

WELCOME TO THE FEBRUARY 2025 EDITION OF THE NPCK NEWSLETTER!

In February 2025, we led key initiatives to strengthen the sector, including formalizing partnerships with Meru and Nyandarua County Governments under the Kenya Sustainable Potato Initiative (KSPI). These collaborations aim to improve access to quality seeds, promote modern agronomic practices, and enhance market linkages for farmers. We also work with the Agricultural Food Authority (AFA) and Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) to implement market-driven standards and digital traceability systems, ensuring quality and transparency within the value chain. Additionally, we participated in the development of the Seed Potato Roadmap (2025–2030), spearheaded by the International Potato Center (CIP), to increase certified seed adoption and boost national yields.

We continue to advocate for mechanization, irrigation, and improved storage to enhance productivity and reduce post-harvest losses. Off-season production and collective marketing strategies help stabilize farmer incomes, while value addition through processing high-demand potato varieties is opening new revenue streams. Platforms like Viazi Soko continue to connect farmers with certified seeds, inputs, and profitable markets. These initiatives reaffirm our commitment to building a competitive and sustainable potato industry in Kenya.

ENHANCING THE SEED POTATO INDUSTRY



Participants of the seed roadmap development committee

POTATO STANDARDS AND TRACEABILITY: ENSURING QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The potato sector holds significant economic, social, and environmental value, contributing to food security, rural development, and sustainable agricultural practices.

Recognizing this importance, We are working closely with stakeholders like the Agriculture Food Authority (AFA) and Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) to address existing gaps in potato trade promotion and develop market-driven standards and traceability guidelines.

Seed potato production faces several challenges that affect the availability and accessibility of seed potatoes, thereby restricting the sector from reaching its full potential. The national potato yield average is 8–12 t/ha. This is only about half of the full potential, primarily due to limited access to quality and certified seed, which currently stands at less than 10%, along with other constraints. In Kenya, despite having a relatively advanced seed system, the sector still struggles to meet the growing demand, thus, the need to strengthen seed production and accessibility is essential for improving potato productivity.

[Click here to explore more on Enhancing the Seed Potato Industry](#)



A section of the training on potato quality standards and contract farming in Nyandarua County is being conducted by Ms. Sarafina Mugo, NPCK Marketing Officer.

[Click here to explore more on Potato Standards and Traceability](#)

INNOVATION IN EUROPEAN POTATO PRODUCTION: HOW MODERN MACHINES ARE RESHAPING THE FUTURE OF POTATO FARMING

In the world of agriculture, a quiet revolution is taking place. This revolution is transforming how we cultivate, care for, and harvest one of the world's most important staple foods – potatoes. This transformation is led by modern machines. Advanced machinery, equipped with cutting-edge technology, is reshaping the potato farming landscape in Europe and elsewhere as well, bringing unprecedented levels of efficiency, productivity, and quality to the global industry.

Potato farming, a centuries-old practice, has traditionally been labor-intensive, time-consuming, and dependent on many factors, from weather conditions to soil quality. However, the advent of modern agricultural technology has ushered in a new era of potato farming.



Aerial view of a crop harvester in operation. A powerful harvester efficiently transfers freshly harvested potatoes into a waiting trailer, showcasing the technology behind modern agriculture.

IMPACT OF ON-GOING FARMER FIELD DAYS UNDER KSPI PROJECT IN NYANDARUA, LAIKIPIA, MERU, NANDI, AND NAKURU COUNTIES

Field demos and field days are critical for practical learning, technology transfer, and farmer participation. They provide hands-on experience, highlight best practices, and enable farmers to see the efficacy of new techniques, innovations, agrochemicals, and machinery in real-farm settings. These events also promote knowledge exchange, encourage the use of improved farming methods, and boost collaboration and networking among farmers, professionals, and agricultural stakeholders.

