

UPDATE ON KENYAN HORTICULTURE

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

- **USDA/APHIS conducts SPS survey in Kenya for US market approvals**
- **UK retailers fears on air freight and climate change could reduce Kenyan imports**
- **Preparations for Miami Flower Show in top gear**

In January, various horticultural activities kicked off, making for a very busy month, after the holidays. The focus was mainly on SPS/environmental issues and preparations for two major international industry trade shows – Fruit Logistica and the Miami Floral Expo. Across the country horticultural growers are commercializing various crops with great success; recording excellent yields and sales. We plan to reach even more growers in 2007, through joint initiatives with private sector partners and the MOA agencies. Global warming could be Kenya's next big challenge in exporting to the "developed" markets, as some consumer activists demand that supermarkets cut back on imports perceived to have high "carbon footprints". The push is for supermarkets to stock more local produce, to reduce environmental pollution, especially CO₂ emissions caused by air-freighting produce from tropical suppliers. Tesco's, a major customer for Kenyan vegetables, announced proposals which would allow concerned consumers to avoid buying air-freighted vegetables. On the face of it, this is illogical since the alternative of growing these crops in heated greenhouses in Europe, would surely require more energy and produce more CO₂.

The KHDP is always trying to make *Update* as interesting and informative as possible. Please contact Update Editor Anne Wangalachi for comments and suggestions at anne@fintrac.com — *Steve New, KHDP Director*

National Task Force on Horticulture

Once again, the Task Force was busy in January coordinating various industry issues mainly on SPS, information dissemination and stakeholder interaction. The draft report on the diagnostic study on EU

Innovative floriculture



Benjamin Thuku, an *Arabicum* flower grower from Wamahua Group in Central Kenya, is one of hundreds boosting production through innovative technologies. KHDP has introduced drip irrigation and more than 20 new varieties to small-scale flower growers.

Regulation 882/2004 was submitted to the Task Force Chairman, Dr. Kedera and circulated to members for comments. A copy was also sent to the Agriculture Secretary, Dr. Wilson Songa. On Jan. 9, members of the Task Force, KEPHIS, EU representatives and other consultants met to "green light" the new EU-funded KEPHIS program - Horticultural Produce Phytosanitary Certification and Quality Assurance.

At the regional level, the Task Force, with the FAO and UNCTAD, is organizing a workshop on "Good Agricultural Practices in Eastern and Southern Africa: Practices and Policies." The workshop will be held at KEPHIS from March 6 to 9. To participate in this workshop and for more details on the work of the Task Force, contact the MD, KEPHIS through kephis@nbnet.co.ke

Local Market Fruit and Vegetables

Rains have finally subsided in most parts of the country and growers are busy establishing new nurseries to replace some of the crops lost in December. Tomato prices in Eldoret hit a two-year high of KSh 2,500 for 64-kilogram crates, creating demand for disease-resistant seed. In particular, Anna F1 tomatoes – a new hybrid variety – are proving popular as fast-growing, vigorous and suitable for greenhouses and field production. Adhiambo Women's Group in Homa Bay had a bumper watermelon harvest of 14 tons and made KSh 196,000 from their Nairobi buyer. Butternut squash and sweet potato production are also catching on throughout the country, with some first-time growers having record harvests. Keen interest and new demand from both the

local and export markets has in turn pushed up sales of butternut squash seeds and sweet potato vines, in preparation for planting. Meanwhile, joint KHDP and partner demonstration plots of various hybrid vegetable varieties are providing training and technical assistance to nearly 3,000 growers and showing the huge benefits which growers can obtain if they invest in good seed and high-yielding varieties.

Chilli Products

Despite December's heavy rains, reasonable African Bird's Eye chilli harvests have been obtained in parts of the country. Mace Foods shipped a 6-ton container load of dried ABE chilli from deliveries by KHDP assisted growers in January. At the Coast, Leonard Shume, a first-time grower, made KSh 20,000 from 200 kilograms of chilli. To meet the demand for planting material, his neighbors from the Mbogholo Group sold ABE chilli seed worth KSh 10,000. Selections from the joint trials on varietal selection by Moi University, Mace Foods and KHDP have been successfully propagated and planted out to produce improved seed. The researchers are evaluating the quality characteristics of varieties from seed collected last year from KHDP sites in western and coastal areas. If successful, the trials will yield ABE chillies that are large, easy to pick, high-yielding and the right colour. This is a good example of demand-driven research which will assist small-scale growers who have adopted the crop and want to improve their performance.

Vanilla and Spices

Field activities in vanilla development have been extended to growers in Busia, who were introduced to the KHDP-Vanilla and Jatropa Development Fund (VJDF) partnership. Planned are training sessions and implementation of a strategy to manage shade, especially using *Jatropha*. Elsewhere, already established vanilla is at the looping stage. Chamomile promotion efforts by Mace Foods have borne fruit as they were able to ship their first consignment of 496 kilograms. This translated to KSh 99,200 in income for the growers. Once the buyers' results are out, Mace Foods will involve even more growers in production.

Passion Fruit

Training activities continued in January, mainly through exchange visits for growers and partner agronomists from Western and Nyanza regions with their Rift Valley counterparts. Growers shared stories with the visitors about their experiences in production, marketing, and pest and disease management. Farmers are upbeat and production of grafted seedlings is thriving as more areas are set to come under production. In the Coast Province, 260 growers transplanted 20,000 vines of yellow passion fruit.

