

# 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.*

- **Miami Expo promotes Kenya flowers**
- **Regional Horticultural Council launched**
- **Regional GAP workshop in Nairobi**

This year's Miami Floral Expo was highly successful in attracting diverse exhibitors who showcased world class products from 15 countries. Through USAID-KHDP coordination, eight Kenyan exporters took part and new flower sales have already been generated as a result. At a cocktail reception hosted for key importers by Fintrac and Kenya's Ambassador to the US, Peter Ogego, it was confirmed that high potential exists in the US market for Kenyan flowers.

Congratulations to FPEAK and KFC for spearheading the launch of the Horticultural Council for Southern, Eastern and Central Africa (HC-SECA). They will jointly host the secretariat, with Hasit Shah and Dr Stephen Mbithi of FPEAK as interim Chairman and CEO, respectively. With FAO and French Embassy support, the HC-SECA brings together 12 countries from Southern, Eastern and Central Africa.

KHDP provided technical papers to two regional workshops on GAPs, organized by the FAO/UNCTAD in Nairobi (in conjunction with the Kenya National Taskforce on Horticulture) and the World Bank in Senegal (focusing on EurepGAP).

On Mother's Day, Marks and Spencer's "Eternal Bouquet", a preserved flower arrangement produced by KHDP partner Rosavie, proved very popular with British consumers. They have continued to choose Kenyan produce because of its high quality and price competitiveness, despite the ongoing controversy over carbon emissions. Sales of Kenyan produce remained high in the UK's leading supermarkets over both March and April. Buyers reported that during the Easter weekend alone, sales passed £500,000 (\$1 million).

The KHDP is always trying to make *Update* as interesting and informative as possible. Please contact

## "Flowers of Kenya" in Miami



The winning Kenyan team at the Miami Floral Expo (L-R): Floral designers Lydia Kang'ethe and Meena Shah, Ambassador Peter Ogego, KFC CEO Jane Ngige and Sue Mureithi of Suera Flowers.



The stunning "Flowers of Kenya" stand: roses and lilies were a major attraction.

Update Editor Anne Wangalachi for comments and suggestions at [anne@fintrac.com](mailto:anne@fintrac.com) — Steve New, KHDP Director

### National Task Force on Horticulture

The Taskforce hosted a major regional workshop (see above) on "Good Agricultural Practices in Eastern and Southern Africa: Practices and Policies". Officially

opened by Minister for Agriculture Hon Kipruto Arap Kirwa, the event brought together 63 participants who identified key requirements of successful GAP implementation.

Three Task Force meetings in April focused on developing national strategies to deal with food miles and carbon footprints. Subsequent to this, a meeting was organized in London by Kenya's High Commissioner Joseph Muchemi, where representatives from Tesco and Marks and Spencer supermarkets met with directors of the HCDA, EPC and KFC. Both supermarkets confirmed that they would continue to stock and promote Kenyan produce. The need to work together to provide eco-friendly products and educate consumers on environmental and development issues was agreed by all parties. For more details on the work of the Task Force, contact the MD, KEPHIS through [kephis@nbnet.co.ke](mailto:kephis@nbnet.co.ke)

### Local Market Fruit and Vegetables

All over the country, small-scale growers are becoming commercial producers of cabbage, tomato, onion and many other horticultural crops through the adoption of more efficient technologies. To maintain this momentum they must also learn the fundamentals of business management. To meet this need, KHDP launched a new training program aimed at strengthening the business capacity of smallholder groups. Consultant Rose Mwaniki took 15 leaders from 6 grower groups in Central Region through aspects of leadership skills, record keeping and financial management.

Growers took advantage of good rains in various parts of the country to transplant hybrid varieties of tomato, cabbage, kale, carrot, onion, butternut squash and watermelon. Coast and Central Region farmers bulked orange-fleshed sweet potato vines to meet the rising demand. Uptake of low cost greenhouse technology is moving fast, especially for production of tomato and cucumber (if you are passing the KHDP office in Nairobi, come in and take a look at our greenhouse production). Demand for African leafy vegetables (managu, kunde etc) continues to increase both for home consumption and market sale.

KHDP launched a new initiative with Uchumi Supermarkets and KEPHIS to establish farm-to-fork supply chains and raise quality standards for a range of fresh vegetables.

