

# 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.*

***"Mapato zaidi kupitia kilimo bora"***

- **FLOWER EXPORTS TO THE US INCREASE BY 50 PERCENT**
- **GREENHOUSES BOOSTING TOMATO PRODUCTION**
- **NEW MORINGA VARIETIES TO INCREASE YIELDS BY 30 PERCENT**
- **NEW MANGO PROCESSING SYSTEM COULD REVOLUTIONIZE MARKETING FOR TANA RIVER GROWERS**
- **NATIONAL REPORT PROVIDES SOLID DATA ON HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND EXPORTS**
- **KARI AND MOA HOLD SUCCESSFUL FIELD DAY FOR CASHEW GROWERS AT THE COAST**

Food safety and new export crops and products are covered in this issue of the Update. Statistics show that Kenyan horticulture is thriving. Exports are increasing and farmers are rushing to adopt new technologies such as low-cost greenhouses for local market tomato production. However, to maintain growth of domestic, regional and global markets, food safety is a key issue for producers, processors and marketers. At an important conference held in Nairobi this month, it emerged clearly that public and private stakeholders are working together to ensure that food safety is given high priority. For export markets, transport is a high part of the final cost. Sea freight is a good way to reduce costs and minimise environmental impact in the future. Kenyan companies are responding well to this challenge by stepping up their efforts to produce crops such as sweet potato and products such as fruit concentrates, which can be shipped by sea to international markets.

## **NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON HORTICULTURE**

The National Task Force on Horticulture met in May to discuss the Horticulture Data Validation Report. This was produced by a national data collection committee including the Horticultural Crops Development Authority (HCDA), Kenya Plant Health Inspection Service

## **Kenyan Flowers in the US Market**



Kenyan flowers undergo vase-life testing in Miami. Kenya/US exports are on the rise. More and more producers are entering the market following technical support from KHDP and USDA and successful promotion at the Miami Floral trade show for two successive years.

(KEPHIS), Kenya Horticultural Development Program (KHDP) and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Improved statistical data is urgently needed by public and private sector stakeholders. The Task Force agreed that the report represents a major advance by providing consistent and validated baseline data on the values and volumes of Kenya's domestic and export horticulture sub-sector. According to the report, the value of export horticulture in 2007 was KSh 57 billion, with flowers, fresh fruit and fresh vegetables valued at KSh 29,715 billion, 1,380 billion, and 17,378 billion respectively. The Task Force recommended establishment of a national data collection and analysis centre with well trained specialist staff equipped with a full range of MIS tools. GPS equipment at field level and satellite data collection technology covering the whole country will also be needed to improve the efficiency and accuracy of information.

## **MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**

The Ministry of Agriculture and KARI Mtwapa organized a successful cashew planting day at Mbudzi Farmer Field School, Jaribuni, Kilifi District. More than 50 farmers attended a practical demonstration of how to grow and plant cashew seedlings. They also heard presentations from various cashew experts and officials on a range of subjects including the future of the industry, income potential of cashew, and the need for good business skills including recordkeeping. An array of dignitaries attended including the Area Chief, the DO,

the DAO and the KARI Mtwapa Director. Despite torrential rains that interrupted proceedings, farmers and officials reported that it was a highly successful day. Similar field days will be held at other cashew locations during the next few months.

**KHDP NEWS**

**Standards and SPS**

NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development), UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) and the EAC (East African Community) hosted a policy-makers seminar on food safety in May to create awareness on food safety standards in the industry. Many Kenyan food companies are market leaders through East Africa and are implementing best practices. Some have achieved the highest levels of safety certification in Europe for fresh and processed vegetables. However, participants in the seminar identified food storage as an area where standards could be improved at all levels. Efficient and safe storage systems are becoming increasingly important as a component of national food security policy. It was recommended that early warning systems be developed. The excellent work done to date by various agencies on traceability mechanisms should also be continued. The Permanent Secretary Ministry of Industrialization, Prof. John K. Lonyangapuo said that his ministry is in the process of making an inventory of food safety practices to identify areas where interventions may be required.

**Floriculture**

Overall flower exports in the first quarter of 2008 increased by 23 percent in quantity and 56 percent in value over the previous year because of record Valentine’s Day prices and sales. Even more impressive was a 49 percent jump in sales to the US. The US market has excellent growth potential for Kenya because, currently, less than 5 percent of flowers go to the US market. The combined promotional efforts of USAID-KHDP and its partners KFC and FPEAK are finally paying off. USAID-KHDP supported Kenyan growers’ stands at the Miami Floral trade show in 2007 and 2008 (see March 2008 Update).