Tree Crops

Farmers in Coast Province are happy with the results of phase II of the joint Cashew Productivity

Bumper harvest



Caleb Ochola inspecting the quality of his freshly harvested butternut squash. He sold it to Sun City Supermarket in Kisumu.



Members of Adhiambo Women Group in Homa Bay, Nyanza region are negotiating prices with a Kisumu-based buyer. KHDP introduced watermelon to the group and provided both technical assistance and market linkages.

Enhancement Program, launched in September 2006. They are harvesting top quality nuts and they expect to get up to 100% better yields than in previous years. Over 1,000 growers have opened new accounts and received credit from K-Rep Bank to finance their production. In preparation for a new macadamia initiative, the MOA, KARI and KHDP held a public-private sector stakeholders' workshop. The recommendations are in preparation.

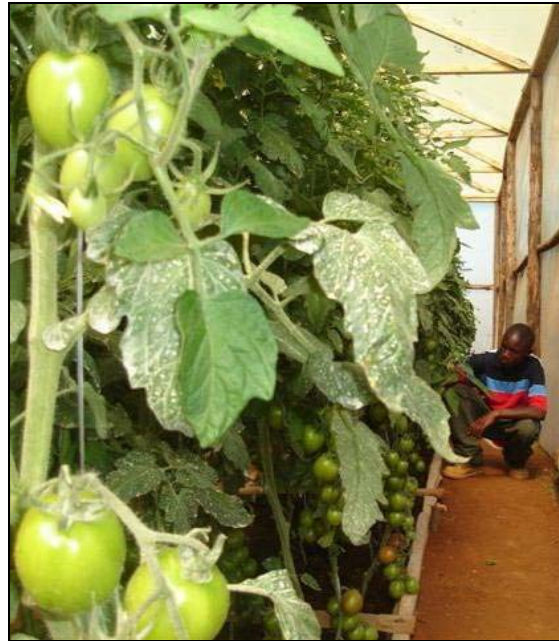
Smallholder Flowers

January was a busy month with growers and exporters gearing up for the Valentine's Day rush. Trials by KHDP partners are doing well, with farmers being introduced to more than 20 "summer flower" varieties and production technologies including shade nets, drip irrigation and multiplication techniques for clean planting material. Training and technical assistance are being provided on GAP, postharvest handling, recordkeeping and market linkages. Growers are upbeat and some have already started commercial production and have harvested their first crops. Once more, USAID will be sponsoring Kenya's participation at the Miami Floral Expo, scheduled for March 14 -16. This will build on last year's success that saw US imports of Kenyan flowers rise, confirming its potential as a new market. KHDP, KFC and FPEAK are coordinating the preparations and a large presentation area has been booked in conjunction with the USAID-funded Trade Hub project. Eight companies are expected to exhibit products, together with a large Kenya Flower stand managed jointly by KFC and FPEAK and supported by KHDP. For more details on this show, please contact KHDP.

EurepGAP/SPS

The USDA/APHIS product evaluation mission, comprising four SPS experts, was in Kenya from Jan. 21 to Feb. 2. The experts visited exporter farms, outgrowers, smallholders, packhouses, airport facilities, government departments and private-sector associations involved in export horticulture to evaluate Kenya's capacity to meet US market specifications. The world class exporter farms and facilities that were visited included: Kakuzi, Sunripe, Everest, Agrifresh, Homegrown, East African Growers and Vegpro. The team also met with representatives from KEPHIS, FPEAK, KARI, HCDA and KHDP. Already, Kenyan shelled garden peas, baby corn and baby carrots have been approved by the US for entry. Approval for French beans is now urgently needed to allow exporters to send the mixed baby vegetable/fresh cut multiple packs which have most potential on the US market. Exporters who interacted with the USDA/APHIS team emphasized the need for French beans to be approved because it is a key ingredient and is grown by many small-scale farmers. Other important exports that need approval include courgettes, leeks, salad onion, and tender-stem broccoli. In a separate initiative, Richard Pike, of House of Quality, South Africa, made an interactive multimedia presentation to industry stakeholders on "Small Farmer Development and Organization in Kenya & Internationally." The focus was on generic management systems specifically developed for the small farmer and the session was organized by the DFID-funded Business Services Market Development Programme (BSMDP).

Wonder tomato



Joel Matunda proudly tends this 3-month-old Anna F1 crop, in a greenhouse in Eldoret which could produce the equivalent of 100+ tons per hectare. Growers from Rift Valley, Western and Nyanza have visited the farm to see the variety for themselves.

Industry News and Views HCDA

On Jan. 29, HCDA held a farmers' meeting at its depot in Limuru along the Nairobi-Nakuru Highway. More than 30 participants attended the function, including Morag Webb of the EU's Pesticide Initiative Programme (PIP). Farmers raised some of their concerns such as inadequacies in market access, soil analysis services, technical production skills, training and farmer-to-stakeholder linkages. HCDA is working with other industry stakeholders to address these constraints and to raise productivity.

Contact KHDP

Kenya Horticultural Development Program

MPPS Building
 Mombasa Road
 P.O. Box 3074-00506
 Nyayo Stadium, Nairobi
Phone: 20-556728/556807
Fax: 20-556804
E-mail: khdp@fintrac.com

Field Offices

Thika, Kisumu, Eldoret, Mombasa

**The KHDP is managed for USAID by
 Fintrac Inc., www.fintrac.com.**