### Chilli Products

Growers are gradually raising their yields and incomes from African birds eye (ABE) chilli. In April, growers from Katulye Self Help Group in Eastern Province supplied Equator Products with 1.076 tonnes of dried product, earning them KSh 107,600. Growers in Nyanza and parts of Western Region sold to Mace Foods a total of 3.384 tonnes of dried product worth KSh 338, 400. KHDP and partner agronomists strove to meet demand for ABE chilli seed and technical assistance fuelled by this type of "grass roots

### Sweet Surprise



USAID Kenya Mission Director Steve Haykin enjoying succulent watermelon grown by Nyamanga Group when he visited them in the Nyanza Region. KHDP through its partner Animal Draft Power Program is providing technical and marketing assistance to the growers.

success". Training this month included compost making and application, and use of *Tithonia* to enrich soils for increased crop yields. Moi University invited stakeholders to make the first selection from ABE genotypes grown from seed samples collected in the main production areas. This research, sponsored by KHDP, will lead eventually to improved commercial seed production, higher yields and more consistent quality.

### Vanilla and Spices

KHDP partner Vanilla and Jatropha Development Fund (VJDF) conducted training and provided assistance to farmers in the Western and Nyanza regions on establishment and management of vanilla fields and shade plants, especially Jatropha. Vanilla plants have started to produce flowers in Busia, two years after planting. KHDP consultant Umran Kaggwa visited from Uganda to train growers in hand pollination techniques. Tissue cultured vanilla was planted at the Kenya Forestry Research Institute in Maseno.

### Passion Fruit

The market price for fresh fruit rose steadily in March/April to KSh 30-50 per kilo depending on quality. In April alone, 27,112 kilos of passion fruit were sold by KHDP-assisted growers in Western and Rift Valley, earning KSh 1,111,592 (US \$ 15, 879) .

Exchange visits provided excellent and practical learning experiences. A team of passion fruit farmers from the Rift Valley and Western Provinces visited various sites in the Rift Valley, Nairobi and KARI Thika to enhance their knowledge in nursery and crop management as well as passion fruit processing. Technical support of this type is crucial for growers as

they set up commercial nurseries and expand their orchards to meet the demand for both quality grafted seedlings and fresh fruit. Training during this period also focused on marketing and business development.

More farmers at the Coast were introduced to growing yellow passion fruit to meet the projected long-term demand from juice processors.

KHDP participated in an international research conference in Rwanda held in March through senior agronomist Lydia Njuguna who presented a paper on "Improvement of Smallholder Passion Fruit Production in Kenya." Conference Proceedings are available at the KHDP.

### Tree Crops

In April a farmers' meeting was held in KARI Thika Macadamia Unit with 57 participants. The meeting targeted farmers and nursery owners from the Thika, Maragua and Gatundu areas. Discussions focused on GAPs especially in plant nursery material, while identifying areas that required intervention. The growers felt that for macadamia production to be successful improved technical know-how in production; better quality planting material and enhanced linkage between stakeholders and farmers were required.

At the Coast, moringa harvesting started, in response to a growing demand for the seed from oil processors. In preparation for the new mango harvest season, KHDP met with local and international companies who have expressed interest in buying the crop for processing. However, the poor condition of access roads to the Tana River is a major disadvantage for growers.

### Smallholder Flowers

The 2<sup>nd</sup> World Floral Expo was in March, in Miami, Florida, attracting 150 exhibitors from 15 countries. KHDP once again coordinated Kenya's participation through USAID support. Eight exporters, the Kenya Flower Council (KFC), the Fresh Produce Exporters' Association (FPEAK), and the African Women's Agribusiness Network (AWAN) shared the spectacular "Flowers of Kenya" stand - a major attraction at the Expo. The Kenyan stand was the center piece of the East African Pavilion which included flowers from Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. The stand was a big success, dramatically heralding the arrival of African suppliers into the US marketplace. American buyers, previously unfamiliar with African flowers, were impressed by the array of roses, carnations, lilies and bouquet fillers which are mainly grown by smallholders - callas and mini callas, gerberas, arabicums, mini carnations and hydrangeas.

A well attended reception was sponsored by Fintrac/KHDP for selected growers, importers and distributors on the evening preceding the show. The Kenyan ambassador H.E. Peter Ogego flew in from Washington DC to attend. The Ambassador, in his key-note presentation spoke about collaboration with US counterparts, anticipated reduction in freight rates,

### Wonder Crops



Growers all over the country have enthusiastically taken up hybrid varieties of carrots and butternut squash introduced by KHDP with great results.

and a pending status change to Category A for Kenya's international airport, as additional import incentives. Opportunities were identified for Kenya to optimize supply of its excellent quality roses and other non-rose varieties and to develop its capacity to supply the US market during its key competitors' "off season". Seven key importers expressed keen and specific commercial interest in Kenyan flowers.

Kenyan flowers have a large potential niche in the US mass market, which is already being exploited by participants who are shipping more than 15 pallet-loads of flowers weekly to new customers met at the show.

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