

BioFach 2006 a success

With 2,089 exhibitors and 37,400 visitors, BioFach 2006 was one of the best fairs ever. EPOPA was well-represented.

BioFach is the largest international trade fair for organic products. It is held every year in Nuremberg, Germany. This year it was bigger than ever, with 37,400 visitors from all over the world. Among the 2,089 exhibitors, 116 nations were represented.

EPOPA was represented by 18 companies and organizations.

From Uganda: Barkcloth; Bark cloth, Bark Cloth; Cocoa & Vanilla, ESCO; fish, wild-catch, frozen “Kyoga wild”, Greenfields; fresh and dried fruits, BioUganda; fresh tropical fruits, Biofresh; honey, Bee Natural Products; processed food ingredients, RECO; sesame, Outspan; shea oil, North Ugandan Shea; certification, UgoCert

From Tanzania: coffee, KCU; canned pineapples, Dabaga; ginger in syrup, Golden African; peanuts, Tanpro; honey, Fidahussein; certification, TanCert; NGO, TOAM

From Zambia: lemon grass, essential oils, AOFI

Lots of first-rate contacts

Vivani of Germany is one of the best processors of chocolate bars in Europe. Director Andreas Meier expressed Vivani’s interest in cocoa beans from East Africa. Vivani buys 600 tons of cocoa beans per year.

Fresh ginger to Sweden

ICA Sweden is the biggest supermarket chain in Sweden. It is part of the Ahold group. They showed



Augustine Chaiga from Esco, Kenneth Kayondo from Outspan and Ruta Abdul from Tanpro are ready to do business at BioFach in Nuremberg, Germany.

interest in fresh organic ginger. Their aim is to switch all their fresh ginger to organic.

Wensleydale, a distributor in South Africa, wants to get fresh fruit from Uganda to South Africa.

Brazilian company asked for vanilla

Alimenta Vitale, a Brazilian company that supplies the processing industry with raw materials, was interested in organic vanilla. Brazil has much experience in organic exports. The emerging interest in organic imports is a sign of a maturing business.

Kari Örjavik – EPOPA marketing coordinator

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Sesame beats cotton

When Outspan first got involved in organic exports, cotton was the cash crop and sesame the rotation crop. Now the opposite is true.

Sesame: the traditional food crop

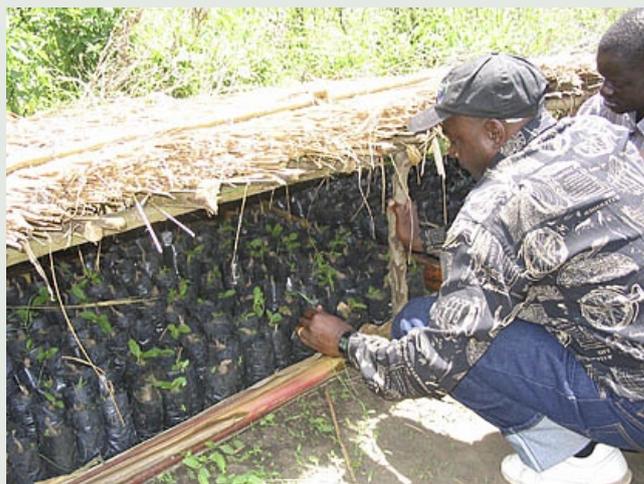
Outspan Enterprises Ltd has been involved in organic export since the late 1990s. In the early days, organic cotton was their main focus, as this was the traditional cash crop of north-central Uganda, where their organic project is based. A traditional food crop in the area was sesame. As EPOPA's support for Outspan moved into the second phase, sesame became the focus crop for the company. More than 3,500 smallholder farmers are organically certified by IMO/Naturland, and from these farmers Outspan purchased and exported more than 400 tons of organic sesame in 2005.

