Hortinews

Growing Ideas

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Feature **New Verpixo® 100 SC by Corteva**

Corteva Agriscience has introduced Verpixo® 100 SC, a new fungicide against powdery mildew—one of the most persistent and economically damaging diseases in roses and ornamentals in Kenya. **PG 12**

New Verpixo® 100 SC by Corteva

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MANAGING EDITOR
Catherine Riungu

CONTRIBUTORS
Anita Nkirote - NPCK
Hamish Ker - Andermatt Kenya
Joan Mbuva - Corteva
Lewis Wachira - Bioline
Nelson Maina- Elgon Kenya
Niels Van Doorn - Chrysal Africa

WRITER
Alexis Nyambura
Riziki Nyawira

ADVERTISING
James Kathuri
Mary Obwocha
Skita Makena

DESIGN
Sydney Kithome

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ASSOCIATED GREEN VENTURES
Mwangaza Road, Komarock Phase 2, opposite main gate, Block E. PO Box 1066-00518
Tel: + 254 722-848970
+254 720-884961
hortinews@hortinews.co.ke

Horticultural News
www.hortinews.co.ke

Hortinews
Growing Ideas

The drought is here, and only technology, foresight, and policy will save us

By Nelson Maina

Communications Manager, Elgon Kenya / nelsonmaina@elgonkenya.com

Kenya is walking—quietly and dangerously—into one of the most severe agricultural crises in recent memory. This week, the Government has flagged 22 counties as hard-hit by the deepening drought. What is emerging on the ground is nothing short of heartbreaking: carcasses of livestock strewn across empty plains, soils cracking under a merciless sun, and fields of maize and beans curling into brittle husks.

Even counties long considered part of Kenya's traditional food basket—Meru, Embu, Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu, Bungoma and Nakuru—are reporting failures that would once have been unimaginable. If these regions, the backbone of the country's food systems, are faltering, then the implications are far more serious than many are willing to admit.

Just weeks ago, millions of farmers planted in hope. They ploughed their land, procured seed, bought fertilizer, paid labourers and prepared their fields for what the Kenya Meteorological Department repeatedly described as enhanced short rains. But the sky refused to cooperate. The rains came late, stopped early, or failed to appear entirely. Today, fields that should be thriving with food are instead brown and lifeless. The tea sector, the country's most important agricultural export, is also suffering. The season that ordinarily opens with heavy flushes has instead begun with depressed yields, guaranteeing reduced earnings for farmers and for the nation.

A bad farming year is always a bad economic year for Kenya, and this year is shaping up to be particularly painful. The agricultural supply chain is already in distress. Agro-dealers and distributors—who stocked their shelves in anticipation of normal planting—are now watching their inventory gather dust. With no crops to fertilize, no weeds to spray, and no harvests to support, their losses will soon become visible. Among those affected is Elgon Kenya, one of the country's leading suppliers of agricultural inputs, whose operations depend entirely on consistent farming activity. When agricultural seasons collapse, so too does every link in the value chain. Transporters, processors, exporters and retailers are all beginning to feel the shockwaves.

Yet even in this bleak moment, innovation offers a path forward. Elgon Kenya has, for years, invested in preparing farmers for the inevitability of rainfall failure. The company has worked across the country to expand the use of climate-resilient tools—from irrigation systems, dam liners and greenhouse solutions to smart tractors and advanced field-monitoring technologies. Its partnerships with drone-technology companies are enabling farmers to detect crop stress, pests and nutrient deficiencies long before the human eye can see them. These tools do more than solve problems; they anticipate them. In a climate where the rains can no longer be trusted, such technologies are becoming essential safeguards for farmers' livelihoods.

The Meteorological Department has now warned that no significant rains are expected until March next year. Yet this same institution has, season after season, forecast rains that failed to materialize. Farmers trusted the forecasts and paid for that trust with total crop loss. Kenya urgently needs a weather service that is modern, accurate and localized—one that farmers, counties and investors can rely on. Weather forecasting is not a luxury; it is a prerequisite for national planning.

But not all crises are about rain. Even in good years, Kenya loses vast amounts of produce to poor storage and a lack of processing facilities. Post-harvest technologies are becoming as important as irrigation. Cold storage for vegetables, fruits and potatoes, along with modern silos and value-addition plants for a wide range of produce, must become part of the national food-security conversation. Kenya will also have to rebuild and expand its strategic food reserves, ensuring the country can withstand at least four consecutive rainless seasons—because climate variability is no longer an exception but the norm.

Beyond technology and storage, Kenya must return to the basics of environmental stewardship. Rainwater harvesting should become standard in every household, institution and county. Wetlands, our natural water banks, must be protected and restored. Forests must be rehabilitated, and tree planting must evolve from a ceremonial exercise into an enforceable national practice. Every farm should be encouraged—if not required—to set aside a portion of its land for trees to help improve microclimates, reduce runoff and restore local water cycles. Without trees, there is no water; without water, there is no agriculture; without agriculture, there is no Kenya.

This drought may not have been predictable in timing, but it was predictable in inevitability. Rainfall patterns have shifted, yet our systems remain anchored to assumptions from another era. Kenya cannot continue planting based on hope, harvesting disappointment and repeating the same cycle each season. The tools to build resilience already exist; the expertise exists; and the innovators are ready. What the country needs now is the political will to convert knowledge into action.

If Kenya is to avoid a future defined by recurring hunger, rising food prices and widespread loss of livelihoods, then rainwater harvesting, irrigation, accurate weather forecasting, post-harvest management and environmental restoration must become national priorities. No farmer, no supply chain and no household should remain at the mercy of uncertain clouds. The time for speeches has passed. What Kenya needs now is decisive action that matches the scale of the crisis before us. ■

Hungarian varieties redefine farming in dryland Kenya

Inside the two-year adaptation trials turning Machakos dust into green gold

On the cracked plains of Machakos County, where many farmers have surrendered harvests to the tyranny of heat and unpredictable skies, a quiet revolution is rewriting the narrative of dryland agriculture. It is September — historically the harshest stretch of Kenya's long dry spell when the land is bleached and parched, and even the sturdiest shrubs bow in defeat. Yet on this Tuesday morning, September 23, 2025, a startling contrast breaks the monotony of browns and ochres. A lush, almost luminous patch of green rises from the dust, shimmering defiantly under the unforgiving sun.At first glance, it looks like an illusion. But a step closer, and the mirage reveals itself as reality: thriving rows of tomatoes, chillies, melons, cucumbers, and capsicums, brimming with vitality that has no business existing in this heat. This farm — a Kenyan demonstration site — has become a living gallery of what happens when genetics, climate adaptation, and precision agriculture converge.

Hungary-Kenyan collaboration

This field is the centerpiece of a two-year pilot project by commissioned by the Hungarian University of Agiculture and Life Sciences (MATE) with the support of the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with a local Kenyan company- Hunagro Consult Limited. The cooperation has seen the evaluation of seeds from ZKI which is a European vegetable breeder renowned for its climate-resilient genetics. In partnership with Hunagro Consult Limited and local agronomists, ZKI set out to answer a critical question:

How can their vegetable varieties perform in Kenya's increasingly volatile drylands?

The stakes are high. Kenya's semi-arid regions make up more than 80 percent of the country's landmass, with only 20 percent mapped as arable. Millions of people depend on the 1/3 for food and income. While climate change has rendered rainfall unreliable and production risky, a growing population has shrunk agricultural lands leading to development of innovations to cope with the erratic weather patterns as well as make the drylands productive.

If seeds can't stand the heat, farmers can't stand a chance. So, ZKI brought five carefully selected varieties into Kenya's harshest landscapes — not to test their limits, but to redefine them.

But a step closer, and the mirage reveals itself as reality: thriving rows of tomatoes, chillies, melons, cucumbers, and Capsicums, brimming with vitality that has no business existing in this heat.

MATE

Inside the field day: from skepticism to awe

Farmers, extension officers, county officials and agribusinesses gathered to witness how the demonstration site challenged long-held assumptions about what Kenyan dryland farmers can realistically achieve."This project shows how breeding, data, and precision tools can make dryland farming profitable," said the ZKI representative, gesturing toward the emerald rows of crops. One by one, the star performers took the stage.

Kennedy Nzioka, Managing Director, Hunagro Consult Limited.

Gigant F1

The bold red flame built for drought

The crowd leaned in as a ZKI official plucked a chilli from a glossy, vigorous plant. Gigant F1, he explained, isn't merely heat-tolerant — it is engineered for survival.

What makes it exceptional?

- A deep, aggressive root system capableof tapping moisture far below dry soil
- Heat-tolerant fruit set
- Thick, firm skin ideal for transport
- Outstanding uniformity and high yields under minimal irrigation
- Crispy flesh, tasty fruits! Indeterminate sweet hybrid for forcing and for intensive open field production, high yield, big fruits
- Middle-fast growing speed Fruits are elongated California type, ripe from dark green to dark red colour,
- Average size is 70-90 mm wide and 120-150 mm long • Stress tolerance and shelf-life is over the average
- Flesh is thick, after ripening has an intensive red colour
- Fruits are suitable for the fresh market and for export
- Average fruit weight: 150-200 g

During the trials, Gigant F1 delivered yields comparable to those seen in well-watered regions — a performance that stunned many. "In this climate, predictability is everything," said farmer Ronald Musyoki, who hosted the Machakos trial plot. "Gigant F1 doesn't just survive the heat - it thrives in it."

SAHARA F1

a game-changer for greenhouses and open fields

When ZKI named this variety Sahara F1, perhaps they anticipated where it would shine: hot, dry, demanding environments where weaker crops retreat **Traits include:**

- High resistance to fungal diseases
- Excellent tolerance to high temperatures
- Versatility across greenhouse and openfield conditions
- Reduced need for chemical inputs
- Hotness and resistance at a high level!
- Indeterminate hot green pepper novelty
- Resistant to tomato spotted wilt virus and powdery mildew
- Balanced vegetative-generative growth, easy to manage and to produce
- Internode size is optimal, suitable for long cultivation
- Stable fruit set throughout the whole season, easy to renew
- Fruits keep their nice, straight shape
- Marketable, light green colour
- Well-developed root system, good nutrientuptake
- Excellent storability and transportability
- Very hot, from the tip of the fruits
- Average length 20-25 cm, average width 3-4 cm
- Average fruit weight: 50-65 g

"This is the future of sustainable production," said the Hungarian Seeds agronomist. "Less water, fewer chemicals, and consistent yield across seasons." Sahara performed especially well in dry climate with uneven temperatures, making it ideal for farmers seeking stability in unpredictable climates.

GREEN MAMBA F1

flavor, heat, and market appeal

Long, sleek, and strikingly green, Green Mamba F1 has quickly become a farmer favorite for one simple reason: it sells fast. Its traits check every important box:

- Excellent pungency and aroma
- Firm structure and consistent size
- Strong disease resistance
- Low chemical requirements
- Attractive to both local and export markets
- Highly resistant, extremely hot!
- Indeterminate hot green pepper with TSWV resistance
- Eective resistance package
- Strong branch and stem, easy to grow, excellent for long term cultivation
- High yield in 21+ cm fruit category
- Thick flesh, dark-green coloured fruits

Well-developed root system, eective nutrient absorbing

- Extra sized fruits, stable shape
- Extremely hot fruits
- Average fruitweight:50-65g

"It's a variety that excites consumers and simplifies farming," the breeder explained. For smallholders juggling high input costs and volatile markets, Green Mamba F1 offers a profitable, low-maintenance option.

