HDC-ADPP partnership in Nyanza to promote local market vegetable production



Anne Wangalachi of HDC meets Margaret Okendo of Homa Bay – butternut farmer extraordinaire!

more details on the workshop, please contact the HDC.

According to industry sources, prices for summer flower varieties produced by outgrowers were generally good for the first two months of 2005. However, the dry conditions reduced supply and quality so that intermediaries and exporters were unable to meet demand on a consistent basis.

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## Tree Crops

The Kenya Coalition for Action in Nutrition (KCAN) held its inaugural national nutrition congress (INNC), with the theme "Food and Nutrition Security for Health and Development." Anne Wangalachi of HDC gave a presentation on mango postharvest management, based on data from the Tana River area, and outlined the specific actions being undertaken by HDC to create a more efficient marketing chain. These include:

- more transparent supply and price agreements between growers, intermediaries and processors
- organisation of growers into groups
- equipment for low-cost road maintenance by the growers
- low-cost collection centres where fruit can be graded and consolidated for collection
- training in post-harvest handling to meet processor specifications

For the duration of the congress, all the participants were treated to bottles of Picana – Kenya's favourite mango juice, produced by Milly Fruit Processors in Mtwapa.

Following a field visit by the USAID Mission Director and his senior managers, reported in our last issue, HDC is currently preparing a proposal for possible USAID funding to increase tree crop activities in Coast Province.

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## EUREPGAP

Nigel Garbutt, the EUREPGAP Chairman spent a week in Kenya during February. After visiting small-scale growers and large export farms he commended the industry on being ahead of most countries in the move towards EUREPGAP compliance, and invited Kenya to join the EUREPGAP Technical Committee. While visiting several smallholder groups (mainly in Central and Eastern Provinces), Mr Garbutt gained useful insights on certification within the Kenyan context, while appreciating efforts made by the various stakeholders in mitigating the panic previously associated with compliance. The outcomes from discussions between Mr Garbutt and the industry's EUREPGAP experts included:



Gary Tomlins in the new Mbari ya Mboce passion fruit nursery, comparing hats with farmers



Top quality African birds eye chilli from Homa Bay – and that tie again!



INNC participants enjoying Picana mango juice in a short break between presentations



Grower Bernard Maina, and Lydia Njuguna of HDC, agreeing on a new marketing contract for tomatoes with Mr Nderu of Uchumi Supermarkets

- Approval for development of Kenya-GAP, to be benchmarked against EUREPGAP, placing Kenya in the same league as Chile Mexico and other major suppliers
- Establishment of a EUREPGAP Technical Working Group responsible for developing Kenyan smallholder compliance guidelines, based at FPEAK
- Establishment of a control mechanism for all training and auditing activities to ensure the quality, competence and consistency of trainers and auditors
- Regular press releases to ensure the accuracy of media reports on EUREPGAP, thus preventing confusion
- FPEAK to coordinate these activities with support from BSMDP, HDC and others

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## Industry News & Views

### MOA

Demonstrating the Government's commitment to implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as the Economic Recovery Strategy, the Ministry of Agriculture held a four-day National Conference on its Strategy for Revitalizing the Agricultural Sector for Economic Growth. During the multisectoral and consultative forum, the Strategy for Revitalizing Agriculture (SRA) was reviewed while identifying the key challenges to and specific actions necessary for the achievements of its objectives. In his opening remarks, the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Kipruto Arap Kirwa, called for increased agricultural production at the farm level as well as a focus on fast track interventions, ministers' policy forums and overall agriculture sector coordination. Representatives from the private sector also pushed for increased public-private sector partnerships. Our thanks also go to the MOA for relaunching Kilimo News, which includes several features on the MOA's work in horticulture. For copies contact the MOA at Kilimo House

### FPEAK

During its well-attended 29<sup>th</sup> AGM, FPEAK's members adopted their five year strategic plan, while making various amendments to the constitution. Additionally, in February FPEAK received the go-ahead to proceed with benchmarking of Kenya-GAP to EUREPGAP, (see above). It is anticipated that with increased awareness, retailers and consumers of fresh fruits and vegetables on the local market will also demand Kenya-GAP certification, thus raising local food safety and quality standards. FPEAK carried out farm visits with a view to appraising and assisting its members in identifying compliance gaps, in preparation for certification by June 2005. To assist with this, FPEAK and HDC agreed on a cost-share partnership to train internal auditors; develop a market promotion strategy; and prepare specific policy papers need by the industry. For more information please contact the Chief Executive Officer , FPEAK, through [info@fpeak.org](mailto:info@fpeak.org)



Planting hot mustard for nematode control and mulch

## KEPHIS

In its role as Chair, KEPHIS recruited a new fulltime secretary Mr Joseph Kigamwa, to coordinate the activities of The National Task Force for Horticulture. Our best wishes go to Joseph on his new appointment.

Additionally, KEPHIS has issued an alert on the Banana Xanthomonas Wilt (BXW), caused by the bacterium *Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *musacearum*. The disease, characterized by the secretion of a bacterial ooze, has symptoms similar to those of the banana Fusarium wilt. Observed mainly on plants past the maiden sucker stage and recently flowered ones, BXW causes wilting and premature ripening of the fruit, with the plant dying within a month of the appearance of the first symptoms. Although previously restricted to Ethiopia, BXW has recently spread to Uganda and threatens Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. Because bananas are an important regional staple food, outbreaks must be managed quickly and efficiently to prevent the spread of the disease which is difficult to eradicate once established in smallholder production systems. Proposals made to contain the spread of BXW include: removal of the male bud; strict discipline by farmers to prevent transmission through contaminated tools and crop residues as well as research for the development of an effective long term strategy.

For more details please contact the Managing Director, KEPHIS, through [kephis@nbnet.co.ke](mailto:kephis@nbnet.co.ke)

## HCDA

The horticulture sub-sector was well represented at the SRA conference (see above) by the HCDA, who had a display stand depicting the benefits of value addition to horticultural crops. At their colourful stand, HCDA also gave a power point presentation and distributed handouts on supply chain value addition. Visitors had the opportunity to learn more about various kinds of packaging for juices, chutneys concentrates, canning and other products. HCDA emphasised that value addition begins during production by use of recommended crop husbandry practices. Good post-harvest handling techniques, maintenance of the cool- chain, transportation, branding, packaging and promotion were all included for both domestic and international markets. HCDA stressed the benefits of these technologies through reduction of bulk; minimization of waste; quality enhancement; prolonged shelf life; improved presentation and greater competitiveness .

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