Drought-resistant and better for export

As sesame is also a food crop, care has to be taken that farmers maintain a stock of sesame for home use. To help ensure this, Outspan limits its marketing (buying) period, and EPOPA has also trained the field staff in home food security and balanced nutrition. EPOPA has also worked with Outspan to improve the quality of the sesame being produced by supporting the introduction of an improved type of sesame commonly called Sesame 2. Sesame 2 is a larger plant than the sesame traditionally grown. It produces more seed, is more drought-resistant, and has lighter-coloured seeds (which are generally preferred by the export market).

30,000 trees grown in local nurseries

Unusually, sesame is harvested before it is fully ripe and tied to large racks to complete the drying process before it is threshed and placed in storage. At that point, it is ready for marketing and consumption. As the drying racks are made of wooden poles cut from local trees, EPOPA has promoted tree planting within the project. Over the past two years, more than 30,000



EPOPA is playing a part in the establishment of local tree nurseries. Tree planting is essential in fighting erosion and enhancing biodiversity.



Sesame dries on wooden racks. The improved type of sesame is larger, produces more seed, and is more drought-resistant.

trees have been grown in locally established tree nurseries and distributed to project farmers. Among the types are mahogany, sesbania, calliandra, grevillea, mvule, teak, mango, and orange.

Organic cotton interesting again

Farmers have been growing sesame in former cotton fields because of the better price for sesame compared to cotton, which they also see as involving more work to grow. Interestingly, however, the global market for organic cotton is growing. In 2006, Outspan plans to motivate farmers to grow organic cotton once again, perhaps in rotation with the popular sesame crop, so that farmers can place their eggs in a number of baskets and Outspan can increase its export portfolio from Uganda.

Text and photo: Alastair Taylor – project leader, Outspan

The farmer competition

Along with 900 other farmers, Ivan Mbambu and his wife joined the EPOPA-RECO organic-fruits project in 2003 expecting nothing exceptional.

This was not the first project to be introduced in that part of Kasese district with promises of a good, steady European market for the farmers' produce.

Ivan had been involved in a number of them, most of which were severely disappointing. Still, he had to survive! He had the land, and the pineapple suckers were being given free by EPOPA. He decided to take a chance..

Ivan becomes a demonstration farmer

In November 2004, the members of the project from his parish (under the guidance of the field officer) elected Ivan their demonstration farmer. The idea of

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Continued from page 2: 'The farmer competition'

demonstration farms in the project had been devised a month before by the project leader, assistant project leader, and the field staff as a means of encouraging farmers to adopt organic practices. Twenty demonstration farmers were selected, five from each field officer's area. In order to boost the morale of the farmers, an element of competition was attached to the exercise which would culminate in a prize-giving ceremony a year later. In addition, incentives like mulch, which many farmers had trouble finding, were provided. The basic qualification was a willingness to practice organic.

The competition

In November 2005, the assistant project leader and the field staff evaluated the performance of the 20 farmers. The criteria followed were

- maintenance of soil fertility
- crop management
- control of soil erosion
- pest management
- handling of garbage
- communication skills

Knowing that she had done much to improve it in the past year, Mrs. Mbambu proudly showed off her pineapple field to the judges. She was not, however, confident that she would win the top prize. The judges were impressed! They agreed that she had done a good job. But so had everyone else. The competition was tight, but a decision had to be made.

And the winner is...

On the morning of Friday 4 November, 20 farmers sat outside the RECO office anxiously awaiting the judges' verdict. The countdown began. Seventeen farmers won hoes and two wheelbarrows. Mrs. Mbambu, unaware that she was the only one whose name had not been read, sat quietly on a bench waiting to receive a hoe or wheelbarrow like the rest. When her husband's name was read out and a bicycle (their prize) was shown to her, she almost passed out. "I had almost lost hope in the project since it had not started buying our pineapples and many of them were being stolen," she said.

The pineapples are selling

Two months later, the Mbambus are not just selling pineapples to the project but are also the proud owners of a new bicycle. "I see no reason why I should leave the project," she said.