GRIZZLY F1 MELON

sweetness that survives the sun

Even more surprising was the success of Grizzly F1, a water melon variety that ripened beautifully under semi-arid stress.

Farmers tasted the fruits and nodded in approval. Traders confirmed the sweetness and shelf life matched even surpassed melons grown under irrigation-intensive systems.

Key advantages observed:

- High sugar content even under heat stress
- Strong, firm flesh ideal for transport
- Excellent adaptability to low-water zones
- Uniform big size, excellent yield, the traders' demand!
- Very early production
- Nice attractive outside colour
- Strong vigor, fruits are well covered by leaves
- Uniform big size 15-20 kg
- Nice quality, deep red flesh
- Reliable and very stable productivity in all weather conditions
- Not sensitive to sunburn
- Excellent flesh quality, suitable for slicing markets

"These melons show that fruit farming doesn't have to disappear from dryland Kenya," the breeder said. "It simply needs the right genetics."

Hungarian cucumbers

fresh, crisp, and heat-tolerant

The cucumber trials drew the most murmurs of disbelief. Cucumbers are typically fragile in high heat. Yet under mulch and drip irrigation, the Hungarian lines produced:

- High-density fruits
- Excellent skin finish
- Uniformity ideal for supermarkets
- Strong tolerance to 32°C+ temperatures

Mr. Musyoki laughed as he inspected a heavy vine.

"Cucumbers in Machakos?" he said. "If you told me this last year, I'd have laughed. But now — we will plant them every season."

Brutus F1

- Spined parthenocarpic pickling cucumber for canning industry
- Recommended for open field horizontal, intensive technology
- Strong leaf area with small leafs, sideshoots are short- easy to harvest
- Outstanding abiotic and biotic stress tolerance of the leaf area
- Good plant health due to the disease resistance package
- Very good yield, stable fruit setting with 1-2 fruit/nodes
- Fruits are dark green with regular cylindrical shape without deformation, keep their size
- Very good shape, ratio and inside quality- optimalised for the canning industry's requirements

Hansa F1

Precision agriculture takes to the skies

Beyond the seeds, this year's trials introduced a drone-based monitoring system- marking one of the first instances of aerial precision agriculture with smallholder productions systems. Hunagro Consult Limited integrated Hungarian drone models from ABZ innovations for scouting to map crop health, identify stress zones and track moisture variations across the field. The drones used multispectral imaging to detect early signs of pest attacks and nutrient deficiencies invisible to the naked eye.

Farmers were trained to interpret simple aerial maps generated after each flight, giving them a visual guide to their crops' health. The company believes this low-cost technology, once scaled, could significantly improve productivity in regions where extension services are limited.

"This combination of high quality seeds and smart monitoring is the future," the Hungarian representative emphasized. "You can't fight climate change with guesswork — you need data." The drones produced simple, color-coded maps that farmers could interpret with minimal training the ZKI official emphasized.

Promise made, promise kept

As the sun lowered over the rolling hills of Machakos and the plains of Mwea, visitors gathered to discuss the day's findings. The consensus was clear: these weren't just test plots, but proof that dryland farming can be profitable, sustainable, and high-tech. In an era of erratic rainfall and shrinking fertile land, resilient seeds paired with data-driven farming tools are giving growers new control over their outcomes. "These trials show what's possible," said Mr. Kennedy Nzioka, the managing director from Hunagro Consult Limited. "For the first time, we're seeing European seed genetics and digital tools come together to solve Kenyan problems — on Kenyan soil." For farmers like Mr. Ronald Musyoki, the change feels tangible. "We used to fear the dry season," he said, smiling as he inspected a row of thriving cucumbers. "Now, it's just another season to plant." In the heart of the Machakos dust, the message was unmistakable: with the right seed, a drop of innovation and an eye in the sky, abundance can bloom even where nature once said no.

For dryland regions where extension services are scarce, drone-guided agronomy could be transformative.

Hunagro Consult Limited is a Kenyan based organization founded in 2018 as a private –sector company to provide agricultural consultancy with aim of introducing and promoting the innovative Hungarian Agricultural products and solutions in the African Market targeting small, medium and large scale farmers.

Contact Us
Raphta Road, Gate No. 156 Opp. St. Judes Chapel Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya
P.O. Box 40030-00100 Nairobi, Phone: 0734616103, Email: info@hunagroconsult.com, Website:www.hunagroconsult.com

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MATE

Seed traders sound warning on ruling

By ANITA NKIROTE

Stakeholders in Kenya's potato and seed sectors are moving to appeal a recent court ruling that allows farmers to share indigenous seeds, citing concerns that the decision could weaken seed quality controls and open the door to adulteration and counterfeit seed.

The concerns were raised during a seed policy meeting convened by the Seed Trade Association of Kenya (STAK) and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) on 16 December 2025. The meeting brought together regulators, seed industry players, and subsector representatives, including the National Potato Council of Kenya (NPCK), to chart a way forward following the ruling delivered on 29 November 2025.Discussions at the meeting focused on the potential impact of the ruling on vegetatively propagated crops, particularly potato, which is highly susceptible to seed-borne diseases. Stakeholders noted that the potato industry's productivity depends heavily on access to quality, certified seed to manage disease pressure, improve yields, and meet market requirements.

Kenya's potato subsector supports millions of smallholder farmers and is experiencing steadily rising production and consumption. As a result, demand for certified potato seed continues to outstrip supply, with seed producers struggling to meet the growing needs of farmers expanding acreage and intensifying production.

Adulteration and Counterfeits

Participants expressed concern that the court ruling could disrupt efforts to scale up the supply of quality seed. They warned that allowing free sharing of indigenous seeds without clear regulatory safeguards could create loopholes for seed adulteration and the spread of counterfeit seed in the market.

Such loopholes, stakeholders said, risk undermining investments in certified seed production at a time when the sector is already unable to produce enough seed to meet demand. Reduced confidence in regulated seed systems could further slow the expansion of clean seed supply needed to sustain the industry's growth.

The meeting brought together representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS), NPCK, and other seed sector actors. Stakeholders agreed on the need to strengthen collaboration with KEPHIS to maintain seed quality assurance, inspection, and enforcement across the seed value chain.

It was also reported that legal steps are being taken to seek a stay of the ruling as part of the appeal process, allowing time for further consultations and alignment between policy, law, and sector realities.

Review

Beyond the immediate legal response, participants called for a review of the Seed and Plant Varieties Act to address emerging gaps in seed regulation, particularly around informal seed systems and vegetatively propagated crops such as potato. Stakeholders emphasized the need for a legal framework that protects farmers' rights while safeguarding seed quality and supporting investment in certified seed production.

Industry Watches Closely

As the appeal process unfolds, players in the potato industry say the outcome will have far-reaching implications for farmers, seed producers, and the broader horticulture sector. With demand for potato seed already outstripping supply, stakeholders are urging policy clarity and strong regulatory oversight to ensure that momentum toward higher productivity and increased potato consumption is not reversed.

New Verpixo® 100 SC by Corteva

A new fungicide against powdery mildew

Corteva Agriscience has introduced Verpixo® 100 SC, a new fungicide against powdery mildew—one of the most persistent and economically damaging diseases in roses and ornamentals in Kenya.

The product was launched through coordinated events held in Nairobi, Naivasha, Nakuru, and Nanyuki, ensuring growers in all major flower belts gained access to technical information and support.

Joseph Anampiu, Corteva Business Leader for WESCA) , highlighted how Verpixo® 100 SC will strengthen Kenya's floriculture resilience. "Verpixo is our latest innovation, attesting to our pursuit for sustainable solutions," he said.

The Nairobi launch, on November 18, 2025, marked the official unveiling of Verpixo® 100 SC, followed by technical sessions and field demonstrations in Naivasha and Nakuru after the Nanyuki introduction that was done earlier than the capital city event. Each region showcased different environmental and production conditions, illustrating the versatility of the new fungicide.

Naivasha, the country's leading flower production region demonstrated Verpixo® 100 SC's performance under intensive greenhouse systems while the neighboring Nakuru highlighted its ability to suppress mildew pressure driven by fluctuating altitude-driven temperatures. Nanyuki, arguably the fastest growing new flower growing frontier that is home to premium long-stem rose production, showcased the importance of consistent disease protection in cooler, mildew-prone environments.

Apart from the Corteva regional team, growers, distributors, government regulatory agencies and flower industry associations attended the launch.

Why powdery mildew is a major challenge for growers

Owing to Kenya's favourable climate for fungal growth - cool nights, warm days, intermittent humidity- powdery mildew is identified as one of the most significant threats to high-value flower production leading to visible damage to foliage and buds that compromises stem quality and market grading. The situation is exacerbated by progressive resistance to long-used fungicide groups sending agriculture scientists to research for new modes of action. Increasing strict residue and compliance standards in export markets has left growers scratching their heads for new solutions to comply with the restrictions. Left unmanaged, the disease reduces photosynthetic efficiency, weakens stems, distorts blooms and affects vase life—directly impacting export quality and earnings.

The Kenya Flower Council CEO Clement Tulezi, in a speech read on his behalf by John Njenga, Scheme Manager, lauded the entry of Verpixo as a timely intervention as Kenya was aligning to global standards while the launch in the country was an affirmation to Kenya's position as a leading producer of flowers globally.

Peter Otieno, representing the Kenyan Pesticide Regulator, Pest Control Products Board (PCPB) CEO Mr Fredrick Muchiri , confirmed Verpixo® underwent Kenya's full regulatory processes approval, - chemical and phys- »


All Season Long
STELLAR PROTECTION
against Powdery Mildew
Novel Mode of Action
Exellent Perfomance
Natural Fit in IPM Programs
Brand New Target Site
The only Group 21
Ascomycete Fungicide
in Ornamentals
Be the First to
Experience it.
CORTEVA™
agriscience
Verpixo®
Adavelt™ active
FUNGICIDE
ELGON KENYA
Lachlan
Amiran
KENYA

» ical property evaluation, human toxicology review, ecotoxicological assessment, consumer safety analysis and efficacy trials and was approved as safe to humans and the environment.

The Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service official, Moses Oyier, representing Managing Director Prof Theophilus Mutui, said the country faces continuous pest pressure requiring development of new modes of action to control existing and emerging pests as well as prevent resistance, terming Verpixo as useful in meeting export demands to ship disease and pest-free flowers. He termed the development as proof Kenya was continuously responding to sustainable diseases and pests management.

Innocent Oeri, Corteva Marketing Campaign Manager described Verpixo as the first picolinamide for ascomycete pathogens, an effective resistance management tool, therefore, a core solution replacing products losing efficacy or under phase-out. Verpixo is powered by Adavelt active, binds to a different site while its translaminar movement provides uniform protection even where conditions favour high disease pressure. During application, it spreads on the surface of leaves, stems and petals preventing spore germination. Adavelt is the only Group 21 quinone inside inhibitor against ascomycetes in ornamentals providing a compliment to existing disease management. Group 21 fungicides inhibit mitochondrial respiration disrupting bioprocesses in the pathogen. Repetitive use of Verpixo is discouraged to avoid resistance. It should be alternated with a different mode of action. Do not do more than two applications without alternating.

