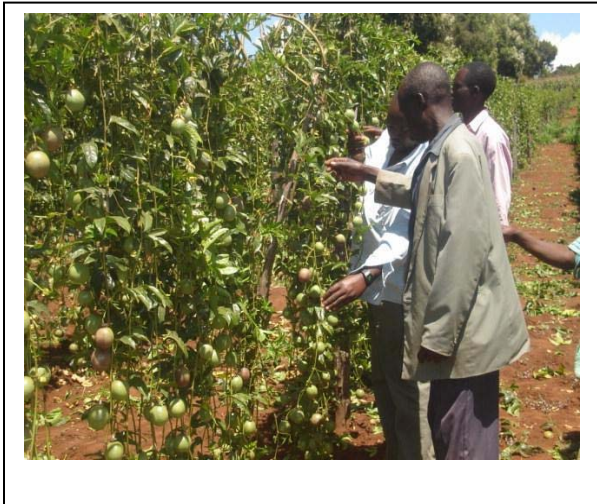




Success Story- Making Money from Passion Fruit

The Labkaiyet Farmer Group in Keiyo District of Rift Valley Province was formed in February 2006 by 25 farmers whose vision was to “eradicate poverty and achieve economic empowerment of both men and women through the production of horticultural crops”. Some of the main challenges the group faced included i) lack of technical know how on production and marketing strategies for various horticultural crops ii) lack of organized market linkages and iii) finding time for both home and group activities.

The group applied to KHDP for technical assistance in March 2006 and have been able to raise their farming activities to a commercial level in less than a year. To supplement existing maize and beans production, KHDP manager Geoffrey Nyamota assisted the group to establish a demonstration plot on one of the members’ farms where all the group members could share the cultivation costs and receive practical training on the growing of passion fruits.



Since then the group has made impressive progress with its objectives:

- 20 members have established their own passion fruit orchards
- Market linkages have been set up
- Growers have added vegetable crops to diversify their production
- Use of improved seed and new techniques has increased land productivity
- Growers have increased their incomes from the sale of horticultural products
- Members have joined a Savings and Credit Organization (SACCO)

Some of the technologies adopted include use of grafted seedlings, raised beds, mulching, pest scouting, hybrid seeds, IPM, compost use, safe use of chemicals, and crop rotation. Different group members have diversified into passion fruit, kale, spinach, cabbages, chilli and tomato.

Average incomes have increased from \$833 (Kshs 62,475) in 2005 to a projected \$9,000 (Kshs 675,000) for 2006, mainly from the sales of passion fruits. For example, in September 2006, the group members sold a total of 24 tons of passion fruit valued at \$7,048 (Kshs 528,600). One member who initially had 280 plants of passion fruit earning \$50 (Kshs 3,750) per week now has 1,000 plants earning \$160 (Kshs 12,000). At peak harvest he expects to sell 1000 kg of passion per week for up to \$400(Kshs 30,000). Additionally, the group has established a passion fruit nursery to supply members with planting material with the surplus sold to outside growers for extra income.

With the additional income earned, the group members have been able to pay school fees for their children in schools and colleges, purchase better breeds of livestock and access better healthcare facilities. Some group members have invested in trading and posho mills. The group now plans to bring piped drinking water to the village and use their existing rainwater dam to irrigate vegetables in the dry spell when prices are usually high. They also intend to plant a further 15 acres of passion fruits by April 2007 and plant a range of new vegetable varieties for home consumption and to test the local market.