

Kenya Horticultural Development Program

MONTHLY UPDATE ON KENYAN HORTICULTURE

March 2006

“Keeping Smallholders in Business”

The KHDP is a USAID-funded program, managed by the agribusiness firm Fintrac Inc. Our mission is to increase and sustain smallholder sales and incomes through crop diversification, improvements in production and postharvest technologies, and market linkages.



Dr Romano Kiome officially launching the new KARI-KHDP passion fruit screen house at KARI Thika

This month

- **Kenya’s status as a major international supplier of horticultural products boosted by EU recognition of KEPHIS as a competent authority to pre-inspect EU exports**
- **Kenya flower growers make major impact on US market at the World Floral Expo in Miami, supported by USAID**
- **Growers, processors and exporters meet in Thika as KARI and KHDP launch next phase of their national passion fruit initiative**

March was a winning month for the industry as Kenyan efforts in marketing and SPS compliance received international recognition. Our congratulations go to KEPHIS on receiving approval from the EU to grant certificates of conformity in accordance to regulation EC 1148/2001. If the reactions of visitors to this year’s World Floral Expo in Miami are anything to go by, this success in Europe will soon be repeated in the US. Buyers were visibly impressed by the range and quality of Kenyan flowers on show. Based on the large number of sales enquiries received, 2006 will be a breakthrough year for Kenya-US trade in flowers. At home, HORTEC 2006 lived up to its billing as a major international show, with both local and global industry exhibitors and guest speakers (including KHDP) taking part in the three-day event. FPEAK is now finalizing preparations to have KenyaGAP benchmarked to EurepGAP which will greatly enhance the competitiveness of Kenyan horticulture and assist in making it ‘the global choice’. USAID support for the industry was very evident this month through the funding of a three-day seminar on rural agricultural finance and the launch of a new passion fruit screening facility at KARI Thika. The launch of this new facility was a colourful ceremony presided over by Dr Romano Kiome, the new Permanent Secretary, MOA, and former Director, KARI, who commended USAID for funding the KHDP-KARI collaboration and expressed satisfaction in the role it was playing in increasing farmers’ incomes. *Steve New, Director, KHDP*

Local Market Fruits and Vegetables

March was a busy month in Eldoret area, with four field days held, drawing 3400 participants to production demonstrations of cabbage, kale, tomato, onion, beetroot and other local market vegetables. Farmers, who have attended similar field days during the transplanting and growth of the crops, were enthusiastic about the results. Many said that they are already adopting new techniques learnt including the use of drip irrigation, hybrid seeds, raised beds and composting as demonstrated by KHDP area manager, Geoffrey Nyamota, and technical staff from KHDP partners Hygrotech. KHDP managers are working continuously with partner agronomists, MOA extension officers and market intermediaries to make realistic cost analyses of domestic market vegetables from these demonstrations. It is clear that hybrid seeds and proper agronomy can give farmers returns that are many times more than the cost of production.



With uptake of drip irrigation technology and hybrid seeds, farmers have sustained their production despite the dry spell, of kale and beans.

Chilli Products

African Birds Eye (ABE) chilli growers in Western and Rift Valley areas are keen to maintain their progress in ABE production and have so far established over 500 nurseries. In April, these will be transplanted to produce this year's new crop. The recent rains have also rejuvenated the one-year-old plants which have started flowering again. The farmers are unanimous that ABE production is lucrative, with some receiving as much as KSh8,000 from a quarter acre plot. Marketing is secure for the foreseeable future since KHDP partners Mace Foods of Eldoret, who provide marketing contracts to all growers, have orders for five times the quantity produced in 2005. Production is also increasing at the Coast. KHDP Mombasa manager Beatrice Gambo is confident that growers will produce enough ABE to fill a container by September (8 tonnes). Coast growers will have a transport cost advantage to Mombasa port, which will compensate for the slightly lower yields which we expect under coast conditions. Mace Foods also report a growing local demand for chilli powder produced from the less pungent *cayenne* variety.