> After 15 years, of collaborative research studies across multiple countries, Corteva has finally launched Verpixo 100SC in Kenya.

Corteva Business Leader, Kenya, Charles Mutema

Corteva's Research & Development Manager Eduardo Posado, emphasized that Verpixo® is not replacing the current fungicide programmes. "Verpixo is not here to replace what you are currently using but an addition you integrate into your existing crop protection programs. It enables growers to alternate and mitigate against future risks to resistance," he said.

Highly effective option

Verpixo® 100 SC introduces a novel mode of action that disrupts the fungus's energy production, giving growers fast and dependable control even under high mildew pressure. Among the product's efficacy, it comes with preventative and early curative activity, translaminar and acropetal movement for internal leaf protection, strong coverage of young growth where infections start, compatibility with existing fungicide, insecticide, and biostimulant programs. Additionally, it has exhibited excellent crop safety for roses and ornamentals making it a highly effective option for both greenhouse and open-field production systems.

Eva Pamba, Corteva's Crop Health Research & Development Manager added that in addition to powdery mildew, Verpixo offers a modest efficacy against botrytis, one of the most problematic diseases in roses. She added , as a Group 21 fungicide, it is a new tool for management of the target diseases without cross-resistance to other groups and is IPM-friendly, with low effect on beneficial organisms. "It is a natural fit into IPM programs,"she said. Corteva evaluated the safety of Verpixo on selected beneficial insects using the classification system of the international Organization for Biological Control, and confirmed compatibility with IPM. The trials show that it is harmless to major beneficial species including: Phytoseiulus persimilis, Encarsia Formosa, Trichogramma pretiosum, Hippodamia variegate and Mallada signatus. There are ongoing trials,for label extensions to other crops; Vegetables & Coffee. There is already ongoing partnership with the Coffee Research Foundation(CRF) to extend Verpixo usage on coffee.

Corteva Business Leader, Kenya, Charles Mutema, described the launch of Verpixo as culmination of years of planning, aligned with Corteva's broader innovation journey. Trials were initiated in the country from 2019, as a response to increasing disease pressure and the negative impacts of climate change. "After 15 years, of collaborative research studies across multiple countries, Corteva has finally launched Verpixo 100SC in Kenya." ■

TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

Apply in mixtures with other fungicides of different modes of action that provide good field efficacy, at label-recommended dosage. To manage resistance risk, use during early stages of disease development.

Corteva's technical team provides the following recommendations to ensure optimal performance of Verpixo® 100 SC:

Application Rate

- Apply 1.25 litres per hectare, or
- 125ml per 100 litres of water in spray mixtures.

Timing

- Use preventively or at the earliest signs of powdery mildew.
- Early application stops spore germination and suppresses early infections.

Coverage

- Ensure thorough coverage of all leaves, including lower surfaces.
- This maximizes the product's translaminar and upward movement into new growth.

Rotation

- Integrate Verpixo® 100 SC into a rotation program with other modes of action.
- This supports resistance management and long-term product reliability.

Compatibility

- Verpixo® 100 SC is compatible with commonly used fungicides, insecticides, and biostimulants, making it easy to incorporate into existing spray schedules.

Safety

- Re-entry interval: 6 hours
- Use recommended PPE and follow label recommendations before use.

The approved distributors for the product are Elgon Kenya, Amiran Kenya and Lachlan Africa

Corteva Agriscience, a global agriculture company

Corteva Agriscience is a global, pure-play agriculture company dedicated to helping farmersproduce healthier, more resilient, and more sustainable crops. Formed in 2019 after the separation from DowDuPont, Corteva combines more than a century of expertise from its heritage companies—DuPont Pioneer, Dow AgroSciences, and DuPont Crop Protection. This deep legacy gives the company a strong foundation in seeds, crop protection, and digital farming technologies.

Headquartered in Indianapolis, USA, Corteva operates in over 140 countries and works closely with farmers, researchers, governments, and agricultural organizations to address food security challenges. The company develops high-performing seed varieties, advanced crop protection products, and innovative digital tools that help farmers make data-driven decisions. Its portfolio includes solutions for pest control, disease management, weed resistance, and overall crop improvement across major crops such as maize, soybeans, wheat, and specialty crops.

Corteva places strong emphasis on sustainability and responsible innovation. It invests heavily in research and development to create products that improve yields while reducing environmental impact. Through partnerships and farmer-support programs, Corteva promotes climate-smart agriculture, soil health, and integrated pest management.

Red Lands Roses Blooms into a special economic zone

By Hortinews Team

On a hot and sunny afternoon of October 14, 2025, amid the fragrant blossoms of thousands of roses and the hum of conversation, Red Lands Roses celebrated a defining milestone in its three-decade journey: the official recognition and celebration of its status as a Special Economic Zone (SEZ), firmly affirming it as a leader among Kenya's elite floriculture SEZs.

The bright afternoon sun illuminated the manicured lawns and high-tech greenhouses, casting long shadows across the vibrant petals, while staff, officials, and visitors gathered to witness what many described as a a milestone for the country's flower industry.

At the podium, Red Lands Roses CEO Disha Copreaux spoke with a mixture of pride, optimism, and determination. "This milestone not only reflects Red Lands Roses' commitment to excellence," she said, "but also showcases the transformative role SEZs play in boosting Kenya's floriculture industry. We are proud to be a farm that is demonstrating how innovation, sustainability, and competitiveness can thrive together."

Her remarks set the tone for the afternoon — highlighting economic progress, sustainability, and community impact as inseparable elements of the farm's vision.

A gathering of leaders and industry champions

The celebration drew an array of senior government and industry leaders, underlining the national significance of the occasion. Lee Kinyanjui, Cabinet Secretary for Investments, Trade and Industry, emphasized the broader strategic role of SEZs in strengthening Kenya's export economy. He applauded Red Lands Roses for demonstrating the potential of SEZs to attract investment, enhance competitiveness, and generate jobs.

Industry leaders were well represented. Chris Kulei, Chairman of the Kenya Flower Council (KFC), attended the ceremony in support of the farm, lending symbolic weight. Clement Tulezi, CEO of KFC, underscored the importance of innovation and global market expansion, while Wesley Siele, CEO of the Agricultural Employers Association, praised the farm for exemplary labour practices. Dr Kenneth Chelule, CEO of the Special Economic Zones Authority, highlighted the farm's investment, compliance, and export growth as a model for other enterprises.

The presence of these leaders underscored a united vision: Kenya's floriculture

sector is evolving, and farms that combine technology, sustainability, and social responsibility are charting the path forward.

Building a global brand

Red Lands Roses was founded in 1996 by French agronomist Dr Isabelle Henin Spindler, who envisioned transforming unused land in Ruiru into a world-class site for premium roses. Over the past three decades, the farm has grown into 43 hectares of high-value rose production, nurturing nearly 200 varieties ranging from T-hybrids and sprays to mini roses. She attended the historical event, her presence sending the farm's staff into a frenzy as she received a standing ovation, attesting to her legacy.

The farm's location, especially proximity to Nairobi and export infrastructure — gives it a natural advantage. But its global recognition stems from consistent innovation and environmental stewardship. Red Lands Roses' hydroponic systems recycle water and nutrients, solar panels reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and strict environmental management ensures minimal ecological impact.

"Success isn't just about growing roses," CEO Copreaux explained. "It's about cultivating a sustainable, inclusive business that creates value for our community, our employees, and our country." Her leadership has focused on harmonizing growth with purpose, blending technology with social and environmental responsibility.

SEZ: Unlocking potential and driving competitiveness

Red Lands Roses is the fourth floriculture SEZs in Kenya. Since being gazetted as an SEZ in August 2022, the farm has invested €7.5 million in infrastructure upgrades, including additional high-tech greenhouses, expanded solar energy systems, and sophisticated hydroponics. Production expanded from 28 to 44 hectares, and operational efficiency increased significantly, reinforcing its position in global markets.

CS Lee Kinyanjui remarked that SEZs provide "predictable and efficient business environments" that allow exporters to scale, innovate, and compete. "Red Lands Roses demonstrates how SEZs can empower Kenya's floriculture sector to compete on a global stage while creating sustainable employment," he noted.

The transition to Special Economic Zone status represents a new chapter in this journey. SEZ designation in Kenya comes with incentives designed to improve competitiveness: streamlined regulatory procedures, fiscal incentives, improved infrastructure access, and an investor-friendly operating environment. For Red Lands Roses, this status translates into tangible benefits that include enhanced logistics, simplified export procedures, and a strengthened platform for growth in global markets.

> "Success isn't just about growing roses, it's about cultivating a sustainable, inclusive business that creates value for our community, our employees, and our country."

CEO Copreaux explained.

Social economic impact

The SEZ transformation has had tangible effects on employment and local communities. The farm now employs over 1,000 people, more than double its workforce from a few years ago, with thousands more benefiting indirectly through logistics, packaging, and related services.

Red Lands Roses is also redefining agricultural employment through competitive wages, private medical insurance, school fee support, subsidized meals, and even bicycles to ease commuting for workers. These benefits exceed industry norms and reflect a philosophy that business growth must translate into community and employee upliftment.

Women, in particular, have found opportunities to thrive. Approximately 55% of the workforce is female, holding positions across production and management. Childcare, health programmes and professional development pathways help women balance work and family responsibilities. "Working here has changed my life," said one employee. "We are not just working for roses; we are building futures."

Innovation and sustainability

Visitors touring the farm saw rows upon rows of vibrant roses in climate-controlled greenhouses, with hydroponic systems, automated nutrient delivery, and efficient water recycling en- »

» suring optimal growth and premium quality. Solar panels glinted under the afternoon sun, reflecting the farm's commitment to sustainability.

These practices not only reduce environmental impact but also enhance marketability. Increasingly, international buyers demand proof of responsible production, and Red Lands Roses meets and exceeds these standards, becoming a preferred supplier for discerning global customers.

Voices from leadership and industry

Government and industry leaders at the event emphasized the broader implications of the SEZ model. CS Kinyanjui praised SEZs as catalysts for growth, noting improvements in logistics and regulatory support that enhance Kenya's export competitiveness. Clement Tulezi spoke of opportunities for market diversification, including emerging Asian markets, while Wesley Siele highlighted the importance of compliance and employee engagement. Dr. Kenneth Chelule called Red Lands Roses a benchmark for investment and sustainability, urging other farms to follow suit.

CEO Copreaux reinforced these sentiments: "This is a new chapter where Kenyan ingenuity meets global opportunity. Every stem we export carries the promise of progress — for our people, our communities, and our country."

Community pride and worker perspectives

Amid speeches and ceremonial ribbon-cutting, workers moved proudly among the blooms, showing visitors the intricacies of modern flower production. Many spoke of how employment at Red Lands Roses has changed their lives, from improved healthcare and education to a sense of purpose and belonging.

The afternoon's sun highlighted both the flowers and the faces of staff, underscoring the human impact behind every bouquet exported. The mood was celebratory, reflecting pride, optimism, and a shared sense of achievement.

Looking ahead

Red Lands Roses is already looking to the future. Plans include further expansion of production facilities, renewable energy projects, research collaborations, and downstream processing that keeps more value within Kenya.

Sustainability, social inclusion, and operational excellence remain core priorities. "We aim to grow responsibly, empower our workforce, and remain competitive in global markets," Copreaux said. "Our success is measured not just in stems exported but in the lives positively affected by this enterprise."

