

HOLLAND HORTI NEWS

Publisher: Uitgeverij Verhagen | Tel.: +31 71 402 2901 | Fax: +31 71 403 2325 | March 2007 | www.bloemenkrant.nl | www.hortinews.nl

New minister of agriculture in the Netherlands

THE HAGUE - Ms G. Verburg was appointed Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality on 22 February. Gerritje (Gerda) Verburg was born in Zwammerdam on 19 August 1957. After obtaining the MAVO (intermediate general secondary education) and HAVO (higher general



secondary education) diplomas, she attended a socio-cultural education course in Utrecht for a year. Between 1976 and 1980 she studied personnel work and labour relations at Christelijke Sociale Academie. Ms Verburg was a member of the House of Representatives for the CDA between 1998 and 2007.

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An exclusive interview with H.E. Girma Birru, Ethiopian Minister of Trade and Industry

'We are on the right track'

ADDIS ABABA - H.E. Girma Birru, Minister of Trade and Industry of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, in an exclusive interview with Holland Hortinews, talks about the dazzling growth of Ethiopian floriculture and his wish to make the vegetable and fruit sector of his country even more successful. There is no country in Africa where horticulture gets more attention. "The Ethiopian Government is supporting the sector on an every-day basis."

As a Minister who has presided over the expansion of the horticulture sector and especially the floriculture subsector, what is your assessment of its current status?

Minister Girma: "First of all we cannot claim that we have been supporting this sector for a very long time. It is only three to four years since we've started to directly support this sector. My general assessment is that we are on the right track. From what I know we have now over 600 hectares of land under greenhouse in floriculture. In a matter of three years, having this number of hectares of land under greenhouses is one element of success. In terms of foreign exchange earnings, every month the earnings have been increasing and we have now reached USD 8 million. The sector also employs over 30.000 workers. So, I can say, it is one of the successful sectors.

The focus seems to be on the floriculture subsector. As a policy maker, how about giving equal emphasis to the other subsectors of horticulture like fruits, vegetables and herbs?

Minister Girma: "It was actually in the subsectors like fruits and vegetables where Ethiopia was to start, but it was floriculture that took off first. I do not think that we succeeded



HE Girma Birru, Ethiopian Minister of Trade and Industry

with fruits and vegetables as much as we did with floriculture. So our focus now will be on balance with the other subsectors of the horticulture. That is why we have decided to privatize our public enterprises dealing with this sector."

You mean the State Farms?

Minister Girma: "Yes. We will cut them into pieces and privatize them so that we will make the growth of this sector faster."

But why did you delay in extending the kind of attention you bestowed upon the floriculture subsector to the horticulture in general?

Minister Girma: "We wanted to go about supporting subsector by sub-

sector. We wanted to build up our experience, to have a clear focus. That is why we focused on floriculture, textiles, leather, garments etcetera. We have learnt enough that will help us to expand to the other subsectors. At any rate, the objective was not to keep aside the other subsectors."

From your point of view, what are the more serious hurdles that are holding back the growth of horticulture?

Minister Girma: "In the horticulture sector, we cannot combine all of the elements, all of the subsectors in one basket and then talk about them. If we take the floriculture subsector, what has been of primary importance in making it successful is its short

supply chain. The shorter the supply chain, the better it would help you to make the intervention. You import the planting materials. The next important thing is managing the farms and then export. In this short supply chain, it will not be that difficult to point out where you can make the intervention and how you can make the difference. When the supply chain is longer, the areas of interventions would be wider. And that would require, of course, many interventions at a time. Regarding the other elements of the sector, first of all, there has not been any experience of having very large size of vegetable and fruit subsectors in the country.

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H.E. Mr Alphons J.A.J.M.G. Hennekens, Dutch ambassador in Ethiopia

'No investor regrets his decision to come here'

ADDIS ABABA - Since September 2005 Mr. Alphons Hennekens is the Dutch ambassador in Addis Ababa and representative to the African Union. To his opinion the bilateral relations between Ethiopia and The Netherlands are showing improvements, in particular in the field of horticulture.

Mr. Hennekens is particularly happy that the Ministry of Agriculture in the Netherlands decided to nominate an Agricultural Counsellor who has been

pivotal in contracting and furthering relations in Government to Government level in the field of commercial and horticulture cooperation.

With regard to bureaucracy Hennekens stresses that bureaucracy is a fact in every society and that there is always an everywhere a need to make it as functional as possible. "The fact that a lot of Dutch companies decided to invest in Ethiopia means that the investment climate in the country is favorable. Otherwise, you wouldn't see the tremendous growth in investment that we have seen in the last 2 -

3 years. That doesn't mean that there aren't any problems that one often encounters."

