

UPDATE ON KENYAN HORTICULTURE

Brought to you by the Kenya Horticultural Development Program (KHDP) — a USAID-funded project aimed at increasing incomes through smallholder production and employment in the horticulture industry. USAID-KHDP works with public and private sector agencies to provide technical and marketing assistance to growers throughout Kenya. USAID-KHDP's main agribusiness partners include grower associations, input suppliers, processors, exporters, research institutions and trade associations.

“MAPATO ZAIDI KWA KUPITIA KILIMO BORA”

- **KEPHIS starts early warning system for insect pests**
- **New legal standards set for export companies**
- **FPEAK holds successful Hortifair in Machakos**
- **HCDA completes validation report on national production data**
- **New wholesale market planned for Nairobi**
- **Tea tree harvesting and oil distillation starts in Nanyuki**
- **USAID-KHDP finds new markets for gums, and resins**

NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON HORTICULTURE

- The Task Force continued work on major issues facing the industry, with funding support from KEPHIS. Main activities in July/August were:
- Development of an early warning system (EWS) for quarantine pests such as white flies on produce going to the EU. EWS scouts from export companies received three days of training to assist in national data collection.
- Revision of export regulations (under the Agriculture Produce [Export] Act, CAP 319) that outline the minimum standards for horticultural produce exporters. The document was signed and gazetted in July.
- Preparation for a regional work shop to be held in November at KEPHIS headquarters in Karen. The work shop is supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and is on "Enhancing the capacity of developing countries to implement international standards for commercial agricultural products to improve their trade competitiveness."
- Surveillance of local market vegetables continued as part of a new research project on the safety of local

Reaching for the sky



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Jacqueline Otieno harvests moringa from her farm in Bondo District, Nyanza Province. USAID-KHDP is working with growers to commercialise moringa production. So far, production is mainly coming from Nyanza and Coast farmers and the seeds are coming from Uganda.

and exported produce, with special reference to pesticide residues. Analysis of 65 horticultural produce samples has been completed since July 2007.

- A regional work shop on pesticide evaluation and registration was held in August at KEPHIS. Participants came from Kenya, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania and South Africa.

KENYA HORTICULTURE COUNCIL – KHC

In July, the Fresh Produce Association of Kenya (FPEAK) held its Machakos Hortifair at Kenyatta Stadium. Production of flowers, fruit and vegetables is growing fast in Machakos with mango and avocado doing particularly well in the warm climates and sandy soils of some areas. The Athi and Kibwezi river basins have high growth potential for horticulture if efficient

irrigation systems are installed. The show attracted more than 4,000 horticultural stakeholders, including large- and small-scale farmers, input suppliers, financiers, exporters and government officials. During the two days of the exhibition, FPEAK also held well-attended seminars and training courses on growth opportunities in horticulture. The next FPEAK Hortifair will be at the coast in Kilifi in October.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

The MOA, through HCDA, and in cooperation with USAID-KHDP and other stakeholders, completed the Horticulture Data 2005-07 Validation Report. The report indicates that prior to 2005, national horticultural production was underestimated by almost 50 percent. Part of the reason was omission of data on large-scale commercial farming operations in fruit and floriculture, which use private extension and research service providers. Also, in the absence of modern survey tools and trained statisticians to analyze the data, many errors went unnoticed and incorrect data were carried forward.

Figures for 2005-2007 were adjusted based on field visits to production areas by the report team, and through consultation with seed suppliers, exporters, researchers, commercial farmers and other stakeholders. Following this process, national production of all horticultural crops in 2007 was estimated to be 7.1 million tonnes with a wholesale value of at least Ksh120 billion (\$1.85 billion). The next step is to improve data collection and analysis systems so that annual production trends can be tracked accurately in future.

The Ministry of Agriculture, together with other ministries and stakeholders, is fast tracking the construction of new wholesale markets in Nairobi and, eventually, other strategic locations. The markets will be equipped and managed by public and private sector investors and are expected to result in fast growth for the horticulture industry. They will have modern storage and handling facilities and operate to high food safety standards. The markets will make Kenya the hub for regional fresh produce distribution.

USAID-KHDP NEWS

Smallholder flowers

Demand continues to grow for “fillers”, field-grown flowers and foliage that help fill out mixed bouquets. This is providing many new opportunities for smallholder flower growers. Activities at this time of the year focus on preparations for the main export season due to start in September. USAID-KHDP, working with export partners Naturegrown and Rosavie, are testing a range of varieties that are suitable for small-scale growers. These include Scabiosa, Delphinium, Molucella, Strelitzia, Rudbekia, Craspidia and Dahlia. All are varieties that can produce a high return from a small area, an important consideration for smallholders in Central Province where land availability is a limiting factor.