Over the past three decades, Red Lands Roses has introduced nearly 200 rose varieties, each cultivated to meet the highest standards demanded by international floriculture markets. The farm's location — high altitude, temperate climate, and fertile red soils — allows flowers to bloom year-round, while hydroponic and greenhouse technologies extend vase life and reduce environmental impact.

The farm has invested €7.5 million under the SEZ framework to expand its greenhouses, modernize its hydroponic systems, and bolster renewable energy infrastructure. These investments ensure that Red Lands Roses can continue to deliver high-quality roses to Europe and other export markets while maintaining sustainability and efficiency at every stage of production.

Innovation and sustainability in action

Red Lands Roses' greenhouses are equipped with state-of-the-art hydroponics, automated climate control, and nutrient recycling systems that optimize plant growth and reduce environmental footprint. Solar power covers a significant portion of the farm's energy needs, and careful water management ensures that operations have minimal impact on local ecosystems.

This focus on sustainability has resonated with international buyers, many of whom increasingly require proof of environmentally responsible practices. By combining high-quality production with sustainability, Red Lands Roses has positioned itself as a preferred supplier to global floriculture markets.

Strategic significance for Kenya

Kenya accounts for a significant portion of the global cut-flower market, and roses remain the country's top export commodity in the floriculture sector. However, rising competition from Latin America and Asia, coupled with evolving environmental and regulatory requirements in Europe, has made the sector increasingly competitive.

The event also highlighted Kenya's broader strategy to use SEZs to catalyze industrial growth. Officials emphasized that SEZs are not just tax or customs incentives but platforms for innovation, efficiency, and competitiveness — particularly for export-oriented sectors such as floriculture. ■

1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Bioline AgroSciences

Congratulations!

The rose is a symbol of timeless beauty.

The methods to cultivate it, and a nation's economic future, are leaping ahead. Congratulations to Red Lands Roses on your first anniversary as a Special Economic Zone.

Bioline Agrosciences is proud to be your partner in growth, providing the science that protects your crops, sustainably.

Red Lands Roses

Redlands Roses Endorses Cryptogran SC, a biological control for FCM larvae

Congratulations

Red Lands Roses

Congratulations to **Red Lands Roses** on your **SEZ Commissioning**.

Osho Chemical Industries extends our warmest congratulations to Red Lands Roses on being officially commissioned as a Special Economic Zone (SEZ). This is a remarkable milestone that crowns 30 years of innovation, resilience, and global competitiveness in Kenya's floriculture sector.

This achievement is not only a testament to your visionary leadership, but also a powerful boost to the country's horticultural excellence. We are proud to celebrate this moment with you.

As longstanding partners, we value the trust and collaboration that have defined our journey together. We look forward to continuing our shared mission of driving growth, quality, and sustainability in Kenya's floriculture industry.

Congratulations once again to the entire Red Lands Roses team on this extraordinary accomplishment.

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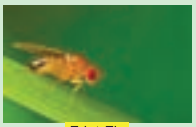
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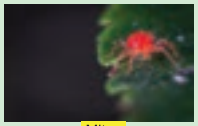
Bollworm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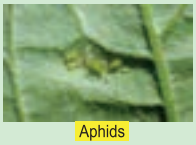
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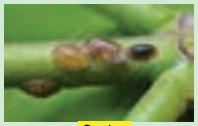
Thrips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Glowing tributes to departed AAKGrow CEO Eric Kimunguyi

The agriculture sector is still coming to terms with the passing of **Mr Eric Sitanda Kimunguyi,** who until his demise was the Chief Executive Officer of AAKGrow, whose leadership and advocacy played a significant role in shaping Kenya's crop protection and sustainable agriculture agenda. He was a respected industry professional who consistently championed science-based approaches to agricultural production.

During his tenure at AAKGrow, Mr Kimunguyi was a prominent voice on matters relating to crop protection, pesticide stewardship and regulatory engagement. He led the organisation at a time when the sector faced increasing scrutiny, regulatory pressure and public debate, and was widely credited with steering constructive dialogue between industry, government and other agricultural stakeholders.

Mr Kimunguyi was particularly known for promoting **responsible use of crop protection products** as a critical pillar of food security, farmer productivity and environmental safety. Under his leadership, AAKGrow strengthened its focus on stewardship programmes, farmer training and awareness initiatives aimed at improving safety standards across the value chain. These efforts reinforced the role of agro-inputs as part of integrated pest and crop management systems rather than standalone solutions.

Eric Sitanda Kimunguyi, CEO of AAKGrow, during an industry forum. He is remembered for his leadership in advancing responsible crop protection and policy engagement.

Within policy and regulatory circles, Mr Kimunguyi was regarded as a steady and informed advocate for evidence-based decision-making. He consistently emphasised the importance of science, risk assessment and global best practice in the formulation of agricultural policies, especially those affecting crop protection, food safety and trade. His engagement helped position the industry as a constructive partner in national agricultural development rather than an adversarial interest group.

Mr Kimunguyi also played a key role in strengthening **industry coordination and partnerships.** He actively engaged with farmer organisations, commodity associations, research institutions and regional bodies to align crop protection strategies with broader goals of sustainability, productivity and climate resilience. His leadership contributed to improved collaboration across the agricultural ecosystem, particularly in addressing pest resistance, product misuse and access to quality inputs.

> Eric Kimunguyi championed science-based, responsible crop protection as a cornerstone of sustainable agriculture and food security.

Beyond organisational leadership, Mr Kimunguyi was recognised for his professionalism and accessibility. He maintained open channels of engagement with stakeholders and was frequently called upon to clarify technical issues affecting agriculture. His ability to communicate complex regulatory and scientific matters in a clear and practical manner made him a valued contributor to sector discourse.

Colleagues across agribusiness, regulatory institutions and agricultural media describe Mr Kimunguyi as focused, principled and solutions-oriented. He approached contentious issues with calm authority, advocating for balanced outcomes that safeguarded farmer livelihoods, consumer safety and environmental integrity.

As the sector reflects on his passing, Mr Eric Kimunguyi's contribution to Kenya's agricultural landscape stands out for its emphasis on **responsible innovation, policy engagement and professional leadership.** His work at AAKGrow helped shape how crop protection is understood and applied within the broader context of sustainable food production.

His legacy remains embedded in ongoing stewardship initiatives, strengthened industry-government relations and a more informed national conversation on science-led agriculture. ■

Dr. Lusike A. Wasilwa: A life sown in service and harvested in legacy

Dr. Lusike A. Wasilwa (June 21, 1963 – September 20, 2025) was more than a scientist — she was a visionary leader whose life's work sowed seeds of innovation, resilience, and hope across Kenya's agricultural landscape. As Director of Crop Systems at the Kenya Agricultural & Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), she dedicated nearly four decades to advancing agricultural research, strengthening food security, and uplifting the lives of smallholder farmers. Her passing in September 2025 marked the end of a remarkable journey, but her legacy continues to flourish in fields, research institutions, and the hearts of those she mentored. (drlusikememorial.org)

Born and raised in Bungoma County, Dr. Wasilwa's passion for agriculture was rooted in both academic excellence and community service. She pursued a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, and later earned her MSc in Horticulture and PhD in Plant Science from the University of Arkansas, USA, followed by postdoctoral research at Rutgers University. Her early work in plant pathology, including pioneering research on diseases affecting cucurbits and other crops, laid the foundation for a distinguished career that blended rigorous science with practical solutions for farmers. (drlusikememorial.org)

At KALRO — and previously at the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) — Dr. Wasilwa forged a path as a systems thinker, integrating scientific research with real-world agricultural challenges. Her leadership as Director of Crop Systems placed her at the helm of national research efforts for food, horticulture, and industrial crops, guiding strategies that responded to climate change, biodiversity loss, and evolving market demands. She was instrumental in shaping the organization's research agenda to be demand-driven, farmer-focused, and innovation-oriented. (drlusikememorial.org)

A hallmark of Dr. Wasilwa's work was her passionate advocacy for **underutilized and indigenous crops.** She recognized that food security is not just about increasing staples, but about **diversifying diets, strengthening resilience, and enhancing nutrition** — especially in marginal and resource-constrained areas. Under her guidance, KALRO championed neglected species such as **guavas, gooseberries, jackfruit, and indigenous vegetables,** promoting their cultivation, value addition, and commercial potential. Her work helped challenge traditional perceptions and demonstrated that these crops are not only culturally significant but also economically viable and climate-resilient. (Kenya News)

Dr. Wasilwa's influence extended beyond national borders. She served on numerous **regional and international boards and advisory committees,** including the East African Science & Technology Commission, the International Advisory Board for horticultural research programs, and global initiatives aimed at bolstering food systems. She was a respected voice in forums that shaped science policy, research funding priorities, and collaborative networks to advance agricultural innovation across Africa. (emerge-africa.org)

Perhaps her most enduring contribution was her **commitment to mentorship and capacity building.** Dr. Wasilwa was deeply involved with the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) programme, where she inspired and guided a generation of young scientists — particularly women — to pursue careers in agricultural science. Her belief in mentorship as a tool for empowerment and institutional strengthening has left an indelible mark on African agriculture. (drlusikememorial.org)

Dr. Lusike Wasilwa embodied the spirit of service, excellence, and innovation. Her legacy lives on in the vibrant agricultural communities she served, the policies she influenced, and the countless scientists she mentored. In a world facing complex food security challenges, her life's work remains a guiding light and a testament to the transformative power of science rooted in purpose. ■

Pest Control Products Board Emergency products for control of Persea Mites in avocados

We have a solution – predatory mites, insecticides, miticides to paraffin oils

By Catherine Riungu

The outbreak of persea mites in Kenya is devastating avocado farms and sending shockwaves across the country's avocado-growing regions. Farmers are panicking as trees shed their leaves and fruits, with some orchards left bare and drying up. The infestation is fast-spreading, and if left uncontrolled, it threatens to cripple one of Kenya's most lucrative export crops.

In response to this crisis, the Kenya Pest Control Products Board (PCPB) has moved swiftly and, under an emergency registration, approved a list of effective solutions to manage and control Persea mite infestations. These products—ranging from insecticides and miticides to biological controls like predatory mites—can now be used until March 31, 2026.

This emergency registration offers a lifeline to avocado farmers grappling with the destructive Persea mite outbreak. With the right knowledge and tools now available, it's possible to bring the situation under control and restore productivity to affected farms. ■

Below is a list of approved products, their active ingredients, local suppliers, and how they work to combat the Persea mite:

1. MAZAO ACHIEVE

• Active Ingredient: Metarhizium anisopliae ICIPE 78 (110^{11} cfu/ml)*

• Formulated by: The Real IPM Company (K) Ltd, Kenya

• Type: Bio-insecticide

• Target: Persea Mites

• Use: Applied on avocado trees to biologically control mite populations through fungal action.

2. REAL CALIFORNICUS

• Active Agent: Amblyseius californicus (12,500 mites per 250ml bottle)

• Supplier: The Real IPM Company (K) Ltd, Kenya

• Type: Predatory mites

• Target: Persea Mites

• Use: Introduced into the orchard to naturally prey on and reduce the population of Persea mites.

3. SPIDOR 240 SC

• Active Ingredient: 240g/l insecticide formulation

• Manufacturer: Yongnong Biosciences Co Ltd, China

• Local Agent: Kenagro Suppliers Ltd

• Use: Chemical insecticide specifically formulated to control Persea mites on avocados.