A problem is lack of communication facilities. "Everybody knows that Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation is not actually doing what is saying on the billboards, 'Connecting Ethiopia to the World'. It is a difficult issue that needs priority. The banking sector also needs to be improved. Banks here are generally conservative when it comes to risk taking and financing new investments."

The Dutch ambassador describes the

Ethiopian floriculture as a very dynamic sector with several challenges. "It is a sector where the growers have to respond to the market needs and where the taste constantly changes. You have to anticipate or even manipulate the market to sell more roses for Valentine Day for example. When it comes to the floriculture subsector particularly, it is fast growing which means that the infrastructure has to be updated i.e. transport, cooling areas in the airport, the roads etc. There Ethiopia has still a way to go."

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Tsegaye Abebe
EHPEA's President speaks

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Beautiful Ethiopian people

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Ethiopia continues to be competitive

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It is only the public enterprises that have been doing this. So, attracting investors, both local and foreign is very important here. This is one of the major areas of focus that we are putting emphasis on."

Are there any other areas that you are going to tackle in the coming 1-2 years?

Minister Girma: "In terms of national development, this would of course, be one of the areas. But I would like to tell you that Ethiopia might have more potential in vegetables and fruits than in flowers."

So have I heard...

Minister Girma: "Exactly. The fact that we have succeeded in floriculture does not mean that we do not have comparative advantage in other areas, particularly in the other elements of the horticulture sector. That is why I say we have this emphasis. Our commitment to this emphasis goes to the extent of cutting into pieces the land that we have on existing, under-managed, horticulture-sector-oriented state farms to be given to private businesses. For sure, in the coming two to three years, we will clearly show as much a difference as we did on floriculture."

Most of Ethiopia's flower exports, in fact, 70% goes to the Netherlands. As the Netherlands is one of Ethiopia's development partners, where does the current bilateral relation stand, in your opinion?

Minister Girma: "The relationship between Ethiopia and the Netherlands has been good in general for all years. Maybe on some regional and international issues, we might have differences on how we see things. This is the political and diplomatic side of the relationship.

Otherwise, on the economic and trade relationship side, it stands amongst the most excellent relationships that we have with Europe. It is not only on sending flowers that we trade with the Netherlands. We also export some other products. So let alone 70 %, even if 100 percent of our flower exports goes to the Netherlands, a place where the biggest auction of flowers takes place, it is a pleasure on the Ethiopian government. If the question is in terms of diversifying our markets, we will see that happen in the future. If we can export more, we have to look into, maybe markets that would be closer to Ethiopia like the one in Dubai. Otherwise, I'm very much satisfied with the market relations that we have with the Netherlands."

How do you see the future of the horticulture industry in the coming five years vis-a-vis neighboring-country competitors such as Kenya and Uganda?

Minister Girma: "Maybe we have to start from the world market as a whole. Of course, the world will not have enough space for every grower that would be coming in. If all developing countries started to produce flowers from any and all corners, I do not think the market would be big enough to absorb all products. But from the general trend, there is always a space for those who would be competitive. There cannot be market for every type of product that can be produced at any cost. So the question should be, 'Could Ethiopia be amongst the competitive ones?'"

Can Ethiopia remain competitive?

Minister Girma: "Yes, for sure, Ethiopia would continue to be com-

petitive for many reasons. Others would not be able to have that type of competitiveness edge even Ethiopia has. The first thing that would make Ethiopia very competitive in this area would be the cost. I do not think there would be any place where flowers would be produced that one could pay something less than USD 20 for a hectare of land per year. You pay USD 40 (per square meter to buy) in Europe. So, who would be able to provide this type of service other than Ethiopia? Ethiopia would do this because land is publicly owned. Our second comparative edge is labor cost because the industry is labor intensive. I do not think there is any one country around us that you would get labor as disciplined as ours, if not as trained as ours, and who can be reasonably cheaper in terms of cost. The third one is transport. Transport (to the European markets) takes about 40 percent of the total production cost. Flowers are taken by aircraft. Ethiopian Airlines has profit making as its priority, it also looks into the possibilities of supporting this sector. And the fourth one is the support that growers get from the Government. The Ethiopian Government is supporting the sector on an every-day basis. So all these advantages combined would make Ethiopia competitive. Lastly, the remaining advantage is the country's geographic location. Someone from southern end of Africa would not compete with us in supplying flowers to Europe because the air distance we travel are not one and the same.

Even our neighbour Kenya, there is an hour or two differences to reach the same destination in Europe. So all these added up, Ethiopia would continue to be competitive. I have no doubt on this."



