Herbs and Spices

The spices and herbs with global demand include the following: Pepper, Parsley, Paprika, Marjoram, Capsicum (chillies and cayenne pepper) Oregano, Pimento (allspice), Thyme, Coriander, Bay leaves, Cinnamon, Rosemary, Ginger, Basil, Nutmeg, Mint, Caraway, Savoury, Turmeric, Dill, Cumin, Tarragon, Cloves, Sage, Mace, Cardamom, Anise or badian seeds, Fenugreek, Saffron, Vanilla, Fennel seeds and Juniper berries. According to AFA, the herbs and spices that are being promoted for exports include the following:

- Herbs (Chives, Rosemary, Dill, Marjoram, Basil, Mint, Parsley, Coriander, Curry leaves & Celery).
- Spices and Chillies (thin, long, bullet & birds eye).

According to the Export Promotion Council (EPC) 56, the European Union (EU) market is the second largest market for seasonings, spices and herbs in the world, accounting for Euros 1.2 billion. The EU, according to the ‘Centre for Promotion of Imports from Developing countries (CBI)57, imports 97% of its herbs and spices from developing countries.

According to CBI, European imports of spices and herbs from developing countries have grown significantly in recent years, by 6.1% annually from 257,000 tonnes in 2012 to 326,000 tonnes in 2016. Therefore, the EU constitutes a critical market to focus in the development and promotion of herbs and spices for exports. Equally important is the global market, which CBI projects to have a growth of 5.1% between 2017 and 2021.

Why the focus on Herbs and Spices?

- A comparative analysis of Kenya’s target and the globally demanded herbs and spices reveals opportunity for diversification of product base by promoting production of what is currently being produced.
- Prospects in the EU (the lead world market for herbs and spices) as well as other countries with potential export demand as revealed by the global market trend for herbs and spices provides an impetus for concerted efforts in promoting production of herbs and spices for the export market.
- Prospects for Kenya to develop and promote its exports of horticulture (vegetables, herbs and spices as well fruits) lie in the new standard (KS 1758 Part Two), which was launched in July 2017.

Challenges in the Herbs and Spices value chain

- Lack of networking arrangement between small-scale producers, and medium and large scale exporters/producers;
- Weak farmer organization structures, especially in small-scale production - weak farmer organization - unregistered groups;
- Lack of suitable finance and credit facilities to farmers;
- Inadequate good quality seed and other planting materials and other farm inputs;
- Inadequate resources (financial and human resource) to support research and development of horticultural produce;
- Low adoption of research outputs in support of horticultural development for export.

MARKUP interventions in Herbs and Spices

- Strengthening the capacity of farmer and marketing associations to achieve high net investment index and accelerate industry growth.
- Strengthening cohesion among smallholder farmers for increased negotiating power with traders, and increased opportunities to build long-term relationships with buyers.
- Collaboration with the Government of Kenya at national and county levels and other stakeholders in implementing policy reforms to create an enabling environment for competitive production and marketing.

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