

EDITORIAL: A SEASON OF IMPACT, INNOVATION, AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN THE POTATO SECTOR

As we close the month of June, the momentum across Kenya's potato sector is unmistakable. From county farms to international forums, the message is clear: the sector is evolving, driven by innovation, digital transformation, and collaborative investments that are unlocking new potential for farmers, youth, cooperatives, and agribusinesses alike.

This edition of our newsletter highlights a defining moment for Kenya's potato value chain, the visit by AGRA President, Dr. Alice Ruhweza, to Nyandarua County. Her field engagements reaffirmed AGRA's confidence in the Kenya Sustainable Potato Initiative (KSPI), a flagship investment in climate-smart agriculture, structured marketing, and seed system transformation.

[Click here to explore more on the Editorial](#)

AGRA PRESIDENT DR. ALICE RUHWEZA VISITS NYANDARUA TO WITNESS FIRSTHAND THE IMPACT OF INVESTMENTS IN KENYA'S POTATO SECTOR



Group photo with members of Kagacha Cooperative Society during Dr. Alice Ruhweza's visit to Nyandarua County

On 8th June 2025, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) President, Dr. Alice Ruhweza, made a landmark field visit to Nyandarua County as part of her first 100 days in office. The visit, hosted by NPCK, was a key part of her tour to project impact zones, to evaluate how AGRA's resources are translating into tangible benefits for smallholder farmers and contributing to AGRA's mission of transforming African agriculture through increased productivity, resilience, and market systems development.

[Click here to explore more on the AGRA President Visit](#)

Dr. Ruhweza's presence in Nyandarua underscores AGRA's continued commitment to deepening support for Kenya's potato sector, particularly through the Kenya Sustainable Potato Initiative (KSPI), a flagship project funded by AGRA and implemented by a consortium comprising NPCK, KALRO-Tigoni, and Egerton University. Launched in July 2024, KSPI aims to directly impact 150,000 smallholder farmers in four counties—Nyandarua, Meru, Laikipia, and Nandi by promoting climate-smart agriculture, sustainable seed systems, and structured marketing.



From right to left: Mr. Wachira Kaguongo, CEO of NPCK; Mr. Reuben Muritu, Founder of Potato Republic; and Dr. Alice Ruhweza, President of AGRA, during a visit to Potato Republic in Nyandarua County.

TRAINING VILLAGE-BASED ADVISORS TO BOOST POTATO PRODUCTIVITY AND MARKET ACCESS

Under the KSPI, NPCK, in partnership with Egerton University, successfully trained 59 Village-Based Advisors (VBAs) in Meru County, one of the project's Counties, from June 18th to 20th, 2025, at Kaguru ATC in Nkubu. This training aimed to enhance extension services and improve smallholder farmers' access to technologies, markets, and agribusiness opportunities in the potato value chain. The VBAs were equipped with knowledge on sustainable potato production, climate-smart technologies, and farm planning under contract farming models. They were also trained on collective marketing strategies to help farmers aggregate produce for better prices and market leverage.

A key component of the training was the introduction of the Viasi Soko digital platform, which connects farmers directly with inputs and service providers. VBAs learned to support farmers in registering on the platform, aggregating the inputs and ware potatoes, and accessing weather and price information to make informed decisions, Soil sampling and spray service provision.



A photo of an interactive section captured during the VBAs training.

[Click here to explore more on the VBAs Training](#)

BEAT THE BLIGHT BEFORE IT BITES: WHY EARLY MANAGEMENT IS KEY IN CROP PROTECTION

Blight remains one of the most destructive and rapidly spreading crop diseases, and potato farmers in Kenya are currently facing a surge in infections across major growing counties. What starts as a few brown or black spots on leaves or stems can quickly escalate into a full-blown infestation, causing severe yield loss, poor-quality produce, and significant financial setbacks. With the disease already spotted in most potato-growing areas, it is critical that farmers act swiftly and decisively to protect their crops.

Blight, caused primarily by the organism *Phytophthora infestans*, thrives in moist and warm conditions. It spreads through air, water, contaminated tools, and infected plant debris. Typical symptoms include yellowing leaves, brown or black lesions, soft rot on tubers, and in severe cases, sudden plant collapse. A field can go from healthy to heavily infested in just a few days if no action is taken.

Timely intervention is the most effective weapon against blight. Early management prevents disease spread, stopping the infection before it reaches healthy parts of the field or nearby farms. This is crucial not only for individual farmers but for the protection of entire farming communities.