Vanilla and Spices

Vanilla planting is set to accelerate now that the rains have started. More than 10,000 vines are due to be transplanted from KHDP partner nurseries. Demand for plants is strong in the main target areas of Busia and Malindi. Growers around Lake Victoria are persevering with *Jatropha* as their support plant, following their neighbours in Uganda. *Jatropha* also has potential as a biofuel crop. To develop this further, KHDP is working with the Vanilla Development Foundation, a Kisumu-based NGO which is promoting sustainable vanilla/*Jatropha* planting in the area. Over the long term we expect a range of other support trees to be utilised by Kenyan growers, including neem and cashew. KARI has an excellent trial plot of vanilla growing in a greenhouse at Thika. The vines are already 3-4m long and should start to flower this year.



Vanilla growing very well on neem at Malindi



KHDP Eldoret manager, Geoffrey Nyamota training farmers on passion fruit grafting at Shinyalu in Kakamega, Western region.

Passion Fruit

KARI and KHDP have been working together for more than a year to improve the quality of plants available to growers, and translate technical research into extension recommendations. KHDP has also established more than 40 passion fruit demonstrations across the country in cooperation with private sector partners. In the next phase of this work, the supply of plants and the delivery of training will be accelerated through more intensive cooperation between KARI and KHDP. This includes the construction of a screen house for producing elite rootstock and scion plants under strict quarantine conditions. The house is already up and running ahead of schedule. A new production training manual has also been written by KARI researchers. Speaking at the launch, the chief guest, Dr Romano Kiome, the Permanent Secretary, MOA, said "I have been convinced of the great potential that grafted passion fruit holds, not just for the smallholder but for the industry as well. I am very happy with the KARI-KHDP partnership and what it is set to achieve." The 300 participants, who represented KARI, the provincial administration, donor projects, various MOA agencies, the media and growers were impressed by the new screen house which has a capacity to produce at least 30, 000 "seedlings" of grafted passion fruit per year. This will greatly improve the availability of clean planting material for growers country-wide. KARI will also jointly with KHDP develop and evaluate additional varieties suitable for various agro-ecological zones. "In the pipeline are plans to develop a protocol for tissue-cultured passion fruit, to also meet the increased demand for good quality planting material," said KARI-Thika Director, Dr Waturu.

Smallholder Flowers

With technical and financial support from USAID, the Kenya Flower Council (KFC) and the Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya (FPEAK) took part as one of the 170 invited exhibitors at this year's World Floral Expo in Miami, Florida. More than 25 varieties of excellent summer flowers, roses, carnations and lilies were on display, with 12 Kenyan companies being represented at the stand. Miami is considered the "flower gateway" for the US market and the Expo was a superb opportunity to highlight the immense potential of our various summer flowers. These varieties are often field-grown by smallholders and are fast gaining ground as niche products. Also on display were the latest products in roses, lilies and carnations. The Kenya stand received a continuous stream of visitors who commended the diversity of the flowers and their professional presentation. The event generated 70 specific trade enquiries and already some growers are processing the orders received.

Participants were impressed by the immense potential of the US market for intermediate and sweet heart roses, as well as zantedeschia, gypsophilla and hypericum. Although the US marketing structures differ from those in Europe, there are still openings for Kenyan growers, provided they understand the market requirements - products, packaging and logistics. Developing direct relationships with wholesalers and retailers will also greatly enhance efforts to identify and position Kenyan products in niche markets. For more details on the Miami Floral Expo, please

contact kfc@wananchi.com

EUREPGAP

The process of benchmarking KenyaGAP to EurepGAP (Vegetable Scope) is now entering the fourth and final phase, having successfully gone through the EurepGAP members' peer and independent technical reviews. KenyaGAP is set to be declared EurepGAP equivalent, once its documents meet the Technical Steering Committee's approval after being successfully tested on a member's farm in April.



The Kenya Flowers stand at the Miami World Floral Expo.