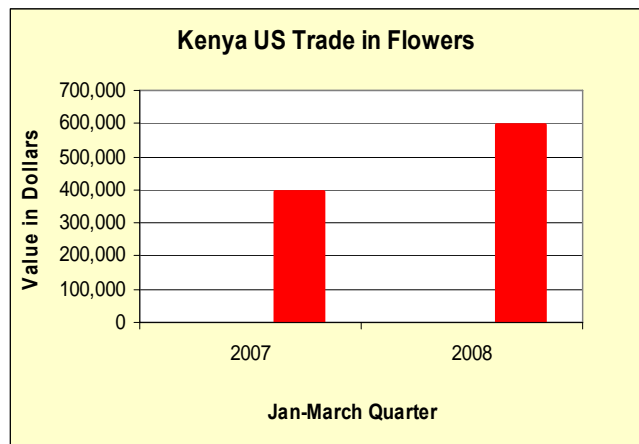
What is also great news for Kenyan smallholder producers is that both US and UK buyers are looking for reliable sources of Fair Trade certified flowers to meet the growing demand for “ethical products” in both markets.

**Local market fruits and vegetables**

Growers in Nyanza enjoyed good prices for butternut squash, watermelon, tomatoes and cabbages in May and June. Throughout Kenya, growers that have adapted hybrid tomato seeds and greenhouse production benefited from strong market demand for their produce. USAID-KHDP is working to meet demand from small-scale growers for training in low-cost greenhouse construction and management. Land constraints and high yields are driving this demand, which demonstrates how smallholders will adopt new



Kalama Ndaa of Mudzi FFS in Kilifi displays cashew seedlings during the cashew planting day organized by KARI, MOA and the Cashew Technical Committee.



technologies very quickly if they see a fast return on investment and are provided with practical information.

**Mango**

The mango season in Tana River and other coastal production areas came to an end in June. Yet again, both growers and processors experienced heavy wastage and losses because of terrible roads that became impassable after heavy rains during the peak season. USAID-KHDP and one of our partners, Renaldo Retief, have been working on various solutions to this during the past three years. In June we tested our latest

attempt to reduce losses by relatively low-cost preparation of frozen pulp close to the production areas. We are waiting for final reports from major processors on the products, but preliminary results are good and full commercial production could be possible during the next season in October. If the system can be successfully expanded it will save growers millions of shillings in the future, and could lead to rapid growth of the fruit juice industry at the coast.

### Moringa

International demand for Moringa remains strong. To increase returns to growers, USAID-KHDP initiated a seed selection and distribution program in June for varieties that have longer pods and produce more weight of seed and oil per tree. The variety that is currently under trial originally came from India but has been grown in small plots at the coast for many years without commercial development. Preliminary results are promising and suggest that yields and profits could increase by more than 30 percent compared to current varieties being grown. Oil extracted from moringa seeds is used for water purification and as a natural ingredient in cosmetics.

### Passion fruit

Sugar farmers in Bungoma District are starting to integrate passion fruit production into their farming systems. In May and June, more than 52,000 vines of passion fruit were planted in Bungoma. Passion fruit is attractive to the farmers because of the short-term nature of the crop, which can provide cash flow as they wait to harvest sugarcane every 24 months.

Growers at the Coast and Rift Valley are also increasing areas under production in anticipation of new processing ventures being promoted in these regions.

In Central Kenya the University of Nairobi is working in partnership with USAID-KHDP-assisted growers to isolate clean material that is free of woodiness virus.

### Chilli

African Bird's Eye (ABE) chilli production continued to grow in May and June. USAID-KHDP partner Mace Foods exported four containers of dried chilli, a 100 percent increase from last year. Researchers from Moi University, working with USAID-KHDP and Mace growers to produce improved varieties, transplanted selected ABE seeds for multiplication at Mabaga FTC. Growers at the coast and in western areas were also trained on seed selection to ensure they plant only high yielding chilli lines. ABE Chilli remains under-supplied in the world market and Kenya could become a market leader following crop shortfalls in recent years in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Uganda who are the traditional suppliers. The good news for growers is that several companies are now buying and processing the crop.

### Sweet potato

USAID-KHDP is promoting sweet potatoes for food security and for export. Identifying and propagating



appropriate varieties for export is a long-term project but the first samples from selected growers were harvested in May and June. Yields were less than expected but samples will be sent to Europe for market reaction after curing and grading. Current production is in central Kenya but trials have started on the coast where sandy soils may produce higher quality potatoes for export through Mombasa port.

### Export vegetables

The concentration of smallholder export vegetable production in central Kenya may be coming to an end. In May, USAID-KHDP-assisted growers in western and Rift Valley areas started to plant crops for export following the launch of a cold store and shipping service by Canken International at the Eldoret international airport. Growers at the coast may also join the export business later this year after USAID-KHDP started trials of fruits and vegetables for sea and airfreight from Mombasa. The coastal climate is good for tropical export crops such as okra and hot pepper, which are difficult to grow in traditional vegetable production areas.

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