

HORTIFRESH

NEWSLETTER



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HortiFresh Celebrated – Recognized by TechnoServe’s HortiMAP for excellence.

Export Quality Boost – HortiFresh & GIZ advance AfPQ & Q-Boost initiatives.

Member Spotlight – Karye Fresh Foods excels in horticulture innovation.

Farm Visit – HortiFresh supports Lwengo District farmers for export growth.

Sector Trends – Uganda’s agro-processing boom in fruits & vegetables.

Mubuku Irrigation Scheme – HortiFresh drives horticulture expansion.

Sustainable Pest Control – Peter Garang highlights IPM benefits.

UFEA Partnership – Strategic alliance to strengthen Uganda’s horticulture sector.

Pictorial Highlights – Key moments captured in photos.

Tropical Dynasty’s Michael Owino (left) speaks to HortiFresh and GIZ representatives at the company’s facility



HortiFresh’s Senior Agronomist, Joshua Baguma at Tropical Dynasty’s Packhouse

Celebrating a Milestone: HortiFresh Honoured by TechnoServe's HortiMAP Project



We are thrilled to announce that HortiFresh has been recognized with an award from TechnoServe under the HortiMAP Project! This accolade isn't just a win for our organization—it's a testament to the power of collaboration in driving transformative change across Uganda's fresh fruits and vegetables (FFV) sector.

How HortiMAP Has Fueled Our Growth

With TechnoServe's partnership, we've achieved remarkable strides, including:

- ✓ Developing a 5-year strategic plan to strengthen internal systems and enhance value for members.
- ✓ Unlocking regional and international markets for Ugandan farmers and exporters.
- ✓ Spearheading critical policy reforms, including a Code of Conduct and sector-wide advocacy efforts.
- ✓ Facilitating market linkages for producers and exporters, with a special focus on supporting Northern Uganda's integration into national and export value chains.
- ✓ Hosting Uganda's first-ever FFV Symposium, amplifying sector priorities through research-backed position papers on avocados and chilies.

This award reflects our shared commitment to sector growth. Thank you, TechnoServe! Together, we'll keep shaping a thriving future for Uganda's FFV industry.

Strengthening Export Quality: HortiFresh & GIZ Forge Ahead with AfPQ & Q-Boost Initiatives



We are pleased to share the outcomes of a productive meeting between HortiFresh and GIZ representatives to discuss the Alliance for Product Quality in Africa (AfPQ) initiative and the Q-Boost Program.

The AfPQ initiative is a multi-stakeholder partnership designed to improve product quality for African SMEs in export sectors, strengthening Africa's competitiveness in international markets. The Q-Boost Program, implemented by GIZ, specifically supports export-ready SMEs in adopting Quality Management Systems (ISO 9001:2015) to enhance efficiency, productivity, and market access.

During the meeting, discussions focused on how HortiFresh members can benefit from dedicated support for 30 export-ready companies under the Q-Boost certification program. Selected companies will receive tailored quality management training and mentorship to achieve GIZ's Q-Boost certification, demonstrating their readiness to implement international quality standards and compete in global markets.

The engagement included a site visit to Tropical Dynasty Agencies, where both teams assessed opportunities for export-ready and near-export-ready SMEs to participate in the program.

We extend our appreciation to all participants for this valuable exchange and look forward to continued collaboration in driving meaningful impact for Uganda's agribusiness sector.

About the Programs:

The Alliance for Product Quality in Africa (AfPQ) is a partnership aimed at enhancing product quality standards across the continent. The Q-Boost Program, implemented by GIZ, provides targeted support to SMEs seeking ISO 9001:2015 certification to improve their market competitiveness.

MEMBER PROFILE

Karye Fresh Foods – Cultivating Excellence in Horticulture

We're delighted to feature Karye Fresh Foods in this month's spotlight, showcasing how they're helping transform the horticulture sector through quality and innovation. As a valued member of HortiFresh, they exemplify the standards of excellence we champion across the agricultural landscape.

Karye Fresh Foods has made food safety and quality the cornerstone of their operations, achieving compliance with rigorous international certifications including GLOBALG.A.P. and HACCP. Their farm-to-export quality control processes demonstrate how producers can meet and exceed global market expectations while maintaining sustainable practices.

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The company's focus on sustainable production methods and efficient logistics mirrors the evolving needs of today's horticulture sector. Their journey stands as proof that agribusinesses can achieve remarkable scale while maintaining the highest standards of quality and reliability.

This success story highlights the immense potential within the sector when companies combine innovation with compliance and market-smart strategies. As Karye Fresh Foods continues to expand its reach, they reinforce the growing recognition of Africa as a global leader in quality horticultural production.



Building Uganda's Export Capacity: Exports: HortiFresh's Visit to Lwengo District Farm



A team from HortiFresh recently visited Tomosi Farm in Lwengo District as part of efforts to strengthen Uganda's fresh fruits and vegetables sector. The visit assessed the farm's potential for integrated pest management production and establishing a satellite packhouse to support export compliance.

