



HDC
horticulture
development
centre

Monthly Update

September 2005

“Keeping Smallholders in Business”

The HDC is a USAID-funded programme, 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.



USAID/ US team at Mbari Ya Mboce



This month

The spotlight was once again on Kenyan horticulture this month. We were pleased to receive the new Chief of USAID’s Agriculture, Business and Environment office, USAID Kenya Director and key US government representatives from Washington at our Thika and Coast field sites. They were impressed with the uptake of various new technologies and products.

The Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI) launched the ‘*ETI Smallholder Guidelines for Smallholders and their Workers*’. Kenya’s horticulture and tea industries were studied in the 3-year project, with a Kiswahili version of the Guidelines being developed. Although the guidelines are not absolute standards, they will help the industry maintain its positive growth trend which contributes significantly to poverty reduction. In the 12 months to June 2005, small-scale growers in rural areas earned more from horticulture than ever before.

We congratulate the MOA for scooping the third prize overall at this year’s Agricultural Society of Kenya/Nairobi International Trade Fair, which once again had the theme “ Building an Agricultural and Industrial Working Nation. ” We were pleased to have had a display stand, for the first time alongside other MOA agencies and departments, with most of the visitors being greatly interested in the vanilla vines in pots. Our best wishes go to Mr Tom Bonyo, the new Deputy Director of Agriculture – Horticulture Division on his appointment.

We sadly learned of the passing on of Prof Juma Lugogo, the former Coast Development Authority Director. He will be remembered by the industry for his dedicated leadership, especially in facilitating horticulture at the Coast.

Steve New, Director, HDC

Local Market Fruits and Vegetables

HDC’s extension partnerships are reaching many growers. The work with Animal Draft Power Programme (ADPP) is a good example. At a field day this month, a total of 647 farmers in Rabour, Migori District were shown how to manage small-scale drip irrigation systems on demonstration plots of hybrid tomato, cabbage, passion fruit, squash and African Indigenous Vegetables (AIVs). Mr Joseph Osumba, a farmer receiving technical assistance from HDC and ADPP field staff, has made Ksh 188, 850 from his bumper harvest of chilli, passion fruit and various AIVs. The area District Commissioner challenged farmers to take up commercial horticulture, saying that “Market-driven smallholder horticulture, especially production of AIVs, tomato, squash and hot chilli has great potential for improving your incomes and nutrition.”



Hon Kirwa at the HDC stand during the Nairobi ASK / International Trade Fair



The Alamin Youth Group admiring their bumper tomato harvest

Chilli Products

The interest in ABE chilli production has been sustained with more areas coming under production. In the next planting season (October/November 05), 56 new farmers will plant 70, 000 chilli plants per week, having undergone a six-module training by Equator Products. Meanwhile, in September, more yields were recorded, as the weather got warmer. Our partner, Equator Products, are encouraging their farmers to innovatively use sunflower, okra, kales and beans in their chilli IPM programme. Additionally, through funding from various Dutch organizations, their farmers have set up a farm input store ran by the Kwayo Farmers' Association Cooperative Society. Paul Muthiini, a delighted Equator Products farmer, has made more than KSh 2,000 so far, having begun harvesting his chillies in May 2005, "From the training and technical advice received, I am able to also take good care of my French beans. From my chilli sales I have managed to improve my living standards and take my children to school. I am looking forward to an even bigger crop next season!"

Vanilla and Spices

This month the first TC vanilla was planted out on demonstration plots being managed by farmers in Malindi District. There are also signs that the market for vanilla is improving again after a very slack period.

Passion Fruit

The Pesticide Initiative Programme (PIP) will be conducting field trials on selected passion fruit pesticides to determine their MRLs (Maximum Residue Levels) between October and December this year. The project to be coordinated by Dr A. Seif , assisted by HDC agronomist Lydia Njuguna, will cover three sites in Thika, Nyeri and Kiambu districts. HDC clients in these areas will also be involved. Samples will be collected at given intervals and sent to the EU for MRL analysis and recommendation. At the end of the project more information on all the appropriate pesticides for use on passion fruit will be available – certainly good news for Kenyan growers!

Tree Crops

Mazao Bora Farmer Field School is one of the demonstration sites in the HDC Cashewnut Productivity Programme initiated this January. That there is equal female farmer participation, with all farmers applying the technologies learnt on their own farms is particularly encouraging. "This project has been very useful, revolutionizing production of my other crops too – ABE, passion fruit and I am also growing other beneficial trees," affirmed Mr Hassan, a Kwale cashew grower during the site visit. Meanwhile, cottage processing of cashew has been ongoing with the Buraha Self Help Group processors happy with their progress.