The final session of the Internal Auditors' course, cosponsored by KHDP, was successfully concluded on 10th March. This time, a record 35 trainees went through the rigorous five-day course. So far, 80 technicians from over 30 exporting companies have benefited from the four trainings covering quality management systems to meet the requirements of the main market standards (ISO, HACCP, BRC and EurepGAP). These technicians can now competently monitor systems within their respective companies and on behalf of their smallholder and outgrower suppliers. FPEAK is also planning a Lead Auditors' course, for more details and to participate, please contact info@fpeak.org

Industry News & Views

The National Taskforce on Horticulture

HORTEC 2006 from March 7th -10th and was officially opened by the PS Agriculture, Dr. Romano Kiome who emphasized the significant role of agriculture and the Kenyan horticultural industry. The programme included an exhibition and parallel technical and marketing seminars. The National Taskforce on Horticulture participated in the exhibition jointly with KARI, PCPB and PIP. In total there were at least 80 exhibitors who also included KEPHIS, HCDA, FPEAK, KFC and other private sector business service providers. The seminars provided ample opportunity for both local and international participants to share insights on the current status and future trends in the industry in postharvest technologies, market trends, production and breeding.



Participants at FPEAK internal auditors training

The role of the media in scaling up information disseminated by national taskforces was explored in a workshop – "**Bridging the GAP** – Supporting Smallholders in Kenyan Export Horticulture" held on March 15th supported by DFID and WRENmedia, of the UK. From the discussions held, the participants felt that in order for the industry to move forward and for the media to accurately report progress, the following strategic actions were required: development of a coherent policy on horticulture; increased co-ordination among government departments and other agencies; and better interpretation of markets and market information. Additionally, 'domesticating' the international food safety standards to apply to local needs; and translating laws into Kiswahili would greatly increase local involvement and interest. USAID' Kenyan mission funded a three-day seminar on rural agricultural finance (RAF). The 39 participants drawn from donor projects,



Catherine Guichard, COLEACP
Delegate General with Sicily
Kariuki of FPEAK when she visited
the Kenya stand during the Berlin
Fruit Logistica

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government agencies, local financial institutions and farmer groups, were unanimous that more needs to be done to finance small-scale agriculture, particularly horticulture. They will be working on a RAF strategy in the coming months. For more details on the work of the Taskforce, contact the MD, KEPHIS through: kephis@nbnet.co.ke

KEPHIS

Kenyan ongoing SPS compliance efforts received a major boost in March when KEPHIS received approval from the EU to grant certificates of conformity to EU food safety and traceability requirements in accordance with regulation EC 1148/2001. This approval is contained in the Commission Regulation (EC) No 431/2006 of 15th March 2006. It is excellent news for the horticultural industry and places Kenya on an equivalent level to other major market suppliers, including EU countries. KEPHIS technical staff and private sector partners from major export companies should be congratulated for the technical skill, market knowledge and persistence which they have demonstrated over the three years which it has taken to get this application approved.

FPEAK

Previous FPEAK regional Hortifairs in Eldoret and Mwea have highlighted the potential of emerging horticultural hubs in Kenya. Building on the experience gained from these events, FPEAK has organized a third Hortifair, slated for Nyahururu, on May 19th & 20th. The region is famed for its exceptional growth in production of summer flowers, legumes and passion fruit; positioning it as the next important centre of production. For more details and to register for the Hortifair, please contact info@fpeak.org

HCDA

For the last two months HCDA has been busy building the capacity of its technical staff and growers in various crop production and marketing aspects, through technical assistance and funding provided by the EU Pesticides Initiative Programme (PIP). Already, eight regions have been covered in two phases - Mwea, Nakuru, Kibwezi, Eldoret, Kitale, Limuru, Yatta and Taveta, with 9 more to go. This demand-driven training has been delivered so far to 40 lead farmers, representing 20 farmer groups, who will pass on their new knowledge to group members in subsequent training events. A training needs analysis, showed that farmers are keen to improve their productivity and profit and would thus benefit from training in "farming as a business", including record keeping. There was also a strong demand for training in: crop protection and safe use of pesticides as well food safety and hygiene. In recognition of the potential benefits of group farming, training was also provided in group formation, management and dynamics. Other aspects covered were: market information and linkages as well as post harvest handling.