Area
Capital city
Population
Head of state
National day

System of government
National language
Highest point
Lowest point
Climate

Currency

1,2 million km²
Addis Ababa
70 million
Pres. Girma Woldegiorgis
28 May (Downfall of the Derg Regime in 1991)
Federal democratic republic
Amharic
4620 m (Ras Dashen)
-125 m (Danakil Depression)
in general cool on the high plateau and tropical in the lowlands. Raining seas on from July to September
Bir



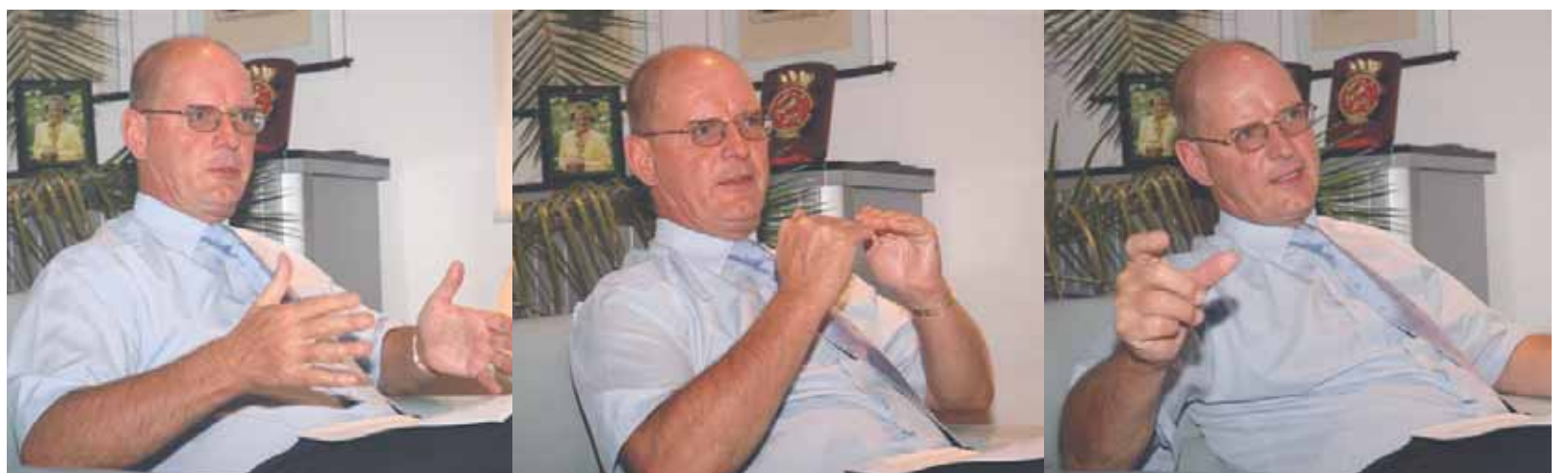
Area
Capital city
Population
Head of state
National day

System of government
National language
Highest point
Lowest point
Climate

Currency

41.500 km²
Amsterdam
16 million
Queen Beatrix
30 April (birthday of late Queen Juliana)
Constitutional monarchy
Dutch
Vaalserberg 323 m
Nieuwerkerk a/d IJssel -6.7 m
temperate maritime,
Average temperature July 17,4 °C, Average temperature January 2,8 °C
Euro

Facts about Ethiopia and The Netherlands



'I am very optimistic'

(continued from page 1)

Corporate responsibility must also be developed. "For instance, the flower market wants to have flowers with 'a good feeling', and for that the corporate responsibility has to be developed. It is good to know that EHPEA is developing a Code of Conduct to encourage growers develop a good reputation. The diversification of products must also be looked into that Ethiopia will become a floriculture base not only for certain types of roses but a variety of products in order to be able to respond to the changing market demands", says Hennekens. Hennekens meets flower growers regularly. During this meetings what transpires? "I would like to start on the positive side. There are challenges. But, the main thing is that there is a large interest in the Netherlands to invest in the Ethiopian floriculture

subsector. They see favorable investment climate, an able workforce, a chance to invest and to expand. On top of this, there is the ideal climate condition for growing flowers. I have not met any investor who regretted his decision to come here. That is a very positive sign. There are issues that one has to deal with, logistics is one. There should be liberalization in this field. There should be a logistical system that enables production to move fast into the market.

We have seen the most spectacular growth in floriculture sector than anywhere in the world

These are some of the issues that we mention in our discussions with the Government."

What is your Embassy doing to encourage more investors to come here? "That is the fulltime task of our Agricultural Counsellor. He is working everyday to identify different areas that could attract Dutch investors. But he is not alone. I am personally interested as well to investigate certain areas to invest and brief the business community. There are also instruments introduced by different Dutch Ministries that reserve funds to stimulate Dutch investment in Ethiopia."