The 450-acre farm features about 300 acres of arable land with sandy loam soil well-suited for crops like mangoes, avocados, and sweet potatoes. Three on-site dams provide water sources that could support irrigation systems, addressing challenges from the area's irregular rainfall patterns. Current farm operations include bananas, coffee, maize, and a herd of 200 cattle, showing potential for diversification into export-focused horticulture.

During the visit, the HortiFresh team met with Lwengo District agricultural officers to discuss collaboration opportunities. Principal Agricultural Officer Peter Bamwesigye and other officials expressed strong interest in partnering to develop high-value crop value chains in the district.

Key recommendations from the assessment include developing the farm's arable land for export crops, implementing irrigation systems, conducting soil testing, and establishing a packhouse for produce aggregation and quality control. The farm's size and resources position it well to pilot crops like avocados and mangoes while potentially engaging surrounding farmers through an outgrower scheme.

This initiative aligns with HortiFresh's national export program that has already secured €49 million in orders for 2025. The organization continues working with partners to address industry challenges and create market opportunities for Uganda's horticulture sector.

Next steps include developing a formal agreement with the farm and planning follow-up actions to implement the recommendations. HortiFresh remains committed to transforming Uganda's horticulture through sustainable partnerships and market-driven solutions.

SECTOR TRENDS

Uganda's Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Agro-Processing Boom



Uganda's fresh fruit and vegetable (FFV) sector is undergoing a major transformation as agro-processing gains momentum to reduce post-harvest losses and respond to rising export demand. Key players like Ocean Green Star in Kasese are leveraging solar drying to export mangoes, pineapples, and chili to Europe and Asia, cutting energy costs by 60%.

Several factors are fueling this growth. Export markets, particularly in the EU, demand strict compliance with hygiene and quality standards, pushing investment into facilities like packhouses and cold chains. Government incentives—such as tax holidays in agro-industrial parks and grants from NAADS—are also encouraging value addition. The World Bank estimates that reducing post-harvest losses by just 1% could inject \$40 million annually into the FFV economy.

Innovative technologies are further shaping the sector. Mobile-enabled cold chains using IoT sensors help maintain temperature control, while blockchain platforms are piloting traceability solutions to ensure quality and transparency.

However, key challenges persist, including high energy costs, limited access to affordable financing (with loan interest rates over 20%), and a shortage of skilled labour in food safety standards like HACCP and ISO 22000.

Looking ahead, Uganda's processed FFV exports could grow by 25% by 2025, provided SMEs gain better access to technology and infrastructure, and digital platforms more effectively connect producers to buyers. This transformation holds potential to double smallholder incomes and help the country reach its \$1 billion horticulture export target by 2030

HortiFresh Advances Uganda's Horticulture Export Growth at Mubuku Irrigation Scheme



HortiFresh's recent visit to the historic Mubuku Irrigation Scheme in Kasese District (June 18, 2025) marked a pivotal step in reviving one of Uganda's key agricultural assets. Established in 1964, the 2,000-hectare scheme—with 990 hectares of cropland—has produced okra, mangoes, vanilla, and other crops but faces challenges, including aging infrastructure and lapsed GlobalGAP certification since 2009.

During the visit, HortiFresh met with farmers, scheme managers, and local processor Ocean Green Star (which exports dried capsicum to Asia but meets less than 30% of demand). Key opportunities identified include:

- **Packhouse Rehabilitation:** Restoring defunct facilities to create a regional export hub.
- **Technology Integration:** Piloting solar drying for chilies and FreeDome pest management.
- **Market Linkages:** Connecting farmers to EU buyers via HortiFresh's partnership with Dream Valley (€49 million in orders).

Planned interventions include appointing a liaison officer, restarting certification programs, and training farmers on high-value crops like avocados and chili peppers—supported by the EU-funded SPS Uganda Project for infrastructure and compliance upgrades. Ocean Green Star emphasized the need for drying equipment, while managers prioritized water system improvements.

Next steps involve finalizing partnerships, conducting soil tests, and reactivating Mubuku's export potential. This collaboration aims to transform the scheme into a model horticulture hub, leveraging its fertile land, infrastructure, and new technologies to meet global demand.

HortiFresh remains dedicated to strengthening Uganda's horticulture value chains for sustainable growth.

SUSTAINABLE PEST CONTROL FOR FRESH PRODUCE: THE POWER OF IPM



Pests can devastate crops. In fact, Pests and diseases cause significant losses in crop production, with estimates suggesting that up to 40% of global crop production is lost annually, costing the global economy over \$220 billion ([FAO, 2022](#)). But over-reliance on chemical pesticides harms ecosystems, human health, and long-term farm sustainability. That's where Integrated Pest Management (IPM) comes in, a science-backed approach that minimizes chemical use while effectively protecting fresh fruits and vegetables.

How IPM Works: A Smarter Way to Manage Pests

IPM combines biological, cultural, mechanical, and (when necessary) chemical strategies to keep pest populations below damaging levels.