Text : Edit – assistant project leader, EPOPA Uganda



Field-officer training

This workshop organized for field officers involved in the promotion of organic production attracted 31 participants, of whom 12 were women. All were drawn from EPOPA-supported projects across the country, i.e., Outspan, Biouganda, Shea, UMS, CNPU/AOE, Nile tees, Naseco, and barkcloth. Projects not represented either had had an earlier training session or were waiting for one.

The goal of the training session was to create common ground for all the organic exporting companies, to share experiences and challenges, and to plan the way forward in the sector.

In the training session, the following topics were covered:

- the new IFOAM organic principles
- organic pest management
- management of soil fertility
- export and organics
- the role of organic inspectors
- the internal control system (ICS)
- organic pest management
- HIV/AIDS

There was also a field trip to the organic farm St. Jude.

These topics were proposed for future training sessions: the importance of records; agriculture and gender issues; participatory rural appraisal; animal draught power; improved energy-saving stoves; tree nursery management; conflict resolution; post-harvest handling; integrated pest management; soil and water conservation; marketing and market information; ICS formulation.

All participants passed division 1 and were awarded certificates by the EPOPA country manager, Mr. Alastair Taylor. It is hoped that this will become an annual event.

Text: J.B. Mugisha, assistant project leader, EPOPA Uganda

EPOPA supports national development of the organic sector. In Tanzania, TOAM receives some of this support.

TOAM leads organic sector in Tanzania

In recent years, Tanzania has experienced a dramatic increase in consumer consciousness regarding the quality and safety of organic foods.

Several donor agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other development partners have begun supporting organic farming and processing and the marketing of organic produce.

The Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement (TOAM) was established in May 2005. The organization answers to the growing interest in organic agriculture. TOAM aims to gather all good forces within the organic movement in Tanzania. The ultimate goal is to enhance the social and economic well-being of smallholders.

Recognized in national policies

The government has realized that the sector offers economically viable, socially and environmentally friendly solutions to meeting agricultural and economic needs. The sector has been recognized in a number of national policies and strategies, among them the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) and Agricultural Policy and Vision 2025. The establishment of the National Environmental Management Council (NEC) further demonstrates the government's commitment to supporting and promoting the organic sector.

Great challenges and opportunities

The organic sector in Tanzania faces major challenges. One is the limited public awareness of the benefits of organic agriculture. Another is the absence of capacity in organic seed production and organic pest- and disease-management technologies. Among the other challenges are little support or encouragement for local innovations, the application of the organic standards amongst relevant stakeholders, and high certification costs, particularly for smallholders and traders. Inadequate capacity for carrying out research in organic agricultural systems is also a challenge.

Limited access to markets and market information and insufficient promotion of organic products in



At the end of 2005, TOAM gathered all stakeholders for a strategic plan workshop in Dar es Salaam.

the international trade fairs have also been cited as stumbling blocks in the organic sector.

An acute need for organized action

The key stakeholders of the organic sector in Tanzania have already realized the need for an organized and more focused movement in order to spearhead the stimulation, development, and promotion of the organic sector.

TOAM acts as an umbrella organization for the movement. The vision is to become a leader in developing a vibrant, sustainable, and mutually beneficial organic sector in Tanzania. Its mission is to provide leadership and coordination of stakeholders' initiatives in developing and promoting the organic sector as a holistic development option to reduce hunger, poverty, and disease in Tanzania.

The strategic plan is already in the pipe

Late last year, TOAM organized a workshop to make a three-year strategic plan. The workshop brought together all stakeholders. In the end, a plan was developed in a participatory manner.

The input obtained from the first workshop has already been presented to stakeholders in six zones for further discussion and to obtain a clear draft plan. The plan will provide direction for the fast-growing organic sector.

The plan has taken into consideration the initiatives by the government with the development partners Sida through EPOPA, UNCTAD/UNEP and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM), of which TOAM is a member.