How effective are instruments like PSOM, PUM and CBI? "I think they have been very effective. These instruments have been used to stimulate the first investors to come to Ethiopia, who later served as an example to other investors to come. If one speaks about the public intervention that leads to more private investment then we see indeed successful instruments."

With a lot of investors coming here to invest in the horticulture sector from the Netherlands, Israel and Ethiopians in the diaspora, where does the ambassador sees the sector in five years from now?

"We have seen the most spectacular growth in floriculture sector than anywhere in the world. And I base this statement based on the information I get from the Agricultural Counsellor. When we talk about in terms of five years, it means that the sector will be one of the top export products from Ethiopia provided, of course, that government Policy remains the same as it is at the moment and provided that the Government allows a matured logistical system. So the enabling environments has to remain as favorable as it is today and bottlenecks have to be addressed. If that is the case, I am very optimistic."



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EHPEA's President speaks to Holland Hortinews

'With the current pace, maybe in five years we will become leading growers in Africa'

Tsegaye Abebe is chairman of the Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association (EHPEA). The association is a non-profit making organization established by its members with the objective of organizing those active in the sector to lobby the government in different ways to solve the problems of members and the sector in general. It also has the objective of building the capacities of its members. It represents the horticulture sector in the country as well as internationally and it also organizes trade fairs like Hortiflora Ethiopia which will take place from March 21-23, 2007 for the second time in the country.

Could you brief us on the historical development of the horticulture sector in Ethiopia?

"As regards the historical development of the sector in general and the floriculture sub-sector in particular, the country is known for its potential, fertile soil, abundant water, proximity to main markets, etc. But we have not started using this potential until the last seven to eight years.

During Emperor Haile Selassie's time there were some fruit and vegetable growers. Although the products were mainly consumed locally, there were some exports. The problem at the time was that the investment was mostly controlled by either the royal family or foreigners who were close to the royal families. When the military regime came to power, the few production farms were nationalized. There were some exports including summer flowers, ie. Open field flowers. But that was subsidized export just to earn foreign currency. After the current government came to power, things have changed and private companies were allowed to engage in the sector."

How many members does your Association have?

"At the moment there are sixty members. But this number still is growing."

As a pioneer in this sector what kind of challenges did you face to establish the Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association (EHPEA)?

"One of the more serious challenges was lack of awareness on the government's side. For instance the number required to establish an association is five. But we were only three. Policy wise, again there was no attention given to the sector at the time since nobody knew about its advantages. In order to get land, it was easier for me to go directly to the farmers and lease the land from them. That took over one year. The banks took more than 18 months to grant me loans because they were not knowledgeable about the profit that can be drawn from flowers. Freight was also a serious problem. We used to dump flowers due to lack of transport facilities. These were the main challenges that I can recall."

How about the opportunities?

"We often mention fruits, vegetables and flowers when we talk about horticulture. But horticulture also includes spices, herbs, coffee, etc. Fruits and vegetables are not yet exploited like flowers though practically every region in Ethiopia is conducive for



Mr. Tsegaye Abebe, chairman of the Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association (EHPEA).

fruits production. In Awassa for example, there is a new farm being developed on fifty hectares of land to grow herbs. If we have a thousand hectares of herb production, I think we have enough market throughout the world. We export some 7,000 tons of vegetables a year to European markets while the potential is up to 40,000 tons. Enough attention has not been given to these sub-sectors."

As the name of your Association indicates, it is a horticulture association. But the focus is largely, if not solely, on floriculture sub-sector. Why is that? What can you do about it?

"In fact, this Association was established by vegetable growers. Yes, floriculture could be given more attention. But that depends on the individual grower's decision. You just can not tell anyone to stop producing flowers and go to fruits or vegetable production. May be we did not do enough promotion on the other sub-sectors.

The majority of the production of fruits and vegetables is consumed locally and the export to Europe could not jump the 7,000 tons figure. This year one vegetable producing company is joining the sub-sector expanding our export product. We are also inviting foreign investors to come and see the potential the country possess. The government is now ready to privatise the state owned farms. It is a matter of time before foreigners or more Ethiopians are to engage in the production of fruits and vegetables. May be, the fact that it is more complicated to grow fruits and vegetables might

not encourage investors to participate in that venture. Because of the use of agro-chemicals there are many certifications involved. These days, consumers are interested in how the product is produced. Does it use proper chemicals? Did you use child labour? Are you destroying the environment? etc. for all these, you need certification. Earlier, it used to be easy to export to Europe. Now it is very difficult that we even call it "Europe Gap", which has some 100 points to fulfill. Another challenge is that unlike flowers, fruits and vegetables take more land. So availability of land is also a problem. Preparing land is not easy. Government is readying plots of land for investors. In fact I would like to say that Ethiopia is ready to entertain fruits and vegetables growers. Land is now ready."