Blight infested crop at Kalro Marindas Nakuru

[Click here to explore more on How to beat blight](#)

HOW CERTIFIED SEED AND GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES UNLOCK MAXIMUM POTATO YIELDS

Potato farming is more than just planting and harvesting, it is a science and a business that, when done right, can transform livelihoods and strengthen food security. For farmers aiming to increase productivity and sustainability in potato production, two critical pillars stand out: the use of certified seed potatoes and the adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs). Together, they form the foundation for high yields, healthy crops, and long-term farm profitability.

Certified seed potatoes are specially grown and tested to ensure they are free from diseases, genetically pure, and of high quality. Unlike farm-saved or informal seed, certified seeds come from controlled environments where they are inspected and treated to meet strict quality standards. Using certified seed potatoes can lead to yield increases of 15–30%, thanks to their robust health and resistance to major diseases such as late blight and bacterial wilt. This is especially critical in regions where potatoes serve as a staple food and a key income source for smallholder farmers. Beyond yield, certified seed potatoes play a central role in disease prevention and management. Starting with healthy seed minimizes the risk of introducing diseases into the field, thereby reducing the need for chemical interventions and lowering production costs. This not only improves the environmental sustainability of potato farming but also helps maintain the long-term productivity of the land.

[Click here to explore more on the benefits of Certified Seeds and GAPs](#)

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF POTATO THROUGH VALUE ADDITION

Potatoes are among the most important staple crops globally, consumed in various forms and grown by millions of smallholder farmers. However, their potential goes far beyond the traditional boiled or mashed forms. Through value addition, potatoes can be transformed into a wide array of high-value products that increase farmers' incomes, create jobs, reduce waste, and contribute to national food and economic security. This transformation is essential in today's agriculture, where diversification and innovation are key to sustainable growth.

One of the most common and impactful ways to add value to potatoes is through processing. Raw potatoes can be turned into frozen products such as French fries, potato wedges, and hash browns, items that are in high demand in fast-food chains, supermarkets, and urban households. Processing extends shelf life and retains nutritional value, while also enhancing market appeal. Dehydrated potato products like flakes and granules are also gaining popularity, particularly among food manufacturers and institutions, due to their long shelf life and versatility. Additionally, the snack industry thrives on potato-based products, especially crisps and chips, which are beloved by consumers of all ages for their convenience and taste. Beyond commercial appeal, value addition can significantly improve the nutritional profile of potato products.

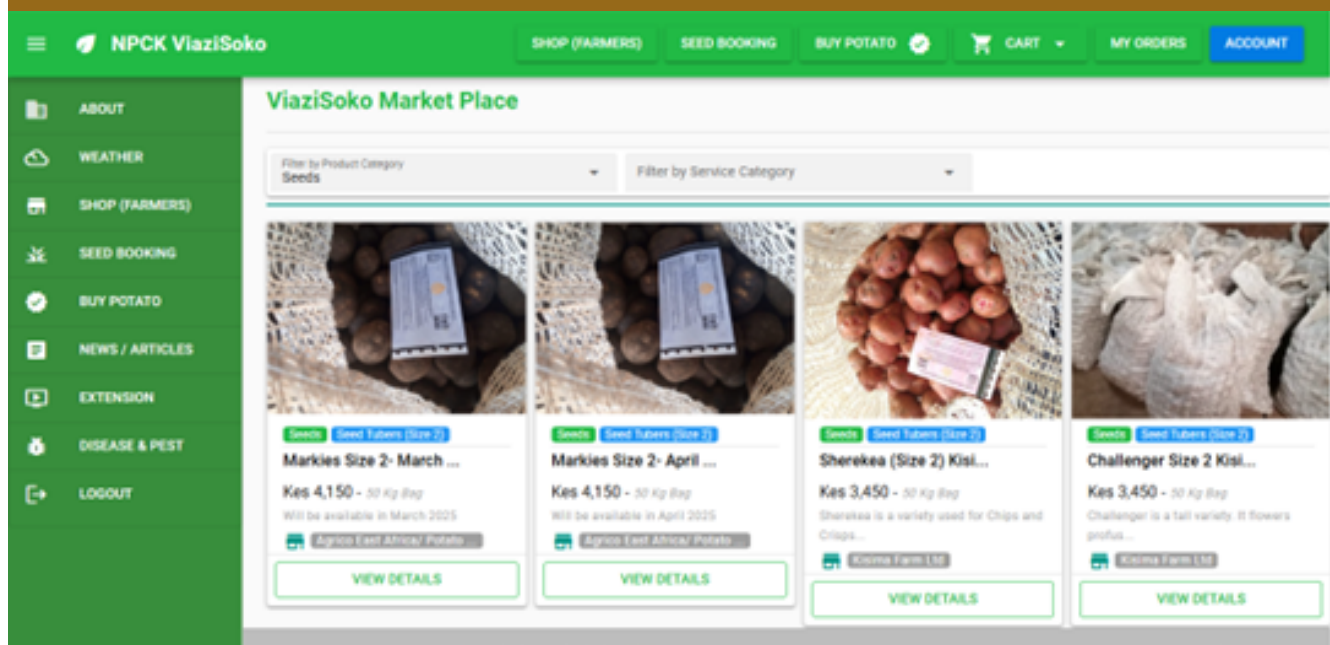
[Click here to explore more on Unlocking the power of Potato through the Value Addition](#)