Smallholder Flowers

This month, we held discussions with several buyers and exporters, in preparation for the start of our field activities in October. We confirmed that



HDC's cashew productivity programme gets a hand with a KARI improved variety being planted by US Ambassador William Bellamy at the Mazao Bora group demonstration plot in Kwale District



Vanilla at the Coast responding quite well to Neem as a support plant

interest is great and some of the highlights of the discussions are:

- 'Collaborative competition' is key to maintaining the county's competitive edge.
- The demand for new varieties is increasing, with that for certain others remaining unmet – further opportunities for Kenya.
- Interventions should focus on provision of adequate information/sensitization on competitiveness constraints and on strengthening existing capacities to meet current demand; add new varieties and ensure continuous and well-timed supply for the key varieties.

On their part, KARI-Thika have successfully conducted lily trials for both the local and international markets, showing there is great potential to be developed. KARI has also introduced a range of 22 varieties (Easter, Asiatic and Oriental hybrids), of which 10 are performing well in the field and are popular with florists in the market. For more details on the agronomy and postharvest management of lilies, growers should contact KARI-Thika.

To be considered for partnership in our smallholder floriculture programme, please contact the HDC .

EUREPGAP

September was a busy month for Kenya, in the lead-up to next month's Conference. As part of the drive towards obtaining certification for the majority of export small-scale growers, FPEAK conducted the second HDC-supported Internal Auditor Training sessions. At the end of the 5-day training the participants, technical personnel from export companies, felt they were now better prepared to set up and maintain internal monitoring processes.

This month a workshop was held to introduce the Good Risk-based Agricultural Social Practices (GRASP) project to various Kenyan stakeholders. While speaking at the Workshop, the new Deputy Director of Agriculture – Horticulture Division, Mr Bonyo confirmed "This is a major boost to Kenyan EUREPGAP efforts as we will have an opportunity to make our contribution to the revision of the global (EUREPGAP) standard in 2007."

Next month, Kenya will be participating in the Paris EUREPGAP Buyers' Conference and we hope to present a strong case for smallholder certification, from the national experience. Also KenyaGAP will be presented by FPEAK to the delegates.

Industry News & Views

The National Taskforce on Horticulture

An adequate regulatory framework is necessary to ensure the continued competitiveness of the sub-sector. In recognizing this, HDC will be supporting a diagnostic study to strengthen the industry's negotiating position. As part of the industry-wide food safety efforts, the Taskforce has been developing a technical flier on "food safety and hazard analysis and prevention" at the farm level and has also forwarded a concept note on "food safety in the local and exported Kenyan horticultural produce" to KARI's KAPP-CARGF (Kenya Agricultural Productivity Project – Competitive



Magie Blanche; one of the popular Easter lily varieties introduced by KARI into the country



The Kenya Wine Agencies Ltd (KWAL) are expertly growing pumpkin – important for food security

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Agricultural Research Grant Fund) Project.

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

FPEAK

FPEAK will be making a presentation on KenyaGAP to nearly 300 delegates in the upcoming EUREPGAP Conference. KenyaGAP, which has a strong smallholder focus, is due for accreditation any time from now.

In order to empower the technical personnel of their members, FPEAK conducted the second HDC-supported internal auditors' training this month in Ruiru. At the end of the 5-day training, the 13 participants were confident of their skills in establishing and maintaining internal monitoring processes for compliance with key quality standards.

The preparations for the October Eldoret Hortifair–Kenya are going well, with farmers and industry exhibitors showing great interest.

For more details and to participate in this Hortifair, please contact info@fpeak.org.

HCDA

The Horticultural Research Fund (HRF), managed by HCDA, received a total of seven applications – and the results of their evaluation should be available in the near future. Also, HCDA launched its 2005 – 2009 Strategic Plan, confirming its determination to take the lead in serving the industry. While officiating the launch, the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Kirwa, confirmed

“This is indeed a very comprehensive document. It is important for all the relevant authorities ensure compliance of all the growers with emerging market requirements.”

HCDA continues to receive encouraging feedback from its August workshop in Kisumu on “Increasing horticultural productivity and diversity in the Lake Region.” The Workshop was particularly timely as it enabled participants to strategize on how to make the area, a net importer of horticultural produce, self-sufficient upon overcoming both production and marketing constraints of the same. For more information, please contact the MD, HCDA.

KFC

KFC participated in the official launch of two key publications: **An Investment Guide to Kenya: Opportunities and Conditions** and **An Investment Guide to the East African Community: Opportunities and Conditions**, on 29th September. Kenya's horticultural industry has been hailed as a great success, well worth investing in. Also, there is information provided on priority areas, the regulatory frame work as well as the 3 top reasons for investing in Kenya: skilled workforce, market access and fabulous climate!

For more details please contact kfc@wananchi.com