With the way things are going now, where do you see the sector in five years time?

"Well, the flower side is growing at almost 200 percent. New growers come into business while existing farms expand. Currently, there are more than 750 hectares of land under green house and 150 hectares of land is also under tunnel production or open field production. With the current pace, may be in five years we will become leading growers in Africa with more than 3000 hectares under production. Even by end of 2007, we expect the land developed for flower production to reach between 1,250 -1500 hectares. As regards fruits and vegetables, may be in a year or two more than 500 hectares of land could be developed. In two to

three years it could be more than a thousand hectares."

In terms of employment, Ethiopia will have more than 100,000 people employed in this sector in the coming five years. And in terms of foreign currency earnings, the country can get more than 500 or 600 million US Dollars in the coming five years. Between now and five years time we expect a 100 percent growth of the sub-sector.

What more do you expect from government stakeholders?

"Well, this is a sector where you can not operate alone. Whether it is a success or a failure so far, it has been a team work. Fortunately, we have a success in this sector. The ministries you mentioned plus the ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Oromiya regional government and other regional governments played a very positive role in what turned out to be a success story in the floriculture sub-sector."

With most of the flowers going to Holland, how do you see the bilateral business relation? Will you also be looking for other markets?

"Well, not all our exports are consumed in Holland. They have a good market network. The flowers are auctioned and go to other markets in Japan, Russia, US, etc. Some times the Dutch repackage your product and re-export it. They know well how to make things beautiful, how to make it presentable. By the way, we have markets in Germany, the UK, and other countries but 70 percent of our products go to Holland. Speaking of looking for other markets, market and product diversifica-

tion is something which you have to take as your core marketing strategy. Diversifying your market and product will help you avoid shocks in case anything happens.

With Ethiopia now becoming one of the key players in flower production, what should it do to keep abreast of others in the region? As you may know, potential competitors are not expected to seat idle?

"It is a good question. Kenya, for instance, is currently the leading country in terms of flower production. It also exports diversified products of fruits and vegetables. But do not expect that or other countries in the region to remain the same. They are already changing policies. The investor is always looking for a better service and better profit.

Whenever there is a better chance in Ethiopia, they fly in and invest. Sentiment does not work here.

At the moment, Ethiopia's policies and incentives are good. In Ethiopia, one is secured any time. There is safety. Here, you do not need to buy land and tie up your money to it. You can lease the land and use that money to invest in production. Ethiopia has proximity to Europe in terms of market. Labour cost is cheaper than many around. The weather is ideal for horticulture business. We do not pay for water. We can bore holes and extract the water for irrigation. Finance is also another factor why investors come here. You can get loans from banks upto 70 percent of what the project takes without any collateral. We also have five years for tax holidays. I am free from paying any income tax for five years. Capital goods for projects are also free of import duty taxes. So this is really what makes staying and investing in Ethiopia advantageous. I am sure government will remain committed in keeping its policies and incentives competitive."

How do you evaluate EHPEA's cooperation with the Dutch Embassy here?

Tsegaye: "Well, cooperation with the Dutch Embassy here is rightly gratifying and exemplary in many ways. Since May 2003, immediately after the visit of the first Dutch Trade and Investment Mission for Ethiopia, our cooperation has expanded to its present level where we are now jointly working on the formulation and implementation of the Ethiopia-Netherlands Horticulture Partnership Programme. The Horticulture Development Strategy study, fully sponsored by the Embassy and now in its final stage, to serve as a blue print for future development of the sector, is also a major contribution of the Embassy to the sector and the Association. Our Association in particular has in many ways benefited from Embassy's collaboration. Under the Partnership several initiatives have taken place benefiting members of the Association and other stakeholders as well. Worth mentioning in this regard are the training programme for the staff members of the horticulture sector, preparation of a Code of Practice for the floriculture subsector, capacity building on phytosanitary standards and systems are but few. Equally important cooperation that benefited our Association and other stakeholders is Dutch Embassy's sponsored visit programmes are immense and very helpful to strengthen our Association's capacity to serve up expectations."

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Geert Westenbrink, Dutch agricultural counsellor in Addis Ababa

'Nowhere else has horticulture made such rapid progress'

In February Geert Westenbrink is on a visit to the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture. Since March 2006 he has worked as the agricultural counsellor to the Dutch Embassy in Addis Ababa. We asked him how he was enjoying Ethiopia and about the role of the Netherlands in the development of agriculture in Ethiopia.

Is the agricultural sector in Ethiopia so important that a separate Dutch Bureau of Agriculture is necessary?