VIAZI SOKO DIGITAL PLATFORM TRANSFORMING POTATO FARMING IN KENYA

The rise of digital technology in agriculture is revolutionizing how farmers grow, access, and sell their produce, and Viazi Soko is at the forefront of this transformation. This homegrown digital platform is not just a tool; it is a game changer that continues to bridge long-standing gaps in seed access, farm inputs, information flow, and market linkage for potato farmers across Kenya.

Viazi Soko has empowered farmers by digitizing and simplifying the entire potato production and marketing process. From seed ordering to selling harvested produce, the platform provides a one-stop solution that ensures transparency, efficiency, and profitability at every stage of the value chain.

[Click here to explore more on Viazi Soko Digital Platform](#)



Viazi Soko Platform seed display

SAFE USE OF PESTICIDES IN POTATO PRODUCTION THROUGH INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM)

Potatoes are Kenya's second most important food crop after maize, playing a critical role in food security, nutrition, and household income. However, pests and diseases such as late blight, bacterial wilt, aphids, and the potato tuber moth can significantly reduce yields. To address these challenges sustainably, farmers are encouraged to adopt Integrated Pest Management (IPM), a system that combines multiple methods to manage pests effectively while minimizing risks to human health, beneficial organisms, and the environment.



[Click here to explore More on Safe Use of Pesticides](#)

CERTIFIED SEED POTATO PRODUCTION AND CERTIFICATION PROCESS IN KENYA

Producing certified seed potato in Kenya is a structured process regulated by the **Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS)** to ensure high-quality planting materials. The use of certified seed is critical in improving yields by up to 30–50%, and controlling diseases such as bacterial wilt and Potato Cyst Nematodes (PCN). However, certified seed production in Kenya currently meets less than 5% of national demand due to limited seed multipliers and high production costs. To participate in seed production, farmers must follow specific procedures and comply with regulatory guidelines.



KENYA PLANT HEALTH INSPECTORATE SERVICE (KEPHIS)

Domestic Regs. Matter # P.O. BOX 49922-00100 NAIROBI, KENYA • TEL: 020 306111 • FAX: 020 306170 • Email: kephis@kephis.go.ke • Nairobi, Kenya

FORM SR 1 (r. 6(2)) APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION AS A SEED MERCHANT

To: The Managing Director
Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service
P.O. Box 49922-00100
NAIROBI

I/We hereby apply to be registered as a seed merchant under the Name

Postal Address

E-mail address

Telephone Number

1. Registration as a Seed Merchant or Out-Grower

To produce certified seed, individuals or entities must register with KEPHIS either as:

- A **Seed Merchant**: Ksh 75,000 registration fee; Ksh 10,000 annual renewal.
- An **Out-Grower** under a licensed merchant: Ksh 500 registration; Ksh 300 annual renewal.

Applicants must complete the **SRI Form** (available on the KEPHIS website) and submit it with the prescribed fees.

2. Pre-Planting Preparations

Before planting:

- Conduct mandatory **soil tests** through KEPHIS:
 - **Bacterial Wilt** – Ksh 3,000
 - **Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN)** – Ksh 1,000
- Identify and source **certified basic seed**.
- Out-growers must sign an **MoU** with a licensed merchant to secure seed supply.
- Maintain proper **isolation distances**:
 - 100 meters for breeder, pre-basic, and basic seed.
 - 50 meters for certified seed (C1, C2, C3).

3. Field Inspection Process

Within 30 days of planting, apply for field inspection using **Form SR5**, a serialized booklet issued by KEPHIS. Information required includes:

- Acreage and crop history of the land (last three seasons).
- Class, origin, and lot number of the seed used.
- Planting date and estimated harvest date.
- Potato species and variety.

Field inspections are scheduled based on planting dates and must verify:

- Proper **isolation distance**.
- **Trueness to type** and absence of **off-types**.
- Presence of any **disease symptoms**.

