

## **COLLECTIVE POTATO INPUT PROCUREMENT AND MARKET LINKAGE IN NYANDARUA**

Low potato productivity is mainly attributed to poor accessibility of appropriate inputs and services while low quality potatoes is majorly caused by poor pre- and post-harvest management practices among potato farmers. To address this, NPCK is supporting farmer groups/cooperatives in procuring farm inputs and services collectively as well as link them to identified potato market outlets. By ordering inputs collectively, the large volumes enable the suppliers to avail the inputs to the farmers in their locality cost effectively. With aggregated order, the groups also benefit from a higher bargaining power as opposed to individual purchase in the form of discounts.

NPCK held a planning meeting for collective procurement of inputs and market linkage with potato farmer in Nyandarua County on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at Aberdare Range resort. In attendance were representatives of farmers groups, NPCK, County Government and IFDC. During the meeting, group representatives shared their information on their current projections on production quantities, harvesting dates, the next planting season, varieties grown among others for planning purposes. NPCK have engaged number off-takers who will contract and buy from farmers. Demand for seeds, fertilizer and services, insurance, mechanization for next season is being aggregated for early booking and delivery.



***Participants of the planning meeting for collective procurement of potato farm inputs and potato market linkage in Nyandarua County.***

## **NAKURU COUNTY POTATO REGULATIONS WORKSHOP**

After the successful development and gazettelement of the *Crops (Irish potato) regulations 2019*, county governments have the role of promoting awareness of the regulation as well as enforcing it.

In line with this, the Nakuru county government in collaboration with NPCK, Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), Agriculture Council of Kenya (AgCK), Sustainable Agriculture Community Development Programme (SACDEP), Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA) and other stakeholders organized for a 2 day workshop at ATC Soilo with an aim of sensitizing ward and sub-county crops development officers, traders, transporters and farmers on the regulations. The two day workshop was held on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019. The workshop was attended by other key stakeholders such as input providers, enforcement officers, and representatives of trade, agriculture and weight and measures departments and the members of agriculture committee in the county assembly. Nakuru county CECM Agriculture, Dr. Immaculate Maina, expressed the county government's commitment to start the enforcement of the regulations from 1st August 2019.



*Participants during a sensitization meeting of potato regulations 2019 at ATC Soilo, Nakuru*

## **DIGITIZATION OF CROSS BORDER TRADE**

One of the challenges in engaging in international trade on crops in Kenya has been the slow clearance process which keeps the goods in transit delayed at the export zone. Considering the high perishability of fresh agricultural produce, this delay may lead to reduction in their quality and lead to economic losses. In line with this, the government has automated its systems of clearance such that importers and exporters can know the particular institutions they need to get permits from, apply for permits, associated fees charged as well as track progress of their clearance online. This has created convenience to cross border traders who initially had to physically visit various institutions to get these services. In order to familiarize stakeholders with the system, Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) organized for training on Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) on 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> June 2019, which focused on cross border trade and foreign trade procedures. The training was held in Sarova Stanley Hotel in Nairobi. Participants included representatives from International Trade Centre (ITC), Society of Crop Agribusiness Advisors of Kenya (SOCCA), Cereal Growers Association (CGA), Ministry of Trade National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) and NPCK.

For more information click here <https://npck.org/step-bystep-guide-to-foreign-trade-procedures/>

## **NYANDARUA COUNTY UNVEILS ITS POTATO COORDINATING UNIT**

The Nyandarua County government in partnership with NPCK has formed and launched a Nyandarua County Potato Coordinating Unit, whose responsibilities include overseeing the implementation of the county's potato strategy and coordinating potato activities in the county. The unit will collaborate and work with other potato players in the county with an aim of sharing information, planning and harmonizing subsector initiatives. The unit consists of farmers' representatives, county officials from department of agriculture, nutrition, legal, Agricultural Mechanization Service (AMS), KEPHIS, KALRO and a youthful farmer representative. The members met on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019 in Ol'Kalou where they discussed and affirmed their terms of references and roles. The Coordinating Unit is currently developing an implementation matrix.



*Mr. Wachira Kaguongo, NPCK CEO, addressing members of the newly formed Nyandarua Potato County Coordinating Unit.*

## **NYANDARUA COUNTY FARMERS SENSITIZED ON THE NEW POTATO REGULATIONS**

On 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019 NPCK convened a meeting at Ol'Kalou, Nyandarua County to educate farmers on the new Crops (Irish Potato) Regulations 2019. In attendance were the County ministry of agriculture representatives, International Fertilizer Development Centre (IFDC) representative and over 40 farmers drawn from various sub-counties in the County. The purposes of regulation and key provisions of the regulations were explained. Among the areas covered included registration, buying and selling, marketing, sorting, grading, collection centers, packaging and penalties for contravening any of the provisions. Framers pledged to support the regulations and abide by the requirements of the regulations.



*Farmers following keenly during the Potato Regulation sensitization meeting at Ol'Kalou.*

## **WAOs TRAINING ON VIAZI SOKO PLATFORM IN NYANDARUA COUNTY**

Viazi soko is a web based SMS platform that is used for collecting, processing and disseminating information on seed and ware potato. It is also used to send advisory and extension messages to farmers. The platform was developed by NPCK and its partners who also train farmers and agricultural officers on how to register and use it.

One such training was conducted on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019 in Olkalou, Nyandarua County. The target audience was the **Ward Agricultural Officers (WAOs)** from the county. A total of 26 WAOs from various wards within the county attended the training. The officers were trained on how to: register on the platform, query about seed potato variety availability as well as query on ware potato market prices in major towns. They were also trained on how to market ware potato through the platform. After the training the officers are expected to train various potato farmer groups within their wards on how to register and use the services offered by Viazi soko.