"Agriculture is extremely important for Ethiopia. More than 80% of the population work in this sector, which generates 45% of all income. The huge importance of agriculture to development and - more specifically - the rapid rise of floriculture, were behind the decision by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture Nature Management and Food Quality to open an office there.

One of its primary tasks is to stimulate and facilitate trade between Ethiopian and Dutch businesses with the achievement of a long lasting win-win relationship as the most important goal. I also put a great deal of effort into improving relations with regard to nature conservation. Other tasks include improving cooperation in the fields of research and education. It goes without saying that all my activities are subject to good collaboration with my colleagues at the embassy. In support of horticultural development we have set up the Ethiopian-Netherlands-Horticulture Partnership in collaboration with public and private bodies in Ethiopia. The main focus of the partnership lies in strengthening the enabling environment with the goal of achieving a robust, market driven competitive sector that excels in sustainable production. I have no figures with which to back this up, but in my opinion there is nowhere else in the world where horticulture has expanded so fast and so strongly. All the parties exhibit huge commitment when it comes to continuing and expanding this rapid growth by sound and balanced means. Product diversification is an important aspect of this, certainly when it comes to developing the fruit and vegetable sector. I am delighted with the opportunities that Ethiopia offers. Development to date has been astounding."

What motivated your wish to become the agricultural attaché to Ethiopia?

"I used to work in the Trade and Industry division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Food Quality and it was from there that I applied for the position of agricultural counsellor. Now that our four children are able to stand on their own feet my wife and I felt we wanted to work internationally again. I am delighted that I have been given this opportunity to open a new Bureau of Agriculture and I like living in Ethiopia. I have been here since 15 March 2006 and my wife since the beginning of January. She is also enjoying life here."

How big is the proportion of Dutch people in Ethiopian horticulture?

"In addition to Ethiopian entrepre-



Geert Westenbrink: "Nowhere else has horticulture made such rapid progress as in Ethiopia."

neurs businesses from Israel, India, Germany, France, America and the Netherlands are active in Ethiopian horticulture. If we include suppliers, there are currently 22 Dutch businesses operating here. These businesses are active in the fields of production, propagation, engineering and supply. Although they benefit from the good environmental conditions here, I am proud that they have shown the courage needed to start up business in this country. Without wishing to exaggerate, I feel that they are making a very important and valuable contribution to the development of what is after all a new sector for Ethiopia."

What is the secret behind the rapid development of horticulture in Ethiopia?

"There are many factors that have contributed to this success. First of all Ethiopia has climate conditions that are favourable to horticulture. Another important factor in this success is the excellent investment climate. The country also has the advantage of being closer to its markets than other African countries. Ethiopian Airlines quickly managed to organise the transport system. Thanks to the low thresholds presented by the Dutch auctions it was relatively easy to sell products from the start. Relations between the private and government sectors are also good.

This is something we are also familiar with in the Netherlands. This is why the partnership between the two countries also works well. The commitment on the side of the government is illustrated by the fact that the Minister for Trade and Industry takes time to visit new companies every three months. Also useful is the openness between the various entrepreneurs. They are happy to exchange knowledge and visit one another's business premi-

ses. Things here are similar to the Netherlands."

What concrete support does the Netherlands provide in the context of this partnership?

"When I arrived here I immediately got together with the Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association (EHPEA), the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Together we checked out what was needed to get the sector prepared to head into the future. This quickly became obvious: important items in the plan of action are the code of conduct, training, improvement of the plant health service and the introduction of integrated pest management. We have made good progress on all these fronts. Other subjects include the development of the fruit and vegetable sector, the establishment of a decision support system for seeking and selecting new production areas and the development of a market information system. We adjust our annual agenda on the basis of the progress made and the experience gained in the previous year. Strengthening the horticultural sector is high on our 'rolling agenda'. More information on our various partnership projects can be found on page"

What are the challenges facing horticulture in Ethiopia today?

"When Ethiopia started to develop its horticulture it aimed to learn from the faults of others. This is a good approach. When I look to the future I can see a number of huge challenges facing this beautiful country. These include improving logistics and quality and communications systems. These are essential for coping with the fast growing volumes as well as for dealing with the move from being purely a pro-

duction site to becoming a service provider. In this context we need to look at getting products ready to hit the shelves, be it as bouquets or in other forms."

Do you anticipate that more Dutch firms will want to start up businesses in Ethiopia?

"In view of the good opportunities and good past experiences I expect more companies to follow soon. Certainly if the infrastructure and support services continue to be improved. In order to make things easier for foreign investors, our bureau of agriculture has collaborated with the Ethiopian government and EHPEA to publish an investment guide. Let me just say this: the fact that 34 Dutch firms participated in the Hortiflora in Addis, indicates that there is more than a little Dutch interest in Ethiopia and that Dutch firms are keen to do business here."