[Click here to explore more on the Innovations in potato production](#)



Farmers' field day at Aldai, Nandi County attended by over 600 farmers

[Click here to explore more on the impact of Farmer Field Days](#)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN THE POTATO SUBSECTOR IN KENYA

The potato subsector in Kenya presents significant opportunities for growth, driven by increasing demand, the potential for value addition, and the need for improved agricultural practices. However, despite its potential, the sector faces several challenges, including low productivity, poor quality of seed potatoes, and inadequate market access. Yet, there are clear opportunities for enhancing the sector, which could have a profound impact on the economy and the livelihoods of farmers.

One of the most pressing opportunities for growth lies in improving seed potato quality and accessibility. Many smallholder farmers in Kenya still rely on uncertified or low-quality seeds, which significantly reduce yields and overall potato quality.

[Click here to explore More on Opportunities for growth in the potato subsector](#)

SMART POTATO FARMING: HOW TO BEAT MARKET CYCLES AND MAXIMIZE PROFITS

Potato farming in Kenya holds immense potential, but only for farmers who approach it with strategy and foresight. Many smallholder farmers suffer from fluctuating incomes, often making losses during glut seasons when the market is saturated. This is largely due to the seasonal nature of production, where most farmers plant and harvest at the same time, leading to oversupply and suppressed prices.

[Click here to explore more on Smart Potato Farming](#)



Mass production of frozen fries by Sereni Fries

MOU SIGNING WITH MERU AND NYANDARUA COUNTY GOVERNMENT



NPCK CEO Mr. Wachira Kaguongo (left) signing the MOU with Meru County Secretary Bishop Dr. Kiambi James Thambura Atheru, PhD. (right) Present: KALRO-Tigoni, Egerton University, Bayer, OCP, Siraji Sacco, Times U Sacco, Meru Potato Union, IPM Potato Group



NPCK CEO, Mr. Wachira Kaguongo, and Nyandarua Deputy Governor John Mathara Mwangi pose for a photo after the signing of the MoU; present: AGRA, KALRO-Tigoni, Egerton University, NAVCDP, Yara Kenya, Tower Sacco

NPCK signed an MOU with the County Government of Meru and Nyandarua to Boost Potato Farming. This partnership is part of the KSPI Project, supported by AGRA- Sustainably Growing Africa's Food Systems. With Egerton University and KALRO as consortium partners.

Through these MOUs, the partners aim to address key challenges facing potato farmers, such as low productivity, limited access to quality seeds, poor agronomic practices, and inadequate marketing infrastructure.

[Click here to explore more on these two MOUs](#)

HOW VIAZIKINGS AND VIAZI SOKO ARE REVOLUTIONIZING SEED DISTRIBUTION IN KENYA

Seed distribution remains one of the most critical pillars in agricultural development. It ensures that farmers have timely access to quality planting materials, directly influencing crop yields, food security, and overall farm profitability. NPCK, in partnership with ViaziKings, is leading a transformative shift in how seed potato is accessed and distributed through the innovative digital platform, Viazi Soko.

The partnership has been instrumental in strengthening seed systems and closing long-standing gaps in seed access among smallholder farmers. One such example is in Ollessos, Nandi County, where farmers recently received certified potato seed efficiently and affordably through the Viazi Soko platform.



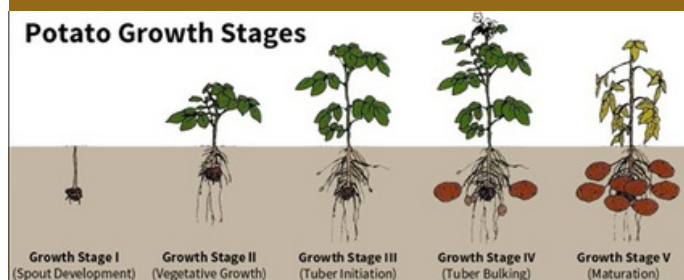
A Farmer receiving seed potatoes at his pick-up point

[Click here to explore more on Viazikings and Viazi Soko Seed Distribution](#)

FROM SPROUT TO HARVEST: UNVEILING THE KEY PHASES OF POTATO PLANT DEVELOPMENT

Potato plant development can be divided into five key phases: Sprout development, Vegetative growth, tuber initiation, tuber filling (bulking), and maturation.

