

POTATO MARKETING FORUMS: A STRATEGIC INTERVENTION BY NPCK AND PARTNERS

Direct market linkage between farmers and market outlets is widely viewed as part of the solution to solving challenges faced by farmers in marketing potatoes. Towards achieving this, NPCK and partners have come up with a strategic intervention dubbed Potato marketing forums. The forums are made up of potato buyers, potato farmer groups, County government, International Potato Center (CIP) and NPCK. Through these interactive forums, farmers have opportunity to learn more about specific variety requirements and procurement arrangements for each buyer while buyers gather information of farmer group membership, production capacity, acreage, varieties grown etc. At the end of the deliberations, the potato buyers agree and plan how farmers can produce and supply potatoes in the subsequent seasons. These forums have so far been created for the Eastern and North Rift Region.

NPCK has also mapped new potato markets in Kisumu, Mombasa, Busia and Nairobi with a similar objective of understanding the needs of potato buyers. The four counties are among the major potato consumers and rely widely on potatoes from nearby counties for each such as Bungoma, Trans-Nzoia, West Pokot, Elyeyo Marakwet, Nandi, Bomet, Taita Taveta, Meru, Nyeri, Nyandarua, Kiambu, Nakuru, Narok, Bomet, Elgeyo Marakwet, Trans-Nzoia, Bungoma, Uasin Gishu and West Pokot with others in Busia sourcing them from as far as Uganda and Tanzania. This exercise sought to identify and profile market outlets in the towns which include local informal open markets, Hotels, fast food Joints and Supermarkets. During this exercise, it was discovered that the main challenge facing the outlets was lack of right varieties for processing and sourcing quality and fresh potatoes on a timely and reliable way. The information gathered is used to advise farmers on which varieties to grow to have a more market-oriented potato farming approach.