

Kenyan avocado farmers receive GlobalG.A.P. certification

More than 300 Kenyan farmers have received GlobalG.A.P. certification - opening the door to the European market - with support from the International Trade Centre (ITC). The producers, who represent nine farmers groups in Murang'a County, 150 kilometres north of Nairobi, received certificates during a stakeholders meeting on 15 March at the Practical Training Centre of the Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya in Thika.



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The certification was achieved under the Netherlands Trust Fund (NTF) III Kenya Avocado project, implemented by ITC and the Dutch Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI) and funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The benefits of having GlobalG.A.P. certification include access to new business opportunities, especially the European market, and the ability to earn higher incomes through price increases for their now-certified products.

Promoting good agricultural practices

GlobalG.A.P. stands for Global Good Agricultural Practice and is a private standard that sets out requirements for farming processes and food safety. As one of the most prevalent certifications for the European market, GlobalG.A.P. opens doors for Kenyan exporters to build more long-term relationships with European buyers and generate higher incomes.

The first step to achieving certification was the establishment of one-to-one linkages facilitated by the project between the farmers groups and exporters in 2015. The approach included localisation and identification of farmers groups, as well as the identification of individual farmers and the varieties and quantities of their avocado trees.

Based on that, the farmers' capabilities of meeting the needs of Kenyan exporters in terms of volume and quality were analysed. Contractual agreements were signed and hence fixed prices and terms of delivery for each group were set.

Ensuring long-term success

Throughout 2016, the farmers groups and technical advisers of each exporting company received training on compliance with GlobalG.A.P. audit requirements. This included activities such as the development of individual quality management systems and the implementation of internal audits.

In each farmers group, harvesting and hygiene supervisors were selected and trained on specific aspects such as recordkeeping and post-harvest handling, as well as Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP).

These follow-up activities have led to job creation: farmers are now taking on more responsibilities along the avocado value chain. Previously, they worked with middlemen who harvested and collected avocados, leading to unreliable practices and prices. Now, using this new model supported by the NTF III Kenya Avocado project and the GlobalG.A.P. certification, farmers are earning on average two times more than what they used to earn through middlemen.

After receiving the GlobalG.A.P. certification, a representative of Harir International, one of the beneficiary companies, said: "I would like to thank ITC for the support that we have received. We highly appreciate the whole team that made this journey worth it. We will strive to make this sustainable and impactful for our smallholders."

Exporters supported the farmers groups by investing in infrastructure, including collection sheds, first aid boxes, offices and hygiene facilities that are required for GlobalG.A.P. certification. They are planning to invest in additional groups in coming years to increase their volume of GlobalG.A.P.-certified avocados and tap into the increasing demand for avocados in the European market.

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