Text: Jordan Gama, executive secretary of TOAM

EPOPA report on artemisia

Whole-leaf treatment of Artemisia annua could become important in the fight against malaria. Here you can read the somewhat shortened conclusions from the report recently submitted to Sida.

Conclusions and recommendations

The artemisia plant is a valuable and promising plant for the production of medicines against malaria. Artemisia is easy to grow in somewhat cooler climates—in Africa, therefore, at higher altitudes. Artemisinin content is crucial for pharmaceutical use, therefore improved varieties shall be planted. A hybrid, Artemisia annua anamed, or A3 (A to the power of 3), is being grown successfully in several countries, among them Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Germany, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. Artemisia cultivation requires a minimum of six months to harvest, whatever the method employed for propagation. The extraction, processing and manufacturing of the final drug takes another three to five months, depending on product formulation.

...

There are many pros and cons surrounding the widespread local cultivation and use of the Artemisia leaf powder as a first-line defence against malaria. An argument against the practice is that very effective healing plants may also cause strong side effects. The isolated ingredient (artemisinin) seems to produce virtually no side effects if used at the right dosage. Another argument is that no clinical studies have been conducted on the recommended level of usage and the possible side effects of long-term usage. Careless usage may lead to the development of resistance, as has happened with many other standardized drugs that have been used over the last decades as a first line of defence and as a prophylaxis against malaria.

...

The arguments supporting the use of the artemisia leaf and powdered leaf are stronger when looked at from a socio-economic perspective than from a biochemical or pharmacological perspective. The first reason in favour is that the health problem is very urgent. Every 12 seconds, someone dies from malaria somewhere in the world. In 161 recorded cases, in three clinics of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, more than 90 per cent of sufferers were healed using artemisia tea. These were indigenous people, and thus semi-immune. The fact that cultivation of Artemisia annua is not simple, and also the bitter taste

of the tea, will ensure that the plant will not be used excessively.

One of the most persuasive arguments in favour of the treatment, however, is its accessibility (local cultivation) and its extremely low cost: one plant yields 200 grams of dried leaves, which can provide full treatment to up to six persons.

Based on a dosage of one adult getting 35 grams (5 grams/litre of water x 7 days) (Source: Anamed 2000 –Word Agroforestry Centre Project Mozambique).

In this situation, one can understand if particular Anamed (*Action for Natural Medicine, editors remark*) groups and NGOs focussing on community health in Tanzania, south Uganda and the Congo already cultivate artemisia at several clinics.

...

The extent to which the use of artemisia tea should be supported, and thus how widespread the cultivation shall be in any country, is a decision to be left to the national health authorities. They have to find the right balance between its usefulness and benefits on the one hand and its risks on the other.

In this debate, Anamed in Germany has taken the following line:

- Make the hybrid seeds available.
- Provide information about Artemisia cultivation in the tropics.
- Record the effectiveness and the side effects.
- Publish the results in the national languages of Southern countries, as an aid to decision making.

The use of tablets made from artemisia whole-leaf powder in combination with other herbs is gaining popularity, as is the case with the Uwemba pastille. It is registered, for sale, and used as a food supplement in Switzerland, giving it added credibility. The safety of the treatment and the non-toxic character of the herb make it easy to administer to children, who bear the brunt of malarial infections. ...

...

In view of the above, it is recommended that EPOPA support local initiatives for the production of leaf-powder treatments and for the organic cultivation of the artemisia plant. In view of its mandate as an export-promotion programme, EPOPA shall also determine whether artemisia cultivation for export is feasible. First indications in this study are positive.

...

Exerpt from report by Ade Towry-Coker for EPOPA, February 2006

Bark with opportunities

BAR KCLOTH (U) LTD has been operating since 2001 and, with support from EPOPA, received its first organic certification in 2005, with 230 registered farmers harvesting more than 7,500 trees.