Agronomists from the MOA, USAID-KHDP and Kisumu-based NGO, Rural Service Providers, inspect cabbages and a greenhouse in Kilimani, Nyanza. USAID-KHDP is working with local agencies to assist displaced growers by introducing horticulture as a reliable source of income.

Local market vegetables

Prices for local market vegetables remain high but have stabilized compared to the erratic patterns earlier in the year. Fertiliser prices are more than 50 percent higher than a year ago and unlikely to come down. To deal with this problem, USAID-KHDP is focusing training on plant and soil fertility management including:

- Careful cost/benefit evaluations of fertilisers, because even at higher prices, good growers will usually gain from proper application.
- Precision use of foliar and granular fertilisers to avoid waste.
- Greater attention to composting, animal manure and vermiculture.

Tea tree

The first harvest of organic tea tree leaves took place in Naromoro, 12 months after planting in July 2007. Growers picked 648 kg that were distilled to produce 2 kg of tea tree oil. The next crop will be ready in September. USAID-KHDP partner Earthoil has set up a plant for pressing the oil at Nanyuki. The oil will be sold to Body Shop International to use as an ingredient in face creams, body lotions, shampoos and other beauty products.

Passion fruit

After seeing their crops destroyed during post-election violence, passion fruit growers in Rift Valley started picking fruit from rehabilitated gardens. Fruit sales will peak later in the year and they are hoping to profit from

Christmas demand. Growers at the coast continued to transplant yellow passion fruit. More than 70,000 vines have been planted in the Malindi region. The enthusiasm for production of yellow passion is to meet demand from several new investors in fruit juice products. In central Kenya, propagation of grafted seedlings continued following the re-opening of the Kevian Kenya processing plant, providing greater market opportunities for all types of fruit.

Mango

USAID-KHDP partner H.R. Retief supplied 5 tonnes of frozen, semi-processed mango pulp to three processors in Nairobi and Mombasa. This follows a pilot project conducted in cooperation with mango growers in Tana River. Juice processors gave positive feedback on the product and placed commercial orders for the next season, which starts in November. Tana River produces an estimated 30,000 tonnes of mango each year, most of which is wasted because of poor roads and disorganized markets. This pilot project could eventually provide an added value outlet for mango producers and justify new plantings in the future.

ABE chilli

Production of African Bird's Eye (ABE) chilli continued in Nyanza, Western and Coast provinces, providing valuable cash sales for some of USAID-KHDP's lowest income beneficiaries. Farmers continued establishing nurseries for further transplants during the rainy season. Mace Foods and other buyers held training days to encourage growers to maintain the high quality of chilli needed for export markets.

Export vegetables

The traditional drop in sales of beans and other export vegetables during July/August has largely ended. The demand for good quality, GLOBALGAP-compliant products is now year-round. As a result, export companies are looking to new production areas and new growers in western, Rift Valley and coastal areas. USAID-KHDP is working with various partners to identify suitable locations. Trials on sweet potatoes, okra, egg plant, bitter gourd and other Asian vegetables started in Kilifi and Malindi and attracted interest from local farmers without experience in export vegetable production.

ASAL crops – moringa, aloe, gums and resins

Moringa continued to generate interest among growers in arid and semi-arid (ASAL) areas. The dried seeds can be sold for oil extraction and the green pods and leaves are good for animal feed, particularly important to pastoralists. In July, Earthoil and USAID-KHDP trained 75 new moringa growers from Ukambani Women's Group in Kathiani, Machakos. The growers will plant Moringa in October when the short rains start. To reduce collection and consolidation costs, moringa production



Lubanchem Director Sadqa Haq discusses pricing of gums and resins during a training session held in August in Garba Tula, Eastern Province. A total of 67 growers and harvesters received training on harvesting and quality management.

zones are being established in Nyanza, Coast, Machakos and parts of Eastern and Rift Valley areas.

USAID-KHDP partner Lubanchem has increased collection of plant extracts from Rift Valley and Eastern districts to meet new US orders for frankincense, gum arabic and other extracts.

USAID-KHDP is also working with partner companies to evaluate market opportunities for Aloe secundiflora, an important wild plant in arid areas of Rift Valley, Eastern and North Eastern Kenya, where it holds and stabilises soil, and is used as a medicinal plant. Aloe "bitters", made by boiling aloe extract until it solidifies, were also exported illegally to Asia in the past. In recent years there have been various attempts to commercialise aloe as a potential income source for rural families in these low income areas. So far the market has been restricted to local processing into soaps, shampoos and other minor products.

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