[Click here to explore more on Certified Seed Production and Certification process](#)

CEHA WORKSHOP RALLIES REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS TO ELIMINATE NON-TARIFF BARRIERS IN AGRICULTURE

Stakeholders from across CEHA focus Countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Rwanda) gathered at the Golden Tulip Hotel in Nairobi for the COMESA-EAC Horticulture Accelerator (CEHA) Regional Workshop on the Elimination of Institutional and Regulatory Frameworks Addressing Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) in Agriculture, held from June 19–20, 2025. The high-level forum brought together government officials, trade experts, private sector actors, and development partners to chart practical solutions to unlock cross-border trade in key agricultural commodities such as horticultural produce, staples, and inputs. The workshop served as a platform for accelerating progress on harmonizing trade standards, promoting regional integration, and strengthening food systems across the COMESA region.

In remarks delivered on her behalf by Caroline Chore, Senior Trade Development Officer at the Ministry of Industry, Principal Secretary for Trade Regina Ombam called for urgent and coordinated action to address persistent NTBs that continue to stifle horticultural trade across borders.



Stakeholders pose for a photo led by CEO of ACTESA Dr. John Mukuka sited center

[Click here to explore more on CEHA Workshop](#)

DRIVING INCLUSIVE AGRIBUSINESS: INSIGHTS FROM THE 2SCALE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE WORKSHOP

As global food systems face growing pressure to become more equitable, sustainable, and resilient, inclusive agribusiness has emerged as a powerful approach for transforming agricultural value chains. Inclusive agribusiness models aim to integrate smallholder farmers, women, youth, and low-income consumers—often referred to as Base of the Pyramid (BoP) actors—into commercially viable market systems. These models go beyond profitability to address systemic inequalities by promoting social inclusion, shared value, and long-term development. The 2SCALE (Toward Sustainable Clusters in Agribusiness through Learning in Entrepreneurship) program, one of Africa’s largest agribusiness incubators, has been at the forefront of designing and scaling such inclusive models across the continent.

Against this backdrop, the 2SCALE Knowledge Exchange Workshop, held from May 16th to 20th, 2025, brought together partners, practitioners, and development actors for an intensive week of learning, reflection, and strategy building under the theme *#InclusiveFoodSystem*.



Participant of the 2scale knowledge exchange forum pose at one of the KDPL Milk shop outlet

[Click here to explore more on Driving Inclusive Agribusiness](#)

YOUTH POWER IN AGRIBUSINESS: SINCY RESEARCH SHINES AT AGRITEC AFRICA 2025 WITH POTATO INNOVATION

The 10th edition of Agritec Africa Exhibition and Conference, held on 11th and 12th June 2025 at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC) in Nairobi, brought together stakeholders from across Africa and beyond to explore transformative innovations in agriculture and agribusiness. Under the theme “Harnessing Technology to Transform Food Systems and Enhance Nutrition in Africa,” the event featured exhibitions, high-level panel discussions, youth engagement forums, and innovation showcases that placed a strong spotlight on technology, sustainability, and youth inclusion. Among the standout moments of the event was the Youth in Agrifood Systems Innovation Pitch Competition, which provided a platform for young agripreneurs to showcase practical and scalable solutions in agriculture.

A key highlight was the recognition of Sincy Research, led by Dr. Nancy Githumbi, who emerged third in the Youth Innovation Pitch Competition.



Dr. Nancy Gathumbi Receiving her certificate from Madam Charlene Ruto

[Click here to explore more on Youth Power in Agribusiness](#)

VIAZI KINGS CHAMPIONS POTATO SECTOR TRANSFORMATION AT NAKURU'S INTERNATIONAL POTATO DAY

Viazi Kings Limited, a pioneering agribusiness enterprise in Kenya's potato value chain, continues to set the pace in sector transformation through innovation, farmer empowerment, and market development. Dedicated to improving productivity and profitability for potato farmers, Viazi Kings is known for its integrated approach encompassing certified seed distribution, ware potato aggregation, contract farming, and digital marketing solutions via the Viazi Soko platform.

During this year's International Potato Day celebrations held at Marindas, Nakuru County, on 29th and 30th May 2025, Viazi Kings stood out as a key exhibitor. The two-day event brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including farmers, government officials, private sector players, and development partners, all united in celebrating the potato crop's critical contribution to food security, employment, and economic growth—estimated to inject over Ksh 70 billion annually into Kenya's GDP.



Viazi Kings limited staff at their exhibition booth

[Click here to explore more on Viazi Kings at Nakuru's International Day of Potato](#)