- ◆ Biological Control – Harness nature's own pest regulators. Beneficial insects (like ladybugs, lacewings, and parasitic wasps) prey on harmful pests, reducing the need for sprays.
- ◆ Cultural Practices – Smart farming techniques, such as crop rotation, selecting pest-tolerant or resistant varieties, and proper field sanitation, disrupt pest breeding cycles naturally.
- ◆ Mechanical & Physical Controls – From row covers and traps to hand-picking pests, these methods provide immediate, chemical-free protection.
- ◆ Targeted Chemical Use – When needed, precision application of low-toxicity pesticides minimizes harm to beneficial species and the environment.

Why IPM Matters for Fresh Produce

- ✓ Safer Food – Fewer pesticide residues mean healthier fruits & veggies for consumers.
- ✓ Cost-Effective – Reduces input costs by lowering chemical dependency.
- ✓ Eco-Friendly – Protects pollinators, soil health, and water quality.
- ✓ Long-Term Resilience – Prevents pest resistance, ensuring sustainable yields.

HortiFresh and UFEA Forge Strategic Alliance to Strengthen Uganda's Horticulture Sector



In a landmark meeting on June 30, 2025, HortiFresh Association and the Uganda Flowers Exporters Association (UFEA) solidified plans for enhanced collaboration to drive Uganda's horticulture sector forward. The strategic dialogue, held at HortiFresh's Kampala offices, brought together sector leaders to address critical challenges and unlock new opportunities for growth.

The meeting established a framework for joint advocacy, with both associations committing to form a coalition that will engage government stakeholders on policy reforms. Recognizing horticulture's prioritization in the National Development Plan IV, participants proposed quarterly high-level engagements with key ministries to push for infrastructure improvements and regulatory changes. Particular attention was given to addressing export challenges, including high freight charges and inadequate facilities at Entebbe Airport, with plans to initiate direct discussions with logistics providers.

A centrepiece of the collaboration is the proposed National Horticulture Exhibition, scheduled for September-November 2025 in Kampala. This major industry event will showcase innovations, connect stakeholders, and elevate the sector's profile through strategic media campaigns. Preliminary discussions have identified potential sponsorship opportunities with leading financial institutions.

The partnership will be formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding covering five strategic areas: coordinated advocacy, joint events programming, government relations, knowledge sharing, and sector self-regulation. Immediate action items include finalizing the exhibition concept note, developing media strategies, and drafting the partnership agreement.

This alliance represents a significant step toward unifying Uganda's horticulture value chain, combining HortiFresh's expertise in fresh produce with UFEA's flower export experience. By pooling resources and influence, the organizations aim to create a more competitive and sustainable sector that can attract greater investment and deliver broader economic benefits.

The collaboration signals a new era of cooperation that could serve as a model for other agricultural subsectors in Uganda.

HortiFresh Membership and Engagement Update – June 2025

In June 2025, HortiFresh registered a positive growth in membership, with 8 new members joining. These included 6 exporters, 1 associate member, and 1 farmer group, raising total membership from 267 in May to 275. This steady growth reflects the increasing recognition of HortiFresh's value among stakeholders in Uganda's horticulture export industry.

During the month, the HortiFresh team carried out targeted outreach to deepen relationships and promote awareness of available services. A key engagement was an introductory meeting held on June 26th with Wakiso Lead Farmers Cooperative. The cooperative is actively mobilizing producers of hot pepper, chili, and garden eggs across Uganda's main growing regions and has established structured aggregation centres to support quality control, bulk handling, and marketing coordination.

Another notable engagement involved the Kayunga Pineapple Processing Plant, which formally registered Ssemu Agrotech Consultancy Ltd as its export company. This firm will oversee the export of fresh pineapples and a range of value-added products, including dried pineapple, pineapple tea, and concentrate. These products are being prepared for both local consumption and export. A follow-up visit is planned in July to assess the packhouse's readiness and compliance with export requirements.

To support new members, HortiFresh began conducting packhouse and farm audits focused on SPS compliance, hygiene, infrastructure, traceability, and post-harvest handling, aligned with MAAIF guidelines. Additional audits will target farmer groups and individual producers to assess Good Agricultural Practices and pest management.

Throughout June, the team also helped new exporters with licensing and supported membership renewals. 8 compliance outreach visits were completed. Consultations were held with prospective and existing members to address concerns and explore collaboration opportunities, including with Janak of Rhino Veges under the Mubuku Irrigation Scheme.

In July, the focus will shift to continued recruitment, compliance monitoring, agronomic support, member trainings, and onboarding new members into traceability systems such as CICS/RUSH (Crop Inspection and Certification Systems/Reengineering Uganda's SPS Inspection for Horticulture Exports), while also contributing to ongoing project development efforts.

PICTORIAL



HortiFresh and PACEID team pose for a group photo during a strategic visit to Tomosi Farm



HortiFresh and GIZ teams during a strategic meeting at the HortiFresh offices to discuss collaboration under the Alliance for Product Quality in Africa (AfPQ) and Q-Boost Program



Teams from HortiFresh Association and the Uganda Flowers Exporters Association (UFEA) during a milestone meeting on June 30, 2025, at the HortiFresh offices.