4. MUMMINET EC

• Active Ingredient: Polyalkyleneoxide Modified Heptamethyltrisiloxane (80%)

• Manufacturer: ICB PHARMA

• Local Agent: The Real IPM Company (K) Ltd

• Use: An effective insecticide that works by enhancing spread and penetration on the leaf surface, improving mite control.

5. SEGATRON ULTRA LIQUID

• Active Ingredient: Paraffin oil (98%)

• Formulated by: Osho Chemical Industries Ltd

• Manufacturers: Raj Petro Specialities, Apar Industries, Kukdong Oil & Chemicals, Gandhar Oil Refinery

• Use: Works by suffocating mites on contact. It's a physical mode of action and an eco-friendlier alternative to harsh chemicals.

6. SAVAGE 240 SC

• Active Ingredient: Spirodiclofen (240 g/Kg)

• Manufacturer: Shandong Kangqiao Bio-technology Co. Ltd, China

• Local Agent: East African Business Co. Ltd

• Type: Miticide/Ovicide

• Use: Specifically targets mites and their eggs, ensuring long-lasting control over Persea mite populations.

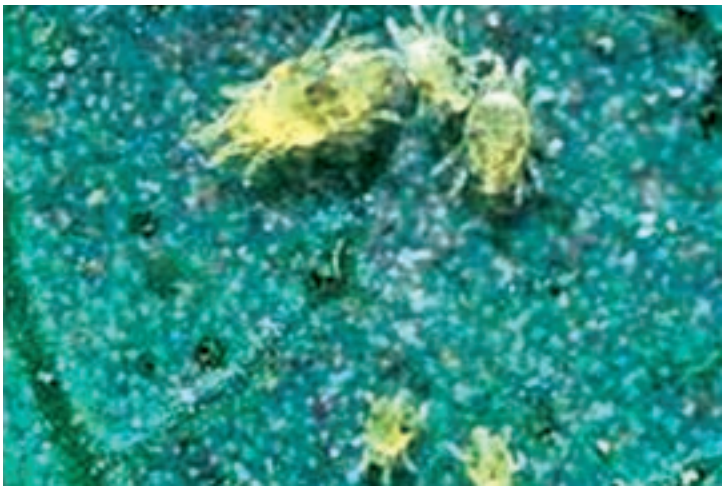
7. ACRAMITE 5EC

• Active Ingredient: Fenpyroximate (50g/L)

• Manufacturer: PI Industries Ltd, India

• Local Agent: East African Business Company Ltd

• Use: A fast-acting insecticide effective against adult mites on avocado trees.



What farmers should do

• ***Act Quickly:*** *Early intervention is key. Once you notice signs like leaf drop, webbing, or drying branches, take action immediately.*

• ***Consult an Expert:*** *Work with agricultural extension officers or licensed pest control advisors to determine the most appropriate treatment for your farm.*

• ***Follow Usage Guidelines:*** *All products should be applied according to label instructions to ensure safety, effectiveness, and compliance with export standards.*

• ***Integrated Approach:*** *For best results, consider integrated pest management—combining biological solutions like predatory mites with targeted use of approved miticides or insecticides*

How Kenya's flower industry subdued FCM

In 2025, the story of how Kenya subdued False Codling Moth stands as one of the flower industry's greatest success stories — not because the pest disappeared, but because the system rose to meet it.

By CATHERINE RIUNGU

Since 2018 and most of 2025, Kenya's floriculture sector — especially its prime export, roses — faced one of its most formidable challenges in recent history: the False Codling Moth (FCM) (Thaumatotibia leucotreta), a minuscule but devastating pest classified by the European Union (EU) as a regulated quarantine pest.

The presence of FCM in Kenyan rose consignments had triggered a sharp increase in shipment interceptions and rejections, jeopardizing access to the EU — the industry's largest and most valuable market.

Yet by late 2025, Kenya had not only met the EU's stringent requirements but largely overcame the FCM challenge through one of the most innovative and collaborative interventions in its export history: the FCM Systems Approach — a science-based, multi-layered pest management and regulatory protocol developed under the leadership of the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) and industry associations - the Kenya Flower Council (KFC), the Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya and the Fresh Produce Consortium with full industry buy-in.

The threat

FCM is native to sub-Saharan Africa and can infest a wide range of crops. Its larvae bore into flower buds and stems, rendering even premium roses risky for export markets that demand zero tolerance for quarantine pests. Over recent years, the EU — citing scientific evidence from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) — tightened its phytosanitary rules and, in July 2024, enacted the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/2004, which introduced enhanced requirements for cut roses to mitigate the risk of introducing FCM into the EU territory.

The EU progressively raised physical inspection rates on Kenyan roses — from as low as 5 % in 2020 to 25 % by mid-2024 — and detected recurring FCM incidences that resulted in hundreds of interceptions and dozens of shipment rejections, with millions of flower stems destroyed.

A unified national response: The Systems Approach

Of the five options tabled by the EU, Kenya settled for the systems approach as the best method. Drawing on international phytosanitary science and EU guidance on systems approaches, KEPHIS, together with industry associations, growers, export agents, government bodies (including the Agriculture and Food Authority, Pest Control Products Board, and Kenya Agricultural & Livestock Research Organisation), developed the Rose False Codling Moth Systems Approach (Rose FCMSA) in 2024.

A systems approach is a coordinated set of preventive, monitoring, and control measures applied throughout the production and export chain — from nurseries and pre-harvest fields through post-harvest handling and certification — to ensure pest freedom or negligible risk. This holistic strategy is recognized under international plant health standards as

an alternative to single treatments or isolated checks.

Core components of Kenya's FCM Systems Approach included:

- ***Pre-harvest pest monitoring & management***
Routine monitoring of FCM populations using pheromone traps, scouting practices and field sanitation to reduce pest prevalence before flowers even reach harvest

- ***Integrated pest control measures***
Application of effective pest control tools — including registered chemical and biological control products — to mitigate pest populations while meeting EU standards and minimizing harmful residues.

- ***Traceability and site approval***
Identification, audit, and approval of 134 production sites with unique traceability codes, allowing easy tracking and verification of compliance for each export shipment.

- ***Training and capacity building***
Targeted training for inspectors, growers, farm staff, and agro-attendants on FCM identification, management, record-keeping, and compliance procedures to maintain uniform standards across the country.

- ***Official control and documentation***
KEPHIS strengthened official inspections, documentation, and certification processes, providing the EU with the evidence necessary to validate Kenya's implementation of the system and ultimately trust its effectiveness.

From Crisis to Compliance:
The success of the systems approach hinged on collaboration across stakeholders: growers and exporters pooled data and best practices, government agencies synchronized regulatory oversight, and KEPHIS engaged directly with EU auditors and regulators to prove that Kenya's roses could reliably meet the zero-tolerance standard for FCM set under EU Regulation 2024/2004.

According to industry leaders, including KFC CEO Clement Tulezi in an interview with Hortinews, the most important lesson was that the FCM challenge could not be solved by any individual farm or exporter acting alone — but only via a coordinated, systematic response rooted in science, discipline, and real-time compliance.

Securing the flower sector
By deploying the systems approach and meeting the EU deadline, Kenya has significantly reduced FCM interceptions and bolstered confidence among EU importers. This achievement secured continued market access for roses — the lifeblood of Kenya's flower exports — and protected thousands of jobs and foreign exchange earnings

A scheduled audit by the EU's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) in late 2025 further reviewed Kenya's official controls, affirming the quality of systems implementation

The story of Kenya's response to FCM is more than a regulatory compliance tale — it is a blueprint for international agricultural competitiveness, showing how targeted innovation, unity between public and private sectors and commitment to global standards can turn an existential threat into a success story.

How Kenya beat the false codling moth – the systems approach that saved the flower industry

For a moment, Kenya's flower industry stood on the edge.

The False Codling Moth (FCM) — a tiny pest with outsized consequences — had begun to threaten the survival of roses, Kenya's single most important horticultural export. Shipments were being intercepted in Europe, inspection levels were rising, and confidence in Kenyan flowers was under strain. For »

» an industry that employs hundreds of thousands and anchors Kenya's agricultural exports, the risk was existential.

Through an unprecedented level of coordination between government, regulators, growers, exporters and industry associations, Kenya designed, implemented and delivered one of the most comprehensive pest management responses the global floriculture industry has seen — the FCM Systems Approach. The European Union reviewed the system, verified its implementation, and confirmed that Kenya's processes met the requirements of the regulation on FCM for cut roses.

A pest that tested the industry to its limits

The False Codling Moth is native to Africa, but for markets such as the European Union it is a regulated quarantine pest with zero tolerance. Even a single detection in a shipment could trigger rejection, destruction of flowers, and heightened inspections across an entire country's exports.

By 2023 and 2024, interceptions of Kenyan roses had increased sharply. Inspection rates were raised, costs escalated, and uncertainty spread across the industry. For growers, exporters and buyers alike, the message was clear: without decisive action, Kenya risked losing its most important market.

This was not a problem any single farm could solve on its own.

Rather than react defensively, the industry chose to act collectively. The goal was simple but ambitious: to demonstrate that Kenyan roses could be produced, handled and exported under a controlled system that consistently prevents FCM from reaching export consignments.

The systems approach was designed as a series of interlocking controls, each reducing risk and reinforcing the others.

It began at farm level, with strengthened pre-harvest monitoring. Farms installed pheromone traps, intensified scouting, and improved sanitation to detect and suppress FCM populations early, long before harvesting began.

This was supported by integrated pest management, combining approved chemical controls with biological options and strict application protocols. The emphasis was on effectiveness, compliance, and sustainability — ensuring pests were controlled while meeting residue and environmental standards.

Traceability became central. Production sites were identified, audited and approved, each linked to clear records that followed flowers from the greenhouse to export. If a problem occurred, it could be traced, isolated and corrected without disrupting the entire industry.

Training was rolled out

Through an unprecedented level of coordination between government, regulators, growers, exporters and industry associations, Kenya designed, implemented and delivered one of the most comprehensive pest management responses the global floriculture industry has seen — the FCM Systems Approach.

across the sector. Farm managers, spray teams, quality controllers, exporters and inspectors were all aligned on FCM identification, control measures, record-keeping and compliance requirements. Everyone, from greenhouse to inspection point, understood their role in the system.

At the final stage, official controls were strengthened. KEPHIS intensified inspections, documentation and certification, ensuring that every consignment exported under the system met the agreed standards and could be defended with evidence.

What emerged was not a single intervention, but a living, disciplined system — consistent, auditable and transparent.

Proving It Works

Designing the system was only half the task. Proving it worked was the real test.

The European Union reviewed the systems approach in detail, assessed its implementation on the ground, and evaluated Kenya's official controls. The verdict was clear: the processes in place met the regulatory requirements for managing FCM risk in cut roses.

Interceptions fell. Confidence returned.

As Kenya Flower Council CEO Clement Tulezi noted, the industry "HAD challenges with FCM" — words that now reflect a problem brought under control, not one still raging.

The success of the FCM Systems Approach goes beyond meeting a regulation.

It demonstrated that Kenya's flower industry can mobilize at national scale, align public and private interests, and respond to global market pressure with science, discipline and unity. It protected Kenya's reputation as a reliable supplier, safeguarded jobs, and secured continued access to the world's most demanding flower market.

