



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/smallholder-farmers-kenya-feed-present-and-future>

Smallholder Farmers in Kenya Feed the Present and the Future

The Rift Valley region of Kenya has favorable climatic conditions for production of horticultural crops. However, this opportunity was not fully exploited for decades namely due to drought, lack of education on horticultural produce, and low private sector investment.

By partnering with Canken International Ltd., a cargo handling export company at the Eldoret International Airport, USAID's Kenya Horticultural Competitiveness Program (USAID-KHCP) has enabled the horticultural industry in the Rift to build its reputation and commercial success by exporting a variety of fruits and vegetables to the European and Middle East countries. Through the improved competitiveness of the horticulture industry, the region now exports more than 750 tons of fresh produce compared to 226 tons when the company was first established in 2007. There has also been an increase in the number of smallholder farmers from 600 to nearly 4,000.

With support from USAID-KHCP, Canken International trained farmers on land preparation, crop maintenance, harvesting, and post harvesting technology. Farmers were also linked with banks and other micro and credit finance institutions whose loans enable them to purchase seeds and manure and afford crop maintenance among other farming activities.

To enable an all-year production of fresh produce despite the dry spells, farmers are receiving training on irrigation and water harvesting techniques from the 75 demonstration plots which have been installed with irrigation kits and 30 water harvesting demonstration tanks which have been set up. In addition, nine collection points with grading shades charcoal coolers have been constructed where farmers deliver their produce for collection by Canken International, who also sorts, grades, packs and exports twice a week.

"These interventions have enabled the horticultural industry to realize an increase in sales and profits of more than 200 percent. Previously, a farmer earned \$48 per month but, to date, they earn more than \$240," said Dominic Biwot, general manager at Canken International. "Increased income from horticultural exports from the smallholder farmers has provided a lasting foundation for progress against malnutrition and food security. The farmers are now able to purchase foods and other nutritional products which they couldn't afford before. They are also able to diversify into producing other commercial crops, increasing food security in the region—thanks to USAID for supporting the interventions."

This USAID project is part of the U.S. Government's Feed the Future global hunger and food security initiative, which addresses the root causes of hunger and poverty. With a focus on smallholder farmers, particularly women, Feed the Future supports countries in developing their agriculture sectors as a catalyst to generate broad-based economic growth and to reduce hunger.

This story originally [appeared](#) on the USAID Mission Kenya website.