The product has attracted attention within the fabrics industry: the Materialica Design Award at the Munich Expo, 20 September 2005, and the iF Design Award at the Hanover fair, 11 April 2005.

BAR KCLOTH (U) LTD employs nine field officers, one field supervisor, and 16 women in Uganda. Support from EPOPA also extends to the farmers through education and training in organic farming principles and practices. Barkcloth processors, who are also farmers, are trained in organic agriculture and certification, quality control, best harvesting methods, and drying and storage techniques.

Barkcloth has brought good income to its farmers, through better prices on the export market. This unique plant is also sustainable and, with proper management, the trees can normally be harvested for up to 25 years. The ficus tree is normally grown on banana and coffee plantations as a shade tree. The bark is har-



2005
Roné Malcorps
African seed I and II
Bark cloth
The Dutch designer and artist Rene Malcorps made these 'seeds' inspired by the surroundings of the Ugandan barkcloth project.

vested when the tree is between 2 and 3 years old. The ficus and banana trees complement each other. During harvest, the outer layer of bark is carefully cut away from the trunk of the tree using soft tools, normally banana stems, to lift the bark from the trunk. After the removal of the bark, the bare trunk is wrapped in banana leaves to protect the tree from infection and to reduce water loss. The tree will form a new layer of bark which can be re-harvested in 12 months' time.

Text: Victoria Burke, project leader barkcloth, January 2006

Kyoga wild: a way forward

At last, Greenfields have had their products certified by UgoCert. They also have launched a website for the products: www.kyogawild.com. This is very satisfying after the long debate that preceded the final decision to set up the project in Kikalagania, in the Nakasongola district on the shores of Lake Kyoga, Uganda.

The first step in the process was to raise awareness among the broader population. The second step was training the boat owners and the fishermen in fish handling and sustainable fisheries. The project chose to work with the boat owners; they have been living at the landing sites for decades. Unlike the fishermen, who seem to move around a lot, the boat owners are actively involved in the development of the community.

It was also necessary to find a way to clearly differentiate the Kyoga wild boats from other boats and to create a traceability system for the fish. For a community where transparency has never been an option, this was a real challenge. It took much time and discus-



Making the 'Kyoga wild' boats stand out from the others was a crucial part of the traceability system.

sion before they understood that the project had no other intention than to create a system that would allow them to present the fishery for certification. The turn came when they realized that they had been the first ones to benefit from the improved traceability and handling of the fish. At the moment, we hardly have to convince the boat-owners to join the project. They are so enthusiastic that we have had to ask them to hold their horses to give the field staff a chance to handle the registrations and explain how to implement the control system.

Hilde De Beule, project leader, Kyoga wild

Middle East Natural and Organic Expo

EPOPA participated in the trade show at the Grand Hyatt Hotel and Convention Centre in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 6–8 December 2005. More than 300 exhibitors from 50 countries were present. It is the largest exclusive trade show on natural and organic products in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Indian Subcontinent.

Participating exporters were Edward Mulondo (Bio Uganda), Sonia Mwadime (BioFresh), Bipin Desai and Victor Desai (Dabaga), Gabriel Lyatuu and Raymond Kimaro (KNCU), Mushtak Fazal (Premier Cashew Industries), and Leonidas Ishansha and Marietha Masawda (Tanica).

The EPOPA team and the exporters made many contacts and gathered useful information that calls for more action toward the Middle East in the future.

Learning and sharing

The EPOPA programme has been going on for almost 10 years, and much has been learned. We want experiences to be shared, so that others can be taught.

On the EPOPA website, www.epopa.info, you can find the fruits of the sharing under “publications.” There, you will find a growing list of reports on various topics related to organic business.

Report on organic seed and planting material

EPOPA have recently finalized the report “Organic, non-treated and non-GMO seed and planting material.” The executive summary says the following: “Organic standards and regulations require the use of organic seed and/or planting materials, wherever they are available. In the last few years EPOPA and organic producers in Africa have been facing increasing pressure from the certification bodies to use certified organic planting materials and/or seed. This report was initiated by the needs of EPOPA, but the results should be useful to all organic producers and certification agencies active in Sub-Saharan Africa.” You can download the full report from www.epopa.info/publications.