Perhaps most importantly, it set a new benchmark. FCM tested Kenya's floriculture sector to its limits. The response reshaped it — stronger, more coordinated, and better prepared for future challenges. ■

ON THE MOVE

Prof Jane Ambuko

Professor Jane Ambuko, a distinguished Kenyan horticultural scientist, has been appointed Director of Research and Training at the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA), marking a significant transition from her long and impactful service at the University of Nairobi (UoN).

Prof Ambuko joins ARUA from UoN's Department of Plant Science and Crop Protection, where she is a Professor of Horticulture and a respected leader in postharvest science and food systems research. Over the years, she has been at the forefront of efforts to reduce postharvest losses, improve fresh produce quality, and strengthen market access for smallholder farmers, work that has had tangible impact across Kenya and the region.

Her professional portfolio spans research, training and community engagement, with a strong emphasis on practical solutions such as produce aggregation models, cold-chain innovations and farmer-centred capacity building. Prof Ambuko has also worked extensively with national and international partners on multidisciplinary projects aimed at building resilient and sustainable food systems.

An alumna of the University of Nairobi, where she earned both her BSc in Agriculture and MSc in Horticulture, Prof Ambuko holds a PhD in Agricultural Sciences from Tsukuba University, Japan, with specialization in pomology and postharvest science.

At ARUA, she is expected to play a key role in shaping the continent's research agenda.

FMC Appoints Diana Kainyu Gitonga Kimathi as Marketing Lead for Africa

Diana Gitonga

FMC Corporation has appointed Diana Kainyu Gitonga Kimathi as its new Marketing Lead for Africa. In this role, Diana will be responsible for shaping the company's marketing strategy across the continent, driving brand growth, and strengthening engagement with customers and partners.

Diana brings over 20 years of experience in customer focused strategy, campaign planning, and go to market execution across East and Southern Africa. Prior to joining FMC, she held senior roles in the agricultural sector, including leadership positions at Bayer Crop Science where she worked closely with smallholder farmers and partners to advance agricultural solutions and deepen market engagement.

Her background combines strategic marketing expertise with hands on experience in building partnerships and driving business growth in diverse African markets. Diana's appointment reflects FMC's commitment to market driven leadership and enhancing its impact across the region.

Okisegere Ojepat

Fresh Produce Consortium of Kenya (FPC Kenya) CEO Okisegere Ojepat has been appointed to the World Agricultural Forum (WAF) Council, a global platform that brings together leading policymakers, agribusiness CEOs, innovators, and development institutions to shape the future of global agriculture. His appointment follows a recommendation by Dr. MJ Khan, Special Advisor to the WAF Board, and approval after internal deliberations.

The World Agricultural Forum is envisioned as a global body, similar in stature to the World Economic Forum, dedicated to advancing agricultural development worldwide. It seeks to address critical challenges facing the sector, including food and nutrition security, climate change, sustainability, agricultural policy, technology adoption, and global trade dynamics. Through high-level dialogue and collaboration, WAF aims to influence global policy agendas while promoting innovation, investment, and inclusive growth across agricultural value chains.

Ojepat's appointment places Kenya's fresh produce sector at the heart of these global conversations. His experience and leadership are expected to contribute to shaping discussions that drive collective action, strengthen international cooperation, and build a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable agricultural future. Membership in the WAF Council also positions him to play a key role in guiding the Forum's annual global summit and broader initiatives, reinforcing Kenya's growing influence in global agricultural policy and agribusiness development.

BRIEFS

Kenya tightens online pesticide sales amid growing safety concerns

Growing concerns over the safety of pesticide use in Kenya have prompted the government to introduce stricter controls on how these products are sold—especially online. Reports of misuse, circulation of unregistered products, and health and environmental risks linked to unsafe pesticides have intensified calls for tighter regulation. Against this backdrop, the proposed Pest Control Products Bill seeks to rein in the fast-expanding digital pesticide market.

Sponsored by Majority Leader Kimani Ichungwa, the Bill aims to close regulatory loopholes that have allowed uncertified traders to sell pesticides through online platforms without proper oversight. If enacted, digital marketplaces will only be allowed to host sellers certified by a newly proposed Pest Control Products Authority, and all pesticide products listed online must be officially registered with the Authority.

The legislation places new responsibilities on online platforms, requiring them to verify seller licenses and product approvals before listings go live. Non-compliance could attract penalties of up to Sh50,000, six months' imprisonment, or both.

The Bill also strengthens national and county-level oversight, introduces stricter rules for the disposal of expired and unused pesticides, and allows for scientific re-evaluation of products already in use. Overall, the reforms are expected to enhance pesticide safety, protect farmers and consumers, and modernize Kenya's pesticide control framework in line with growing digital trade.

Kenya Flower Council partners with MPS to advance sustainable floriculture through the HortiFootprint calculator

The Kenya Flower Council (KFC) and MPS have announced a game-changing partnership to accelerate sustainability in Kenya's floriculture industry through the HortiFootprint Calculator, a globally recognized environmental impact tool developed by MPS and LetsGrow.com.

The partnership, unveiled during the International Floriculture Trade Fair (IFTF) in Vijfhuizen, positions Kenya as a global leader in sustainable flower production, empowering local growers to track, benchmark, and reduce their environmental footprint using verified life-cycle data.

The HortiFootprint Calculator measures 16 key sustainability indicators, from energy and water use to transport and packaging, providing growers with actionable insights via an intuitive dashboard. The tool is officially recognized by the European Commission and the Floriculture Sustainability Initiative (FSI), ensuring global credibility and compliance with FloriPEFCR standards.

"This tool is a game-changer for growers who want to demonstrate their sustainability credentials," said Arthij van der Veer, MPS Area Manager for Africa.

"The partnership will empower Kenyan growers with science-based data to strengthen their environmental performance and competitiveness," added Clement Tulezi, CEO, Kenya Flower Council.

With Kenya exporting flowers to over 60 destinations worldwide, the collaboration embeds sustainability at the heart of production through the Flowers and Ornamentals Sustainability Standard (FOSS). It will also enhance training, data management, and capacity building for growers across the country.

By adopting the HortiFootprint Calculator, Kenyan growers are aligning with international buyers, opening new markets, and future-proofing their operations ahead of the 2026 FloriPEFCR compliance deadline.

"We are not only equipping our members with the tools to remain competitive but also reinforcing Kenya's leadership in shaping a greener future for floriculture," said Chris Kulei, Chair of the Kenya Flower Council Board.

Osho Chemical Industries CEO Nisheel Shah recognized among Africa's top technology leaders

Nisheel Shah, Chief Executive Officer of Osho Chemical Industries Ltd, has been named a finalist for the prestigious CXO of the Year Award at the CIO100 Symposium & Awards 2025, positioning him among an elite group of technology leaders reshaping Africa's digital transformation landscape.

Shah leads one of East and Central Africa's largest agrochemical manufacturing operations, with Osho Chemical Industries boasting over 500 distributors, 6,000 stockists, and operations spanning Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Burundi. The company impacts approximately 10 million farmers across the region.

His recognition comes as 162 organisations across Africa compete for honors at the 17th edition of the CIO100 Awards, selected from a record 1,200 applications spanning Mauritius, East, West, and South Africa.

Lohana International Business Forum Expo 2026 to be held in Mumbai

The Lohana International Business Forum Expo is set to take place from January 30th to February 1st, 2026 at the Jio Centre, Mumbai. Organized by the Lohana community, this annual event has grown in scale and popularity over the years, attracting business leaders and professionals from around the world.

Bimal Kantaria, Director of Lohana, highlighted that the expo is an excellent platform for networking, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing. "The forum brings together businesspeople and professionals from diverse industries. This year, we are also introducing dedicated sessions for lawyers, accountants, doctors, and other professionals, making it even more relevant and engaging," he said.

The event is open to all, including non-Lohana businesses, and there are no registration or entrance fees. Participants can expect a vibrant atmosphere with opportunities to explore partnerships, learn from industry experts, and expand their professional networks.

For more information and updates, interested participants are encouraged to get in touch with the organizers.

DHL Launches New Agri Express Service for avocado exporters

DHL Express Sub Saharan Africa has introduced a new logistics service called Agri Express specifically designed to support fresh avocado exporters in Kenya. The service aims to streamline and enhance export logistics for avocado producers by providing fast, reliable air freight solutions and specialised handling tailored for perishable fruit exports. This initiative is expected to help growers and exporters reach key international markets more efficiently, improving transit times and cargo visibility while maintaining product quality throughout the supply chain. The launch reflects DHL's commitment to enabling agricultural exporters to compete in global markets by offering logistics expertise and dedicated export support for high value horticultural produce like avocados.

Pictorial

Naivasha Hortifair 2025 scenes

DIRECTORY				
Name	**Location**	**Person of Contact**	**Telephone Number**	**Email**
AAA Chui Farm	Timau	Phanuel Ochunga	0722506026	fan uel.ochunga@ aaagrowers.co.ke
AAA Roses	Timau	Mr. Sanjeev	0739360050	sanjeev@aaagrowers.co.ke
Bigot Flowers	Flower Park, Naivasha	Mr. Jagtap Kakasaheb	"050 50425 / 0722205271"	jagtap.kt@bigotflowers. co.ke
Big Flowers	Timau	Mr. Gedion Waweru	0721178974	gedion@fontana.co.ke
Africalla (K) Ltd	Rumuruti	Mrs Greet	0707112194	meindert@africalla.com
Africa Blooms	Salgaa	Ramnath Sarbande	0798190511	ramnath.sarbande@xflora. net
Afriscan Kenya Ltd	Naivasha	Charles Mwangi	"0722 711925 / 0724 212531"	charles.mwangi@afriscan. co.ke
Agriflora K Ltd	Njoro	Charles Mulemba	"0720852176 / 0721311279"	cmulemba@sianroses.co.ke
Alani Gardens	Timau	Mrs. Judith Zuurbier	0722364943	alani@alani-gardens.com
Altima Roses	Olkalao	Simon van der Bug	0724443260	
Aquila Development Co	North Lake Naivasha	Pranshant Takate	"0729 776656 / 0722 205368"	gm@aquilaflowers.com, sales@aquilaflowers.com
Baraka Roses	Ngorika, Nakuru	Mr. Paul Salim	746,766,638	cropproduction@ barakaroses.com
Batian Flowers	Timau	Mr. Rakesh	0724631299	
Beauty Line	Moi North Lake Naivasha	Mr. Peter Gathiaka	"0721392559 / 0721101075"	peter@beautyline.com
Bel Fiore Ltd	Timau	Hikmat Braimi	0707723535	
Bila Shaka Flowers	North Lake Naivasha	Mr. John Mbaria	"0724024859 / 0723806441"	jmbaria00@zuurbier.com
Black Petal	Limuru	Mr. Nizra Junder	0722848560	nj@blackpetals.co.ke
Black Tulip Flowers	Limuru	Yogesh Lemotit	737,453,768	gardenflora@swiftkenya. com
Bliss Flora	Njoro	Appachu Sachin	"+254 789101060 / 0700204600"	appachu7@yahoo.com
Blooming Africa Ltd	Gilgil	Bert Louwerse	722,204,309	bert@blooming - innovations. com
Bloomingdale Roses	Timau	Mr. Sunil Chaudhari	718,991,182	sunil@bloomingdaleroses. com
Bogmack Farm	Timau	Mr. Anderson	722,350,020	kathendusn@yahoo.com
Bohemian /Oserian	Nakuru South Lake	Chakravathi Yashmitha	0786143515	chakra.kuppusam y@ oserian. com
Bloom Valley	Salgaa	Ramnath Sarbande	0798190511	ramnath.sarbande@xflora. net
Branan & Mosi Ltd	Thika	Mr. Brian Wahome	0722204911	mwaiwahome@mosiflowers. co.ke
Buds & Blooms (K) Ltd	Timau	Mr. Shivaji Wagh	051-851776, 212080/1	
Bondent	Nanyuki	Mr. Peterson Thuita	"0722 509919/ 0724 786 004"	bondet.fm@kariki.biz
Benev Flora Ltd		Mr. John Ndungu	722,318,793	benevflora@gmail.com
Cartesia Blooms International			720,895,911	shivaniket@yahoo.com
Carnations Plants Ltd	Athi River	E. Fieldman/ Amir	"0722 202046/ 0733 697 404"	evi@exoticfields.com, cpl@ exoticfield.com
Carzan Flowers (K)Ltd	Nakuru	Stanley Rotich	0721931710	"sanley.rotich@marginpar. biz, info@carzankenya.com"
Carzan k ltd st	Nakuru	Thaddeus Adung'o	0716019094	thad deus.adung'o@ marginpar.biz
Carzan Molo	Nakuru Molo	David Ndundu Waweru	0723954698	davidndundu@gmail.com
Charly Fresh Produce		Mr. Charles Mbugua	722,764,395	charlyfreshproduce@gmail. com