Sprout development: After planting, sprouts that may already be present on the tubers begin to develop further, while roots also form. Depending on soil temperature, the physiological state of the seed potatoes, and the variety, this phase typically lasts two to three weeks until the sprouts surface and leaves start to develop on the stems. During this period, both the potato haulms (leaves and stems) and roots grow rapidly.



[Click here to explore more on Unveiling the Key Phases of Potato Plant Development](#)

Using Diffused Light Storage (DLS) for Seed Potatoes

Small-scale farmers can effectively store seed potatoes using the Diffused Light Storage (DLS) method. This technique utilizes natural indirect light along with proper ventilation, making it both cost-effective and easily adaptable to existing storage facilities.

How to Implement DLS

Layering: Place seed potatoes in layers on trays or shelves. This arrangement helps maximize space and ensures even exposure to light.

Ventilation: Ensure that there is adequate ventilation throughout the storage area. Good airflow is essential to maintain the health of the tubers and prevent moisture buildup.

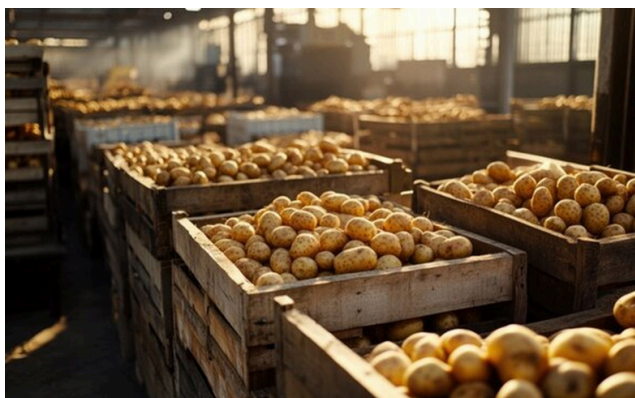
Storage of Seed Potatoes for Large-Scale and Small-Scale Farmers

Proper storage of seed potatoes is vital for ensuring healthy crops. After harvesting, farmers should wait three weeks for skin-setting and then dry the potatoes in sunlight for no more than one hour, discarding any rotten or damaged tubers.

For large-scale farmers, bulk storage is commonly used, focusing on critical factors like temperature and humidity. Tubers should be cured at ambient temperature before storage, and adequate ventilation is necessary to dissipate heat. The ideal storage temperature depends on the variety and duration: maintain 4 to 8°C for long-term storage (over five months), while higher temperatures are suitable for shorter periods.

By following these guidelines, both large-scale and small-scale farmers can enhance seed quality and improve crop yields.





[Click here to explore More on Using Diffused Light Storage](#)

Key Advantages of TPS

1. Compact and Economical: One of the most notable advantages of TPS is its size. These seeds are considerably smaller and lighter than seed tubers, making them not only easier to store but also more economical to transport. This compactness translates into reduced logistical costs for farmers, allowing for more efficient operations and better resource management. The ease of handling also means that farmers can focus more on cultivation rather than dealing with bulky and heavy seed tubers.

The Advantages of True Potato Seeds (TPS) in Modern Agriculture

True Potato Seeds (TPS) are an innovative agricultural development derived from the berries of potato plants. This method of propagation presents a revolutionary alternative to traditional seed tubers, which have been the standard for potato cultivation for generations. Unlike seed tubers, which are the edible portions of the potato used for planting, TPS provide a range of significant benefits that can enhance both the efficiency and sustainability of the potato industry.



[Click here to explore More on the advantages of True Potato Seed](#)