Several firms receive a PSOM-grant, a subsidy from the Dutch government. When does a firm qualify for a PSOM-grant?

"A number of the first Dutch companies to settle in Ethiopia linked up with an Ethiopian partner and benefited from PSOM. The purpose of this grant is to offset some of the entrepreneurial risks involved in the introduction of new techniques or starting up production for new markets. PSOM is still available for horticulture and other commercial activities but starting up a rose nursery in Ethiopia is no longer considered to be innovative. New activities that are subject to entrepreneurial risk are what are needed. PSOM has most certainly contributed to the emergence of Ethiopian horticulture and in the future will continue to be an instrument that can play an important part in the continued expansion and innovation of this successful sector."

New funds available

Companies in emerging markets, who want to set up a small-scale pilot investment in Ethiopia should consider to look for Dutch companies to set-up a joint venture. Consortia consisting of at least one company based in the Netherlands and one Ethiopian company can apply for financial support from the Dutch Government for 60% of the total project costs.

PSOM

The financial support is provided through the Programme for Cooperation with Emerging Markets (PSOM). This programme aims at supporting private sector development by promoting and supporting economic cooperation between the business sectors of Ethiopia and the Netherlands on the basis of equal partnership and mutual benefit with a focus on private investments. The programme is open to projects in all economic sectors. To qualify, the projects should aim at introducing a new, but elsewhere proven technology, stimulate the transfer of knowledge, and have a positive impact on employment and income generation. The project proposal should demonstrate the commercial viability and the need for funding through PSOM. The funding available under PSOM in Ethiopia is a grant of 60% of the total project costs. The total costs of the project can be maximum EUR 825,000 .

Example projects

In general, companies that benefit from PSOM are mostly small and medium sized enterprises. In most countries, especially in the agricultural sector, numerous successful projects have been established. However, also PSOM-projects in the industry, transport, environment and tourism sector have proven to be successful. The projects have a significant positive effect on employment, transfer of knowledge, income-generation and poverty reduction. The positive spin-off effects are considered substantial and follow-up investments are expected.

Procedure

Applying for PSOM consists of only one phase, the qualification phase, during which the final responsibility lays with EVD. The qualification round, in which a complete project proposal (including a project and business plan and all the necessary annexes) has to be submitted, ends on 22 August 2007. The tender documents required for this phase and including the obligatory format for the project proposal are available at www.evd.nl/psom. Before the deadline of 22 August 2007 the original proposal including required annexes has to be received by EVD, The Netherlands. At the end of the qualification round a final decision on PSOM-funding will be taken and contracts awarded.

Information: www.evd.nl/psom
Project officer: Michel Ridder (ridder@evd.nl or psom@info.evd.nl)





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Van Oers can supply bobbybeans of consistent quality all year round

'We have come a long way thanks to the help of the Ethiopians'



HEERLE - Bobbybeans from the farms of Van Oers are on sale in European shops all year round. Last winter the first beans came on to the market from the firm's own production unit in Ethiopia. In addition to the production sites in Ethiopia and the Netherlands, the company already had branches in France, Spain and Morocco. According to the account manager for East Africa, Peter van der Starre, Van Oers is first and foremost a grower rather than a trader or exporter. "That is how it has always been and it is what has made us successful."

The concern is active in a number of countries, growing bobbybeans, string beans, peas, Brussels sprouts and leeks. Bobbybeans, grown in the Netherlands, are by far the firm's most important crop. The 1,000 hectares of beans growing in the parent country are harvested in July, August and September. Picking is done mechanically and delivery to the customers is simple and carried out by our own staff. In the late Eighties and early Nineties Van Oers expanded production to France and Spain in order to extend the season. In 2002 the company from Brabant crossed the water to Morocco, since when the European consumer can eat bobbybeans at any time of the year. This has certainly been the case since Van Oers started cooperation with companies in Egypt and in Ethiopia. "However", says account manager for East Africa Peter van der Starre, "the period from December to the end of April remains difficult.

Weather conditions in Egypt and Morocco are not ideal. If you want to supply the same quality as in the other months of the year, Ethiopia is the place to be. The weather there is more consistent."

