

UPDATE ON KENYAN HORTICULTURE

“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.

- ***50% Increase in USAID funding for horticulture***
- ***APHIS/KEPHIS hold regional Pest Risk Analysis workshop for passion fruit in Nairobi***
- ***New EU funding proposed for KEPHIS***
- ***Total of EU-certified growers reaches 1,400***

USAID Kenya provided a major boost to horticulture in April by awarding Fintrac a 50% increase in funding for KHDP over the next 18 months. This has been made by USAID in recognition of the impressive investment of time and money which our private and public sector partners in the industry have made over the past two years. It also acknowledges that horticultural crops and products offer some of the best opportunities for growth of Kenya-US trade in future. Starting this month, we will highlight the work of the National Taskforce on Horticulture on the front page of *Update*. This recognizes the leading role which the Taskforce is playing to develop, guide and promote the industry for the benefit of both private and public stakeholders. We are continuously working to make the *Update* format as interesting to readers as possible. If there are things you would like changed or included every month, please get in touch with our Editor Anne Wangalachi. *Steve New Director, KHDP.*



USAID's irrigation expert Harrigan Mukhongo and Kibrigwi Scheme Manager Mr Wang'aragu assist Rodah Kibuchi to install her new drip irrigation kit

National Taskforce on Horticulture

A progress report on horticulture from the Taskforce for the year to March 2006 was sent this month to the Agriculture Secretary, Dr. Wilson Songa. It

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details the successes, challenges and areas requiring assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture.

Work is continuing on a diagnostic study for the **EU regulation 882/2004** by consultant Mr. J.J. Gichuki. A preliminary report on his findings is expected in May.

FPEAK's Chief Executive Sicily Kariuki and KHDP's EurepGAP Manager, Timothy Mwangi represented the Taskforce on 'Mali Shambani' - a new and interactive national radio programme. During the horticulture-specific segment themed "Access to export markets in the horticultural sector," Timothy and Sicily expertly fielded questions from growers on pertinent issues that included: meeting and maintaining export market quality standards; packaging and freight charges.

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

Local Market Fruits and Vegetables

With good rains over much of the country, KHDP-assisted farmers are busy transplanting hybrid tomato, cabbage, onion and indigenous vegetables. Seminis also report big demand for butternut squash seed, a relatively new crop introduced by KHDP in 2004. Market reports indicate that tomatoes and indigenous vegetables are doing particularly well with good prices in Nairobi, while increases in supply of kale and cabbage have caused prices to drop.



KHDP's Beatrice Gambo demonstrating use of coconut husk as a mulch and manure

Chilli Products

We were pleased to see recognition of Kenya's growing significance in the world African birds eye chilli market in the UK's leading agricultural commodity trade journal, the *Public Ledger*. Kenyan ABE chilli, mostly supplied by Mace Foods of Eldoret, was acknowledged as being of high quality. It is competing strongly with Malawi to meet the market shortfall due to crop failure in Zimbabwe, both traditional suppliers to the global market. This year, the Kenyan crop will reach 100 -150 tonnes, according to the *Public Ledger*, but KHDP estimates are even higher than this. Growers in Western, Rift Valley and Coast areas have been transplanting large quantities of ABE since the beginning of the long rains. KHDP is providing technical assistance to growers in transplanting, use of raised seedbeds and soil fertility management, with a view to increasing productivity. This is bringing new areas such as Butula in Busia, Western region, into horticultural exports for the first time. Encouraged by the market potential of ABE, growers at the Coast have established nurseries to meet the demand for high quality seedlings. According to KHDP Coast Manager, Beatrice Gambo, "The farmers are now ready to go into commercial ABE production thanks to the technical and marketing assistance being provided."

Vanilla and Spices

We warmly congratulate Prof. Esther Kahangi on her appointment as the new coordinator of the BIO-EARN Programme - the East African Regional Programme and Research Network for Biotechnology, Biosafety and Biotechnology Policy Development - funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). In her four-year term, Prof. Kahangi will be based in Kampala Uganda. Over the past two years, Prof. Kahangi has been collaborating successfully with KHDP in the development of a vanilla tissue culture protocol. In that time, more than two thousand tissue cultured vanilla plants have been propagated and transferred to trial plots on the coast. KHDP field trials so far have shown that the conditions in coastal and western areas are most suitable for vanilla production. We will continue to collaborate with JKUAT through Dr Losenge Turoop while Prof. Kahangi is away to meet the high demand for vanilla plants.

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KHDP partner Mace Foods has introduced chamomile to growers in Busia and is happy with the results so far. Chamomile is popularly used as an ingredient in herbal teas and pharmaceutical products, valued for their soothing, anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic effects. In April four nurseries targeting 20 growers with a ¼ acre each were set up. The results from this trial will be available in September.