DIRECTORY				
Name	**Location**	**Person of Contact**	**Telephone Number**	**Email**
ChainGreek (K) Ltd		Peter Gachanja	0701730133	peter@chaingreek.net
Chriven Flowers	Naivasha	Mr. Andrew Khaemba	722,431,170	andrew@chriven.coke
Colour Crops	Bahati/ Nakuru	Patrick kipkirui	0727806184	bahati@colourcrops.com
Colour Crops	Meru Timau	Kennedy Wanyama	0716389472	kennedywanyama@gmail.com
Colour Crops	North Lake/Airstrip	Geofrey Mwaura	0722200972	nva@colourcrops.com
Credible Blooms	"Ngong/ Rumuruti"	Mr.Kasee		farmmgr@crediblebloms.co.ke
Country wide Connections			0720,895,911	shivaniket@yahoo.com
Dale Flora	Mogotio Rd, Nakuru	Bharath	0795113966	pstakate@hotmail.com
De Ruiters EA	South Lake	Mr. Ethan Chege	+25,720,477,717	ethan.chege@deruiter.com
Desire Flora K. Ltd	Isinya			gm@desireflora.com, info@desireflora.com
Dummen Orange	Naivasha- South lake	Mr. Bart Engels	0759069896	s.b.engels@dummenorange.com
Double Dutch	Naivasha	James Opiyo	0723516172	opiyojames160@gmail.com
ECO ROSES	Salgaa	Mr. Jack Mbanya	0723565630	"girish@fontana.co.ke, mau.production.eco@btfgroup.com"
Enkasiti Flowers	Thika	Mr. Shem Oburu	0720129088	enkasiti@gmail.com
Esmeralda Breeding	Naivasha	Mr. Loui Hooyman	+31-297-385444	loui@esmeraldafarms.nl
Equinox	Timau	Mr. John Ngugi	+254725307509	john.ngugi@ equinoxflowers.com
Everest Flowers	Meru Timau	Japhet Chelal	721,770,597	
Everflora Ltd.	Juja	Mr. Dusang Ghanshyam	0721638005	manager1@everflora.co.ke
Exotic Peninah Roses/ Carnations	Athi river	Mr.Shimon	737,626,633	sharon@exoticfields.com
Fantasy Flora Ltd.		Mr. Henry onyango	202,352,813	henry@fantasy-flora.com
Fides (K) Ltd	Embu			info@fideskenya.com
Fina Flora	Naivasha	Stephen Muasya	723,920,237	info@finaflora.com
Flamingo Farm	South Lake	Mr. Peter Mwangi	0722204505	peter.mwangi@flamingo. net
Flamingo Carnations	South Lake	Mr. Jacob Wanyonyi	0722773515	jacob.wanyonyi@flamingo.net
Flamingo Hort (K ing fid her,Os prey Flamingo)	Nakuru	Elijah Getiro	0722873539	elijah.getiro@ dudutech.com
Finlay's Siraj	Timau	Peris		
Flamingo flora	Njoro	Sam Nyoro	0721993857	s.ivor@flamingoflora.co.ke
Flamingo Hort-Pioneer	Timau Meru	Suguvi	706,178,124	
Fresh Gold	laikipia ngare ngiro	John Karimi	0721622294	karimi@freshgoldkenya.co.ke
Flora Delight	Limuru	Mr. Hosea Andayi	0724373532	hosndai@yahoo .com, info@floradelightkenya. com
Flora Ola	Solai	Mr. Lucas Choi	07221832710	lucas.choi@floraola.com
Florensis		Mr. Simon Mwangi	0721519470	simon.mwangi@florensis.co.ke
Florenza Flowers	Olbanita Solai Nakuru	Mr.Viveck	731,040,498	farm.florenza @ megaspingroup.com
Fontana- Akina	Njoro	Mr.Mahindra Patil	0798254199	mahendra@fontana.co.ke
Fontana - Ayana	Mau	Osman	0712933710	osman@fontana.co.ke
Gatoka Farm	Thika	Mr.Robert / Chris	"0720 639 392 /0715 215 840"	info@gatokaflowers.com

DIRECTORY				
Name	**Location**	**Person of Contact**	**Telephone Number**	**Email**
Geta Group(TEGMAK)		Mr. James Marimbi	727,087,748	
Greystones Farm		Mr. Silas Mbaabu	722,312,316	silas.mbaabu@greystones.co.ke
Gladioli Tulip		Pieriguichi/Claudia	0722206939	torres.palau@yahoo.com
Grove	South Lake	Mr. John Ngoni	724,448,601	groovekenya@gmail.com
Golden Tulip	Olkalau	Mr. Umesh Choudhery/ Boniface	"0739729658/ 0723497491"	umesh.gtfl@btfs.co.ke
Gorge Farm		Patrick Mulumu	0722498267	pmulumu@vegpro-group.com
Golden Tulip Laurel investment	Olkalau			ashok@btl.co.ke
Hanna Roses	Thika North Off Gatura Road			production@hannaroses. com
Hamwe Ltd	Kinamba	Glory Gatwiri	0718328382	hamwe.production@kariki.biz
Heritage Flower Ltd		Shailesh Rai	722,203,750	hfl.srk@gmail.com
Highlands Plantation	Olkalau			production@ highlandplants.co.ke
Hub Import & Export Ltd		Mr. Patrick Karanja	723,852,512	sales@ hubimportsandexports. com
Interplant	Flower Park	Mr. George/Mark Low	791,183,929	george@interplantea.co.ke
Isinya Roses	Isinya	Mr. Sankar	+25,432,525,308	info@isinyaroses.com, pm@isinyaroses.com
Jedini Ventures Co Ltd.	Thika	Mr. Nicolas Mwaniki	"0727 237 354/ 0753 179 781"	info@jedini.co.ke
Jatflora	Olkalau	Mr. James Okech	724,418,541	jatflora@gmail.com
Kabuku Farm	Limuru	Mr. Natrajan	738,999,149	kabuku@eaga.co.ke
Kalka	Isinya	Mr. Shiva	715,356,540	shiva@kalkaflowers.com
Karen Roses	Karen, Nairobi	Mrs Rebecca Kotut/ Juliana	"020 207 8270, 0722717187"	sales@karenroses.com
Kariki Ltd- Thika	Thika	Miriam	"0729722591/ 0720674307"	kariki.fm@kariki.biz
Kariki - Molo ltd	Nakuru Molo	James Oluoch	0716333717	james.oluoch@kariki,biz
Kariki - Nanyuki	Meru Kagaita	Mr.Peterson Thuita	0724786004	bondet.fm@kariki.biz
Kemaks Blooms Ltd	A b e r d a r e ranges	Mr. Peter Gakuna	"0792 705 160 / 0717 334661"	kemaksblooms@gmail.com
Kentalya	Naivasha	Mrs. Lynette	"50 50006, 733 549 773"	lynette@kentalya.com
Kentalya Double Dutch	nakuru	Pharis Wainaina	0728207661	
Kenfloraa	Kiambu	Mr. Allem Abdul	"+254-20-2047682, +254722-311468"	info@kenfloraa.com
Kenya Cuttings	Thika	Mr. Martin Kolvenbach/ Phillip	721,225,540	martin.kolvenbach@syngenta.com
Kikwetu Flowers	Meru Timau	Rathan /Edwin Yinda	"0787266007 / 0721328026"	
Kisima Farm	Timau	Mr. Craig Aulton	0722205826	craig@kisima.co.ke
Kimar Flowers Exporter		Margret Joseph	"+254 2461485, 0721 974596"	kimmanexp@gmail.com, sales@kimaaroses.co.ke
Kordes Roses E A	Masai West Rd Karen, Nairobi	Mr. Bas Smit	733,363,642	info@kordesroses-ea.com
Kreative Roses	Flower Park	Mr. Alkis Charitatos	5,050,163	info@kreative-roses.com
KRF BEMAC		Balasaheb Ingwale	"0717181102/ 0712006323"	balasaheb@vegpro-group.com
KRF Galaxy Division		Chandrakant Bachche	0742639898	chandrakant.bachche@vegpro-group.com

