

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

PRIVATE-SECTOR STANDARDS AND NATIONAL SCHEMES FOR GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES: IMPLICATIONS FOR EXPORTS OF FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Experiences of Ghana, Kenya and Uganda



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Foreword

Export-driven growth of horticulture has been impressive in a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The involvement of small-scale growers in the production of fresh fruit and vegetables (FFV) exported mainly to the European Union (EU) has contributed to poverty alleviation and rural development. However, the emergence of stringent public and private-sector standards and the growing power of large supermarkets have resulted in fundamental changes in international trade in FFV, as discussed in this monograph. Spot markets for exportable FFV are being increasingly replaced by supply chain management. Exporters need to coordinate closely with producers, traders and processors to ensure that their exported produce is properly documented and complies with the requirements of powerful retailers in international markets. This includes conformity with process-related requirements of private-sector schemes for good agricultural practices (GAPs). There is also a trend towards increased vertical integration: integrated producer-exporters source a larger share of their exports from their own production. These trends undoubtedly present a huge challenge for small-scale growers who so far have participated in value chains through contract farming.

In Ghana, FFV are a major component of non-traditional exports. Several initiatives are implemented in the country, driven by the Government, the private-sector and the donor community, to enhance the capacities of FFV producers and exporters to meet requirements of international markets, such as food safety and quality requirements, traceability and private voluntary standards such as GLOBALGAP (formerly called EurepGAP). Larger exporters have implemented quality assurance systems, mainly with a view to obtaining GLOBALGAP certification. Smaller producers and exporters, on the other hand, have been slower in implementing the recommendations of government- and donor-funded seminars and training events in day-to-day operations. Ghana needs to explore various options for the development of sustainable food safety and quality management systems that gradually also incorporate environmental protection and workers' welfare.

Traditionally, the Ghanaian fresh produce industry has dealt mainly with independent buyers and wholesalers. The pineapple sector started to engage with EurepGAP in 2001 when it encountered problems in meeting EU regulations concerning maximum residue levels (MRLs). Today, many pineapple producers have EurepGAP certification. GAP certification may help the Ghanaian FFV industry to increase export volumes and achieve the economies of scale needed for the cost-effective introduction of new varieties of pineapple and papaya and to reposition itself in the EU market by strengthening its capacity to supply supermarkets.

GAP implementation can have a number of positive impacts, such as higher yields and profitability, better quality produce, increased employment, greater occupational safety and lower environmental impacts, but it also poses considerable challenges to producers, traders and governments of SSA countries. In Ghana, the National Horticulture Task Force has been discussing options for the introduction of a national GAP scheme and its strategic aspects. It has been examining the advantages of such a scheme (such as national food safety, export promotion and general agricultural development), its costs and benefits, critical success and risk factors, the roles of key stakeholders and resource requirements. In addition, the needs of small-scale growers in implementing GAP need to be addressed.

This UNCTAD study elaborates on crucial issues in complying with private-sector standards, in particular with GLOBALGAP, as an increasingly important element of market access for FFV exported from SSA. It draws on case studies in several SSA countries, and also provides an interregional perspective based on similar analyses conducted in South and Central America and South East Asia. It raises pertinent issues and ways of conceptualizing and shaping proactive approaches to GAP schemes that meet external market access requirements while securing maximum developmental benefits. In particular, it examines how such approaches could contribute to pro-poor development strategies.

This publication is highly relevant for discussions on these issues in Ghana and many other countries in SSA that are confronted with similar challenges. It could also facilitate the exchange of national experiences among African countries. Furthermore, in concert with the two other UNCTAD studies

that synthesize the challenges and opportunities in meeting GLOBALGAP requirements in several countries in South America and South East Asia, it could make a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate on the issue of private standards and market access of developing countries.

The study will be launched at the twelfth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XII), to be hosted by the Government of Ghana in Accra on 20-25 April 2008. I am sure that this analysis will enrich the in-depth policy discourse on pro-poor development strategies for agriculture in Africa, which will feature prominently on the agenda of the Conference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ernest A. Debrah', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ernest A. Debrah
Minister of Food and Agriculture, Ghana

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