Passion Fruit

Passion is one of the hottest products around at the moment. In addition to growing local demand,

customs statistics for 2005 show that 740 tonnes were exported to Uganda and 1,400 tonnes to Europe. Local processors just cannot get enough fruit to meet domestic and regional demand for juice. KEPHIS also held a regional workshop, assisted by USAID and APHIS, the US Plant Health Inspectorate, to develop a regional pest risk assessment for passion fruit as part of the preparation for entry to the US market. KHDP-assisted growers in Eldoret recorded improved sales, of over KSh300, 000 from 9,000 kgs in April alone. This has motivated more farmers to establish new orchards, further increasing demand for grafted seedlings.



Left: Selina Cheptum , a KHDP-assisted grower in Keiyo, preparing to prune her passion fruit.

Right: Packing for Export

Tree Crops

Two mango workshops were held in April. The DANIDA-funded Agricultural Business Development (ABD) project presented a study on mango production and marketing to growers and other stakeholders in Malindi. Action Aid also held a three-day mango marketing workshop in Jinjilia, Garsen, attended by many local farmers from the Tana River area.

Cashew growers at the Coast are upbeat about the industry's recovery, thanks to joint stakeholder efforts. Through the Cashew Productivity Enhancement Program, farmers have been receiving training in agronomic techniques and quality control. Their optimism is also reflected in a

new wave of tree planting to take advantage of the current rainy season.

In a novel development, Coast growers are turning coconut husk waste into profit by using it cut thickly in a potting mix for vanilla production, and chopped into smaller pieces for a surface mulch and compost for chilli and other vegetable crops. This is an excellent example of a simple but effective innovation which contributes to environmental management, crop productivity and income generation.

Smallholder Flowers

Growers in Central region are working with KARI-Thika and Jomo Kenyatta University to evaluate the

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potential of various of outdoor flower varieties. These include: hydrangea, zinnia (flowers) and pigeon pea (leaves) for KHDP partner, Rosavie, who are testing them in flower arrangements for the US and Japanese markets. KHDP has also compiled a long list of cut flower and foliage varieties needed by exporters to Europe, which are suitable for outgrower production. trials of these will start in June.

EUREPGAP

Industry efforts to achieve increased market standard compliance and certification of Kenyan growers are on-going with donors, exporters and input suppliers working to build grower capacity. Between February and April 2006, 12 new EurepGAP certificates were awarded to 8 groups, 2

exporter-managed farms and 2 outgrowers. These were supported by Nak-Agro, Vegpro, Frigoken, KHE, Uchumi and BSMDP. So far, a total of 117 individual growers; 1205 smallholders in 38 groups and 63 exporter-managed farms have received EurepGAP certification. So, a total of at least 1,423 farms are now certified for fresh produce exports including large and small-scale growers. A further

5,000+ small-scale growers are certified for supply of beans to Frigoken for processing. This outstanding performance is attracting a stream of visitors from other African countries to see how we do it in Kenya!

Separately, smallholders attached to Homegrown, East African Growers (EAGA) and other major export companies are also being audited and certified to other market standards such as Tesco's Nature's Choice (TNC).

Bayer East Africa launched its "Green World" Project this month. The project targets agrochemical stockists who will work with Bayer to communicate the right message on safe use of pesticides to farmers. This was introduced by Joseph Iracha, National Sales Manager, during a stakeholders' meeting organized by the firm in Nyeri. At the same meeting, Lydia Njuguna, KHDP Manager for Central Province highlighted USAID's activities in promoting safe use of pesticides and integrated pest management.



Industry News & Views

KEPHIS

Following its recent approval status under EU regulation 1148/2001 to pre-inspect EU exports,

KEPHIS held an awareness meeting for horticultural exporters. The exporters expressed much interest in the charges which KEPHIS will be making for the conformity checks. However there was complete agreement that there will be major cost savings in future compared to the

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current system where exporters frequently have to pay for arrival inspections in Europe.

The need for training/refresher courses for inspectors and graders was also discussed to ensure proper compliance and meet the national standards demanded by the regulation. Proposals were also made for KEPHIS to issue the Certificate of Conformity for sea-freighted produce.

The EU has indicated that funds of up to a million Euros may be available to assist with these new activities, and generally upgrade capacity and facilities at KEPHIS.

For more details contact the MD, KEPHIS through: kephis@nbnnet.co.ke

FPEAK

The FPEAK Board met with members growing flowers, particularly small-scale growers, to discuss areas of concern and to share ideas on which services they expect from FPEAK. Among the proposals made were: continued engagement and interaction with NGOs monitoring social accountability; increased appraisals and pre-audits for members and establishment of a flower growers' interactive forum. Members were concerned about the loopholes in some industry legislation and suggested that FPEAK should organize members' sessions to share information on such topics. For more details, please contact info@fpeak.org

HCDA

As part of its outreach activities, HCDA organised a farmers' meeting in Matuu, Machakos District, attended by 27 growers from the region and KHDP agronomist Irene Ngugi. During the interactive meeting, growers requested assistance with market linkages as well as calendarized production to optimize the profitability of their farming. Areas identified for training included: EU market requirements; proposal writing for fundraising; and training in group formation and cohesiveness. The farmers also felt that increased availability of water for

irrigation and good quality planting material would greatly boost their production.



Prof. Esther Kahangi handing over 2, 000 tissue cultured vanilla plants to be field-planted at the Coast

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