



The KHDP Cashew Program: Raising Productivity through Collaboration

Global demand for nuts — specifically cashews and macadamias — continues to rise. However, Kenya is a relatively small player in the global market, contributing just .05 percent. Although Kenya's cashew industry has faced aging trees, powdery mildew disease, poor agronomic practices, uncompetitive prices, inadequate planting material and a lack of organized marketing, things are slowly beginning to change. Various industry-wide initiatives are underway to rehabilitate Kenya's cashew sector with improved productivity, processing and marketing. In addition, the National Cashew Technical Committee has been revived with support from the Horticulture Development Centre. The committee comprises representatives from the MOA, KARI, Bayer East Africa, Chamber of Commerce, Coast Development Authority (CDA), Action Aid Kenya, Coast NGOs Forum, TechnoServe, DED, Kenya Nut Company, Millennium Management and the Kenya Cashew Nut Processors and Exporters' Association. Plans to form a cashew growers' association are moving along rapidly.



Cashew productivity training in Mombasa



USAID-Mission Director, Dr. Kiert Toh planting Cashew tree in Kilifi

Cashew Production

Through USAID assistance, the Kenya Horticulture Development Program/Horticulture Development Centre (HDC) initiated its collaborative cashew productivity program in Kenya's coastal region. In response to the farmers' productivity challenges, HDC developed a Cashew IPM Protocol that can be tailored to train farmers how to cost-effectively raise productivity through better agronomic practices such as pruning and biological control of pests and disease. Seeking to utilize practices made in the Cashew IPM Protocol, HDC is supporting the National Cashew Technical Committee through the MOA and KARI Mtwapa to implement the Coast Province Cashew Productivity Enhancement Program. Recognizing the significant role of frontline extension officers, 90 to date have been given IPM protocol manuals, training in IPM and other cashew production practices.

HDC's target is to increase production in 2007 by at least 5,000 MTs from a baseline of 8,620 MTs in 2003. The NIS value in 2003 was Kshs 40 per kg and is currently at Kshs 65 per kg. Already, farmers have increased yield from 3.5 kg per tree in 2003 to 6 kg per tree in May 2005. With 20 trees each, farmers brought in Kshs 2,800 (US\$37) in 2003 and currently make Kshs 7,800 (US\$103). This increases the average income of the program's 4,325 farmers by almost 300 percent. To date, the program has increased income from Kshs 12.1 million (US\$160,025) to Kshs 33.7 million (US\$445,475).

The activities in this collaborative extension program include:

- ✓ Field-based training of 5,000 farmers by extension officers through HDC support. Each extension officer has held field-training days for farmers in the areas of nursery establishment, orchard establishment, orchard management, buyer linkages and cashew IPM strategy. More training is planned and they have also established and maintain one to two small cashew demonstration plots and are collecting baseline and follow up data as required.
- ✓ Providing specialized equipment for frontline extension workers (pH meters, moisture meters and pruning saws).
- ✓ Supporting KARI Mtwapa in maintaining a central demonstration and propagation plot, maintaining a central demo plot at KARI, enabling KARI to continue dissemination of improved planting material and providing KARI with two computers, a digital camera and a GPS unit.
- ✓ Organizing organic certification programs.



Cashew from Kwale District on sale in Mombasa

About KHDP/HDC

The Kenya Horticultural Development Centre (KHDP), a USAID-funded project managed by Fintrac Inc., under the Horticultural Development Centre (HDC) supports smallholder growers in production, post-harvest handling and marketing of high-value horticulture.

Cashews are an excellent crop for increasing smallholder income and providing employment in processing and exporting. Global demand for cashews is strong and processing capacity already exists within the country to absorb roughly 30,000 tons — three times production in 2003. HDC has developed an IPM strategy to fight powdery mildew and other biological diseases and is working with KARI to train frontline extension workers.

Cashew processing

To support Kenya's small processors, HDC is also collaborating with the Coast Development Authority and over 40 women's groups representing 800 entrepreneurs.

The program improves capacity through training in micro-processing, entrepreneurship, group mobilization and marketing. This leads to enhanced quality and aims to raise the proportion of graded whole nuts to 90 percent — the optimum global rate — resulting in higher incomes.

Additionally, through the Cashew Technical Committee's extension program, processors have been encouraged to initiate their own extension programs and are hiring field staff to assist farmers in raising the quality of cashews.

In June, HDC participated in the first meeting of the African Cashew Alliance in Baltimore, Md., by sponsoring the attendance of James Wachira of the Kenya Nut Company. At that meeting, donors and processors pledged to increase the quantity of locally processed nuts and to reduce the exports of raw nuts.

In another development aimed at supporting growth in Kenya's cashew industry, the Kenya Cashew Nut Processors and Exporters' Association agreed on a levy that will provide technical assistance to farmers on a consistent basis.