*WAOs appreciating Viazi soko services during the training*

## **SEED POTATO DEGENERATION**

Seed degeneration is the gradual loss in productivity of a potato crop during successive multiplication cycles as a result of growth of seed borne diseases. These diseases include viruses such as potato leaf roll virus (PLRV) and bacterial diseases such as wilt. Seed degeneration is significant when seed potatoes are used in several subsequent seasons without special measures to control seed borne diseases (e.g. in ware potato production).

To control seed degeneration, farmers need to replace their seed stocks regularly with healthy seed potato. It is also important for farmers to practice Positive Seed selection (PSS) when they are not replacing their seed stock.

*Source: Seed Potato Production and Certification Guidelines from KEPHIS, Dec 2016*

## **SEED POTATO DEHAULMING METHODS**

Dehaulming, in potato production refers to the act of detaching the vegetative part of the potato plant, found above the ground, from the root tubers. Dehaulming is one of the pre-harvest practices which are aimed at hardening the skin of the tubers and therefore reduce injuries during post-harvest handling.

Despite of its benefits and depending on the method of dehaulming used, the practice can contribute to the spread of virus diseases such as *potato leaf roll virus* and *potato virus Y (PVY)*

There are three methods of dehaulming, namely:

- Haulms cutting
- Haulms pulling
- Paraquat spray

*Haulms cutting* is a dehaulming method whereby a sharp object such as a panga is used to cut off the vegetative part. This method of dehaulming may lead to spread of viruses from an infected plant to a healthy plant through the cutting objects which carry infected plant sap.

*Haulms pulling* is a method of detaching the foliage from the root tubers by pulling them using hands. One hand is used in pulling the foliage while another hand holds the base of the foliage to prevent tubers from coming out. It is the safest method of dehaulming although it could be time consuming in seed potato production.

*Paraquat spray* is a chemical method of doing away with foliage. Once sprayed the chemical is absorbed into the plant system where it interferes with the physiological processes of the plant eventually leading to its death. One drawback of the paraquat spray as a method of dehaulming is the fact that since the process is systematic (must first be absorbed into the plant tissues before action), it takes longer compared to the other methods.

## **THINGS YOU DID NOT KNOW ABOUT POTATO**

### **1. Different potato varieties have different sugar levels**

Every potato variety has different sugar levels which make them cook differently and have different tastes. Varieties with high sugar levels end up with a gummy, sticky mess of mashed potatoes as compared to varieties with low sugar levels. The potato variety catalogue 2019 contains all the available varieties with their different matter content available on <https://npck.org/catalogue/>

## **2. When you buy them, potatoes are still alive**

After harvesting, potato appears dormant yet it is still living. When stored in warm places with moisture, potato begins to sprout as evidence that it is still alive. This is the reason why they are supposed to be stored in cool and dry places.

## **3. Sweet potato is not actually potato!**

Sweet potato is actually swollen roots and is not related in any way with the Irish potato.

## **4. Potatoes were the first vegetable to be grown in space.**

Seed potatoes were first tested in space in 1995 aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia.



*Columbia being launched to space. Seed potato production in space was first tested in October 1995 aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia in its Microgravity Astroculture Laboratory. Photo courtesy of pixabay.com*

5. China is currently experimenting with growing of potatoes in the moon! The potatoes were kept sent in a container together with arabidopsis seeds and silkworm eggs and sent to the surface of the Moon. “The eggs are expected to hatch into silkworms, which will produce carbon dioxide, while the potatoes and the seeds emit oxygen through photosynthesis. Together, they will establish a simple ecosystem on the Moon.

## **6. Potato crisps were invented by mistake.**

The invention of crisps occurred after a passive aggressive move by a chef who made thick cut potatoes as a meal to his boss in New York. The boss was not a fan of such and so he sent them back to the kitchen where the chef got so irritated about it, sliced them into very thin portions, fried them in salty oil and turned them into crispy potatoes. The boss really enjoyed them and that was the genesis of crisps!





*Crisps: The popular potato snack was invented by mistake*

## **HONEY CHILLI POTATO RECIPE**

This amazing starter recipe, honey chili potato, can be added to any party food menu. It is a Chinese dish and is liked by most people of all ages. Made with fried potatoes, honey and chili sauce, this snack is crunchy, flavorful and amazingly delicious.

### *Ingredients*

Maize flour, Vinegar, honey, salt flour, Chili Powder, Whole Red Chilies, chili flakes, garlic, ginger, Tomato Sauce, Chili Sauce, Sesame Seeds, Spring Onions, and Potatoes.

### *Preparation*

1. Take two potatoes and cut them into slices in a bowl.
2. In the bowl add maize flour, salt and red chili powder,
3. Toss them well so that the mixture coats the sliced potatoes properly.
4. Now heat oil in a broad pan and deep fry the potatoes on medium flame till golden brown and crisp. Do not fry on high flame otherwise they will burn from outside and remain uncooked from inside.



*Fried potatoes*

5. In another pan dry roast the sesame seeds on low heat till light brown and keep aside.



*Sesame seeds*

6. For preparing honey chili sauce:
- i. Heat oil and add garlic, ginger, whole red chilies, chili flakes and tomato sauce. Stir well.
  - ii. Now add chili sauce, vinegar, honey and salt. Mix all the ingredients well to make a sauce.
7. Add the fried potatoes and coat them well with the sauce.
8. Toss well and sprinkle the roasted sesame seeds and spring onions.



*With roasted sesame seeds and spring onions*

9. Combine the ingredients well and serve the crunchy honey chili potatoes immediately.



*Crunchy chili potatoes*

<https://food.ndtv.com/recipe-honey-chilli-potato-951813>.