

UPDATE ON KENYAN HORTICULTURE

Brought to you by the Kenya Horticultural Development Program (KHDP) - a USAID-funded program to increase incomes from smallholder production and employment in the horticulture industry. KHDP works with the MOA and other public and private sector agencies to provide technical and marketing assistance to growers both directly with agribusiness partners including exporters, processors and input suppliers

Highlights

- **Kenyan peas approved for US market**
- **USAID supports Phase II of Cashew Program**
- **KEPHIS International Accreditation launched**
- **USDA to undertake Kenyan phytosanitary evaluation**
- **FPEAK holds 4th regional Hortifair**

July and August are traditionally quiet months for the industry. The local market is well supplied and the European market is flooded with fruits, vegetables and flowers grown by European farmers through their spring and summer. This year, unusual weather in Europe – extreme heat followed by excessive heavy rains, created a demand for imported vegetables and flowers which some export companies were able to take advantage of. Orders for beans and flower prices were much higher than usual in August. Despite this unexpected bonus, export companies are expecting more competition than ever during the coming season. To combat this, the National Task Force on Horticulture is working hard to reduce the “costs of doing business” in Kenya. KEPHIS is also playing a major part by gaining international accreditation as a regulatory body. In a very welcome move, the US APHIS has also recommended that Kenyan shelled peas receive approval to enter the US market, and is sending a high level team to evaluate other products for fast-track approval.

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

Ripe for the picking



Fatuma Mwinyi, Treasurer of Mazao Bora self-help group, Kwale District, admires the quality of her yellow passion fruit.

National Task Force on Horticulture

The Taskforce continued to coordinate various industry-level activities on sanitary and phytosanitary issues, farmers' access to credit and public relations. The Horticultural Research Fund (HRF) committee short-listed the proposal on “Kenyan Horticultural Produce: Food Safety Study on Local and Exported Produce with Special Reference to Pesticide Residues” for funding. The final decision on disbursement of the fund will be announced by the HCDA Board in late September.

For more details on the work of the Taskforce, contact the MD, KEPHIS through: kephis@nbnnet.co.ke

Local Market Fruit and Vegetables

Prices for most fresh fruits and vegetables dropped in July-August with ample supplies available. This is typical for the time of year and prices were generally similar to previous years (see KHDP Horticulture Marketing News). Butternut squash seed was in demand and input suppliers ran out of stock. This has become a really popular crop on the local market since it was introduced in KHDP/Seminis field demonstrations in 2004. Bulking of orange-fleshed sweet potato vines continued, in preparation for mass planting to meet growing market demand. New varieties introduced by KARI are being tested across the country. Watermelon and African indigenous vegetables are becoming important cash crops in Coast Province.

KHDP partners held various field days for more than 300 farmers, brokers and extension staff during July-August to demonstrate the benefits of hybrid seeds drip irrigation, and other techniques. The joint project with local market traders to develop better group marketing systems held two training days on price forecasting, calendarized production and post-harvest management systems.

Chilli Products

The African Birds Eye (ABE) chilli and long cayenne harvest season is in full swing, with growers producing excellent quality. Farmers were trained on methods to increase productivity through mulching, and use of *Tithonia diversifolia* as green manure and for pest and disease management. Dominion Farms in Kisumu became one of the biggest suppliers to Mace Foods, delivering 1.3 tonnes of ABE in the space of two weeks.

Vanilla and Spices

Vanilla vines are doing well on the coast growing on a variety of support trees including neem and cashew, but so far there has been no flowering. Farmers in the west are seeing the benefits of good weather which has accelerated the growth of bananas planted for shade and *Jatropha* trees for vine support. The Mace Foods chamomile trials did well and harvesting began in August, with about 50 kgs of flowers dried so far.

Passion Fruit

July and August gave Kenyan passion fruit growers a reason to smile as high regional and national demand and limited supplies kept prices up for fresh fruit. KHDP-assisted grower groups, Labkeiyet and Kutsi Vision, delivered a total of 10 tons, worth KSh 300, 000 to Kasarani Fresh, a local processor. Demand for top quality grafted seedlings and training in various crop management aspects has also increased, as new orchards are being established.