Manual for exporters of organic

There are many guides on marketing and trade, but in EPOPA the need for a simple and practical guide dedicated to organic exports was obvious. Now it ex-

ists. You can download the “Organic Exporter Guide” from the website: www.epopa.info/publications.

Honey-market survey

As part of its support to organic exporters, EPOPA conducts market surveys. The most recent is “Export Opportunities for African Organic Honey and Beeswax,” a survey of the markets in Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. Download it from: www.epopa.info/publications.

Kawacom project finalized

The Kawacom-EPOPA project has ended, but the business has definitely not. Download the executive summary from www.epopa.info/publications.



Alastair Taylor (to the right) and his staff outside the Ugandan EPOPA office.

The Ugandan EPOPA office

The EPOPA Office in Uganda is at Plot 207, Ggaba Road. It opened in January 2004 with a country manager, two project leaders, an administrator, and five support staff. Two assistant project leaders and two project leaders joined the team in 2005.

When the office opened, it was renting a house with a gym next door. When the gym shifted, the management of EPOPA saw fit to expand into the vacant area. Many alterations took place.

The new office is more spacious, and it accommodates well the increasing number of staff. It also has a guest wing where visitors coming to the office from outside the area can sleep for a night or two. With all the new changes, the office is more beautiful. Lucy’s potted plants help to keep the environment more natural and green.

Since it’s on the main road, the office is easy to find. The signpost also helps.

News in short

Zambia prolongation is a fact

At the Sida review meeting in Zanzibar, Tanzania on the 23 March, it was decided that the Zambia programme would be prolonged to 30 June 2006.

New projects

Since October last year, there have been six new projects in the EPOPA programme: cardamom from UCB, dried fruits from Amfri, hibiscus from Nile Teas, honey from Bee Natural Products, vanilla from West Lake, and peanuts from Tanpro. You can find the projects in the list below.

Deepa has borne a son

Deepa van Staalduinen, programme officer of EPOPA, is on maternity leave at the moment. She gave birth to a son on 10 March. His name is Arnav, the Hindi word for ocean. The EPOPA team wishes her son and the whole family all the best.

During Deepa's maternity leave, Inge van Druuten is taking over the duties of programme officer for EPOPA. You can reach Inge at the Agro Eco office. See contact info below.

EPOPA calendar

Date	Place	Topic
23 April–6 May	Tanzania	Organic Sector Development Training
2–6 May	Bosnia	IFOAM Conference on Organic Wild Production
15–20 May	Uganda	Exporter Marketing Training
June	Uganda	Organic Sector Development Training
30 Aug–5 Sept.	Zambia	Exporter Marketing Training

Current EPOPA projects

Uganda

barkcloth, Barkcloth
cardamom, UCIL **New**
cocoa and vanilla, ESCO
dried fruits, Amfri **New**
fish, wild-catch frozen "Kyoga wild", Greenfields
fresh and dried fruits, BioUganda
fresh tropical fruits, Biofresh
hibiscus, Nile Teas **New**
honey, Bee Natural Products **New**
processed food ingredients, RECO
sesame, Outspan

shea oil, North Ugandan Shea
vanilla, Ibero Robusta coffee
vanilla, CNPU OAE
vanilla and fruit products, Lakeside

Tanzania

arabica coffee, KNCU
canned pineapples, Dabaga
cashew nuts, Premier Cashew Industries
ginger in syrup, Golden African
peanuts, Tanpro **New**
honey, Fidahussein

vanilla, West Lake Agriculture Products **New**

Zambia

lemon grass, essential oils, AOFI

New: Projects designated "New" started in October 2005 or later.

If you want to know more about a certain project please contact the Country Manager; see contact info in box below.



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