DIRECTORY				
Name	**Location**	**Person of Contact**	**Telephone Number**	**Email**
KRF Gorge Division	Nakuru South Lake	Anand Patil	0728608785	anand.patil@vegpro-group.com
KRF- Longonot hort	Nakuru South Lake	Ravi Sathe	0715173603	ravi.sathe@vegpro-group.com
KRF-Star Division		Jagtap Shahaji	0792547633	jagtap@vegpro-group.com
Larmona Flowers- Nini		Mr. Peter Mureithi	722,238,474	ladmin@lamornaflowers. com
Lathy Flora&Fairy	kiambu	John Mbaoni	0753888126	info@lathyflora.com
Lauren International-Roses	Thika	Mr. Chris Ogutu	722,783,598	laurenflowersltd@yahoo. com
Laurel Investments-(Gemflora Kenya Ltd)		Shadrack Aura/ Ravindra Palshikar	0725613039/ 0740569286	ravi.lil@bttfgroup.com, pr oducti onmanager. laurel@bth.co.ke
Leekem Holdings Ltd	Nyandarua	Mrs Margaret Muthoni	"0720 267004/ 0719 691007"	leekement@gmail.com
Lobelia Roses Ltd		Mr. Ken Mwiti/ Ruth	+254 722475 785	ken.mwiti@lobeliaroses. com, ruth.mwiti@ lobeliaroses.com
Loldia Farm	Naivasha	Mr. Rotich/ Gary	721,237,936	locland@bidii.com
Lolomarik	Meru Timau	Douglas Njeru	0724210765	douglas@lolomarik.com
Maaskant Flowers	Olkalau	Mr.T. Srinivasan	711,368,756	srini@eaga.co.ke
Mahee Flowers	Olkalau	Mr. Krithinan / Promoth	0705401431 / 0705613186	maheefm@eaga.co.ke
Majesty Blooms Ltd	North Kinangop	Karutu Mbuthia	0722518805	
Maridadi Flowers	Flower Park	Mr. Jack Knepper	05050430/29/ 0733333289	jack@maridadiflowers.com
Maua Agritech Ltd	Isinya	Mr.Kori	115355251	kori@mauaagritech.com
Mau Flora	Molo	James Sirikwa / Manju	0727164214 / 074825471	manju@mauflora.com
Murara Plants	Kericho	Mr. Eric Bouman	111,015,600	
Mzuurie; Molo River Roses	Muserechi	Andrew Wambua	0724256592	awambua@moloriverroses.co.ke
Mzurrie Flowers:Winchester-Roses	Karen	Mrs Irene Njeru	722,203,630	irene@winchester.co.ke
Mzurrie Flowers:Winchester-	Nakuru- Bahati	Joseph Kasoso	725,696,509	jkasoso@winchsterco.ke
Mzurrie Flowers: Winchester -Maji Mazuri	Eldoret- Moi's bridge	Mr. Mark Juma	0727471034	mjuma@majimazuri.co.ke
Molo Greens			717,400,166	info@mologreens.com
Mosi Ltd	Juja	Alice Mureithi	722 204911, 733509673	alicemurugi@mosiflowers.co.ke
Mt. Elgon Orchards	Kitale	Mr. Bob Anderson	"054- 31458/ 5431460 / 0734333095"	bob@mtelgon.com
Mt Kenya Alstromeria	Meru Timau	Miriam	0716162671	miriam@ mountkenyaalstomerialtd.com
Mukungi (Tegmak Blooms)	Mukungi Kipipiri	Mr. Patrick Chege Mjuguna	720,663,625	tegmakbloomsltd@gmail.com
Multigrow Investments	South Kinangop	Mr. Peter Murimi	0724 97 7259	peter_murimi@yahoo.com
Mwanzi Farm	Rumuruti	Ram /william ndichu	0722265845/0712192192	
Nathe Flowers	Kinangop	Jesse Njoka	0722526959	info@natheenteprises. co.ke
Newholand	Olkalau	Mr. Ashok	738,359,459	
Ngong Roses	Ngong	Mr.Charles Maina	202,700,660	maina@africaonline.co.ke
Nini Ltd.	South Lake	Mr.Vijay Bhosale	0702662297/0720611623	dawa@niniltd.com
Nirp EA. Ltd	Flower Park	Mr. Deborah Ghione	072047771	deborahg@ nirpinternational.com
Ol Njorowa Ltd.	South Lake	Mr. Charles Kinyanjui	0725617361 / 0723986467	mbegu@olnjorowa.com

DIRECTORY				
Name	**Location**	**Person of Contact**	**Telephone Number**	**Email**
Orgem		Lawrence Mukundi	0729877990	
Panacol International Ltd.	Kitale			production@panacol.co.ke
Panda Flowers	Flower Park	Sundhar	0748436571	fm@pandaflowers.co.ke
Penta Flowers	Thika	Mr.Tom Ochieng	"0733625 297/ 0723 904 006"	penta@kenyaweb.com
Plantech Kenya Ltd	Naivasha	Mr. Idan Salvy	702,187,105	idan@plantechkenya.com
P J Flora		Santosh Kulkarni	"0792 269 521 / 738 990 521"	santosh@pjdaveflora.com
P.J Dave Flowers	Isinya	Mr.Pravin Yadar	0708920202	pravin.yandar@pjdave.com
P.J Dave -Rising Sun	Timau	Mr. Solai	732,556,256	fmrisingsun@pjdave.com
Pollen Sygenta Ltd.	Ruiru	Mr. Daniel Kisavi/ Joseph	733 603530/ 0733 552 500	daniel.kisavi@sygenta.com
Porini farm	Keringet	Shakti	0731040498	shakti@poriniflowers.com
Primarosa Zuri Flowers	Olnjorok	Wilfred Mwai /Peter Njagi	0721922163/0723575461	sprayer.p2@ primarosaflowers.com
Ravine Roses	Eldama Ravine	Mr.Peter Kamuren	051- 52281/ 722205657	pkamuren@karenroses. com
Rain Forest Farmlands Ltd	Naivasha	Isaih Goro	0726305199	igoro@fleurafrica.com
Racemes Ltd	Naivasha	Bonny	0721938109	bonny@kenyaweb.com
Redlands Roses Ltd	Ruiru	Mrs. Isabelle Spindler	"067-54017/ 25051 / 0733- 609795 /600519"	adric@redlandsroses.co.ke
Redwings	Kabarak	Mr. Sayer Simon Tobile	722578684	sayer@redwingltd.co.ke
Riverdale Blooms Ltd	Yatta	Ms. Zipporah Mutugi/ Antony	"0733-722180/ 0722 584 874"	rdale@swiftkenya.com
Rift Valley Roses	Naivasha	Peter Muchiri	0721216026	fm@riftvalleyroses.co.ke
Rimi Flora	kihingo-Nakuru	Richard Mutua	0722357678	richard@rimiflora.com
Roseto Ltd	Salgaa	Mr. Aravind Harirao/ Vikas Gugale	0741791483/ 0748515139	gm.roseto@ megaspingroup. com
Royal Van Zanten		Mr. Maarten Brussee		cuttings.ke@ royalvanzanten. com
Sandpro growers	Meru Timau	Elly oketch	0727580266	elly.oketch@ sandprogrowers. com
Savannah International	South Lake	Mr. Ignatius Lukulu	728,424,902	i.lukulu@sa vannah-international.com
SCHREURS	Flower Business Park Naivasha	Mr. Haiko Backer	0733633823	haiko@schreurskenya.com
Shade Horticulture	Isinya	Mr. Ashutosh Mishra	254,722,792,018	mishra@ shadehorticulture. com
Sharlimar Farm	North Lake			dinkar@eaga.com
Sececta Kenya/ KPP	Juja	Mr. Robert Khamala	0727467464	r.khamala@selectakenya. com
Sian Agriflora (K) Ltd	Nakuru	Mr. Charles mulemba	0721311729	cmulemba@sianroses.co.ke
Sian Equator Flowers	Eldoret	Mr. Nehemiah Kangogo	0725848910	nehemiah@ equatorsianroses. co.ke
Sian Maasai Flowers	Kitengela	Elizabeth		
Sierra Roses	Njoro	Shem Okware / Opaso Bandgar	"071117148972/ 0720070053"	farm.sierra@megaspingroup. com
Simbi Roses	Thika	Mr. Jefferson K. Karue	"0722 489882/0733 609 795"	simbi@sansora.co.ke
Sirgoek flowers	Eldoret	Mr. Andrew Kaittany	0725946429	sirgoek@africaonline.co.ke
Soloplant K Ltd	Kabati	Ravi	"0702404051/ 0723159 076"	ravi@soloplant.co.ke

DIRECTORY				
Name	**Location**	**Person of Contact**	**Telephone Number**	**Email**
Sololo Agriculture	Uasin Gishu	Mr Andrew Tubei	0722728364	atubei@sianflowers.co.ke
Solai Roses/Tindress Flowers	Solai -Nakuru	Vinoj Kumar	0737801646	solairoses@gmail.com
Sojanmi springs fields	Njoro	Senthil	0791184851	senthil.adhikesavan@bidcoafrica.com
Star Flowers /Kongoni	Flower Park			
Stokman Kenya Ltd	South Lake	Mr Julius Muchiri	0722200890	julius@srk.co.ke
Subati Flowers	Subukia & Kinangop	Mr Charles Kariuki	0726657448	chakari13@gmail.com
Subati Flowers Naivasha	Kinamba Naivasha	Tushar/Danson Mbugua	0717719003/0755315023	tushar@subatigroup.com
Sugutu Growers		Mr.Yabesh N. Marga	0733719053	sugutugrowers@yahoo. com
Sunflotritech blue sky	Nakuru Marula	Patel Sunshat	0725622333	sushant.sfl@btfgroup.com
Sunrose Nurseries	Athi River	Mr. Nehmiah Abraham	020- 3586939/ 2014606	Info@sunrosenurseries. co.ke
Sygenta Flowers-Kenya	Ruiru	James Ouma	0725217284	john.odhiambo@syngenta.com
Sygenta Flowers-Kenya	Thika	Philip Kavosi	0721225540	philip.munyoki@sygenta.com
Sygenta Flowers-Pollen	Thika	Joseph Ayieko	0733552500	joseph.ayieko@syngenta. com
Tambuzi Ltd.	Naromoru	Mr. Bernard Maina	0721860080	info@tambuzi.co.ke
Tambukizi -pendekeza	Kisima Meru	James Kiiru	0708124381	james.kiiru@tambuzi.co.ke
Terrafleur Ltd		Mr. Chris Kaluku	6,730,063	chris@terrafleur.com
Terrasol	Limuru	Mr. Bernard Adwer	066 76004; 0753444230	info@terrsolkenya.com
Timaflor Ltd	Timau	Mr.Thomas	062 41263/ 0707803636	info@timaflo.com
Top Harvest	Nyandarua	Purity Nyaga	0725289873	oloo@harvestflowers.com
Transebel	Thika	Mr. David Muchiri	724,646,810	davidmuchiri@transebel.co.ke
"Tropiflora (GemFlora (K) Ltd)"	Limuru	Mr.Veronica Mwaniki	0724286606	tropiflora@tropiflora.net
Tsara Rozen Kenya Ltd.		Mr. Jan Molenoor	020 2123230, 734417157	jan@tsararozen.com
Tulaga flowers	North Lake, Naivasha	Ms Duzai Rajan	0794572232	tulagaflower@africaonline.co.ke
Uhuru Flowers	Timau	Mr. Ivan Freeman	722,863,252	ivan@uhuruflowers.co.ke
United Selections		Jelle Posthumus	786,580,761	fkisumo@united-selection.com
Utee Estate	Limuru	Apasso Mane	0737513844/0738978515	mane.uel@btfgroup.com
Valentine Growers	Kiambu	Mr Joseph Kariuki	0728093379	info@valentineflowers. com
Van kleef	North Lake	Ms Kiran Nangare	0787787544	kiran@vankleef.nl, judith@vankleef.nl
V D Berg Roses		Johan Remeeus	0721868312	johan@roseskenya.com
Wac International	Naivasha	Mr. Richard	722,810,968	richard@wac-international.com
Waridi Ltd	Athi River	Mr. Kenneth Mbae	045-22873, 0722362865	kadlag@africaonline.co.ke
Wildfire Flowers	South Lake	Mr. Patrick Mbugua	0721639306	patrickmbugua@wildfire-flowers.com
Windsor Flowers	Thika	Mr.Pradeeep Bodumalla	0727527621/0736 586 059	pradeep@windsor-flowers.com
Wilfay	Subukia Nakuru	Sammy Ndugu	0720467551	
Wilmar Agro		Alice Muiruri	0722321203	alice.muiruri@wilmar.co.ke
Sosiani farm	Eldoret	Francis Kariuki	0725444515	fkariuki@zenaroses.com
Zeeflora		Kolekar	740,569,286	
Zena Roses- Asai Farm	Eldoret	Chelal Japhet	0721705597	japhet.zenarose@gmail. com

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