Tree Crops

Phase 2 of USAID's support to the joint KHDP Cashew Productivity Enhancement Program was launched in Mombasa on July 13 by USAID's Harrigan Mukhongo. In this phase, KARI-Mtwapa in partnership with KHDP, MOA, K-Rep, Bayer Crop Science, Technoserve, Action Aid and others will work with thousands of growers to increase tree yields through IPM techniques funded by a commercial credit facility provided by K-Rep bank. Speaking on the results of the first phase, Fatuma Mwinyi, a grower in Kwale said "the project has put more money in our pockets through increasing the productivity of our cashew orchards". A total of 43 MOA extension officers and tree management teams from 21 groups were trained on production systems in August, while K-Rep Bank trained growers on credit management.

In the field



Mrs Phenolia Mutai of Eldoret enjoys a bumper harvest of black nightshade.



Growers in Busia are already harvesting their first chamomile crop for Mace Foods.

Following the approval of new USAID funding, KHDP met with macadamia and coconut processors and other stakeholders to learn about the main challenges and agree suitable interventions for these new target crops. Meanwhile, moringa's uptake in western and coastal Kenya is good, with many nurseries being established. Moringa provides excellent shade for vanilla and ABE chilli, the seeds can be sold for oil, and green pods and leaves eaten as a vegetable.

Smallholder Flowers

Field activities continued in July and August with more demonstration plots for summer flowers being established. Good prices in Europe provided a good incentive to growers.

EurepGAP/SPS

Kenya achieved a major breakthrough on the US market in July when APHIS proposed an amendment to their regulations to allow the entry of Kenyan shelled peas. US growers have 60 days to state any objections to the amendment, but this is not expected

to delay the approval significantly. At the same time, a team from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) met with USAID, KEPHIS, FPEAK and KHDP to discuss a proposed USDA phytosanitary evaluation. During the November evaluation, two USDA experts will assess Kenyan farms and packhouses for nearly 20 commodities with identified US market potential. If successful, this could lead to fast track approval for other Kenyan vegetables to enter the US market.

Training and compliance in EurepGAP other market standards continued relentlessly as usual in July-August.

This year's global EurepGAP buyers' conference, themed "The Global EurepGAP Event for Revision and Implementation" will be held in Prague, Czech Republic on September 20 and 21, 2006.

For more information and to register visit www.eurepgap.org

Industry News and Views

KEPHIS officially launched their International Accreditation on July 28, after receiving the certificate for the Analytical Chemical Laboratory (ACL) from the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS), at KEPHIS headquarters. The certification ceremony was well attended and presided over by the Minister for Agriculture, Hon. Kipruto Arap Kirwa. The accreditation is certainly great news for Kenyan trade because export produce will be certified by KEPHIS in future – saving time and money. Also, teams from the EU and KEPHIS met to further discuss details of funding and identification of the consultant for the proposal on "Horticultural Produce Phytosanitary Certification and Quality Assurance."

For more details contact KEPHIS through: kephis@nbnet.co.ke

MOA

The annual Mombasa Agricultural Society of Kenya Show was held in the last week of August. The MOA/KHDP joint stand won 1st prize for theme interpretation and presentation, and 2nd prize for environment. Visitors included the Minister of Agriculture Hon. Kirwa, various MOA officials and the USAID Commercial Attaché, Kevin Smith.

As follow-up to the June workshop on "Improving the Quality of Horticultural Data and Information," a technical committee was constituted to formulate an action plan for implementing the recommendations made at the workshop. The 14-member committee was established by the MOA in consultation with KHDP. It comprises representatives from the MOA, KEPHIS, HCDA, KHDP, Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), and the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA)/Customs Department.

More nuts



Through the new phase of the Cashew Productivity Enhancement Program, more growers will benefit from high-yielding trees.

FPEAK

FPEAK held its very successful fourth regional Hortifair in Machakos, on August 10 - 11. Dr Wilson Songa, the Agriculture Secretary was the chief guest. More than 2,000 visitors thronged the various exhibition stands to learn more about new products, technologies and services suitable and available for the region.

Genetic Technologies Ltd won the prize for the best stand overall while KEPHIS and Bayer took 2nd and 3rd place, respectively.

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