Ethio-Vegfru

In previous years Van Oers grew beans in Ethiopia in collaboration with state owned enterprises. This year they started operating their own company, Ethio-Vegfru. Van Oers has set the company up together with an Ethiopian partner, Tsegaye Abebe. Van der Starre considers it imperative for a European company to work with a local partner. "Together it is possible to achieve something new and we are really happy with that. Tsegaye knows the ropes, maintains good relations with the ministry and can open doors for us there. The task that we Westerners have is to provide technical know-how about seeds, crop protection, Eurep-GAP and other quality demands and techniques." The provision of know-how is very important. For example, every European country has different regulations concerning the use and/or prohibition of chemical pesticides. This means that extra vigilance is essential if the beans are to be eligible for export everywhere. Van der Starre: "Thanks to the help of our Ethiopian contacts we are well ahead of the game. We are involved in close consultation to ensure the admission of agents, which are acceptable throughout Europe. Part of our cooperation involves keeping one another informed of what is happening and shoring up mutual confidence."

Everything in one hand

Having its own farm in Ethiopia provides the Dutch company with a number of advantages. "When you hold all the reins, it is easier to steer", says Van der Starre, referring to cultivation, grading, treatment, processing, packaging and logistics. We use the same seeds and packaging in all our production regions and make the same demands on food safety. There is no way the consumer can tell where the beans come from." This is not strictly true. The Ethiopian beans are arranged in neat straight lines in their boxes. In summer straight and curved beans are jumbled up together to the amazement of the Ethiopians who visited the Dutch company. Van der Starre: "In the winter months bobbybeans are an exclusive vegetable for Europeans and they pay more for them than for beans from their own latitudes. Consequently they expect better quality, colour and presentation. This latter is not a problem because the beans from Africa are hand picked rather than mechanically picked as is the case in the Netherlands, France and Spain." If export quality is to be supplied, the plants must receive the right quantities of water, fertiliser and pesticides. "We leave the curved beans behind", says Van der Starre. "They are for the local market, for animal fodder and, possibly even for composting." Whereas Ethiopians are surprised by the trade in curved beans, the Dutch are amazed to find that Ethiopians eat so few vegetables. Many people in the Netherlands are convinced that they

need to eat at least 200 g of vegetables every day to stay healthy.

Economic progress

Van Oers are considering doubling the forty hectares currently in use at some time in the future. The warehouse is already based on a larger cultivation area and there is no doubt about the fact that there are plenty of opportunities to sell more beans - as long as they meet the quality specifications set by supermarkets. These specifications involve guaranteed food safety and punctual delivery of the agreed quantities of beans. "In Ethiopia people still have to become aware of the links in the distribution chain. On our side of the world, we are used to planning and thinking ahead. Agreements are there to be adhered to and supermarkets need to be able to rely on suppliers. If a problem occurs it has to be solved the same day." Europeans are far less patient than Africans. Van der Starre has known Ethiopia for some fifteen years and is still amazed at the speed at which the economy has progressed. "Demand from the European markets has been well received but the growth also owes much to policy. A great deal of effort is being put into the expansion of the airport and the development of the infrastructure. Who could have anticipated that it would happen so quickly? A great deal has already happened here. Yellow zucchini, strawberries, roses, Geranium and Chrysanthemum cuttings. It is all going on and who knows what developments we can expect in the next five years?"

Product innovation

Currently Ethio-Vegfru grows bobbybeans on 40 hectares. One of the problems facing the grower is that the year round production of bobbybeans in Ethiopia is not profitable. In the summer months the high cost of transport makes it difficult to compete with other producing countries. Currently onions and maize are grown for the local markets during those months. The plan for the future is to plant other export vegetables. A test is planned using Brussels sprouts and peas as an alternative. These products are very labour intensive and prohibitively expensive to grow in the Netherlands because of the labour costs involved. Potatoes, garlic and mangos could also be products that could help year round production to succeed at Van Oers Ethiopian facility.

Water

According to Van der Starre frugality is crucial if problems with water are to be avoided in the future. "This is also a chapter in the Eurep Gap-protocol. Watering is done by means of a drip system and this has the additional advantage of permitting fertiliser to be added along with the water. This makes fertilising more efficient. The water is supplied from Lake Koka via a 2,200 m long pipeline. The water is purified at the production facility and pumped to the irrigation system. It was not possible to tap into an underground water source because of the great depth at which water is present, the high temperatures and the high salt content.

Packaging

Van Oers imports its own water resistant cardboard boxes to package the beans. The boxes are transported by sea in containers via Djibouti as flat packs. On site a special boxerecting machine is used to punch and assemble them. "These water resistant cardboard boxes are strong enough to stand on", says Van der Starre with pride.

Out-growers

Van Oers collaborates with some 15 smallholders in the vicinity of the production facility. Van der Starre: "We want to involve the local population in our work but a great deal of support is needed to teach these people how best to fertilise and protect the crops. It is not easy to comply with the European regulations governing quality and food safety." In a bid to provide support for the local population, Van Oers' Ethiopian partner has cooperated in a number of projects, which include improving drinking water and setting up a library.

Nature conservancy

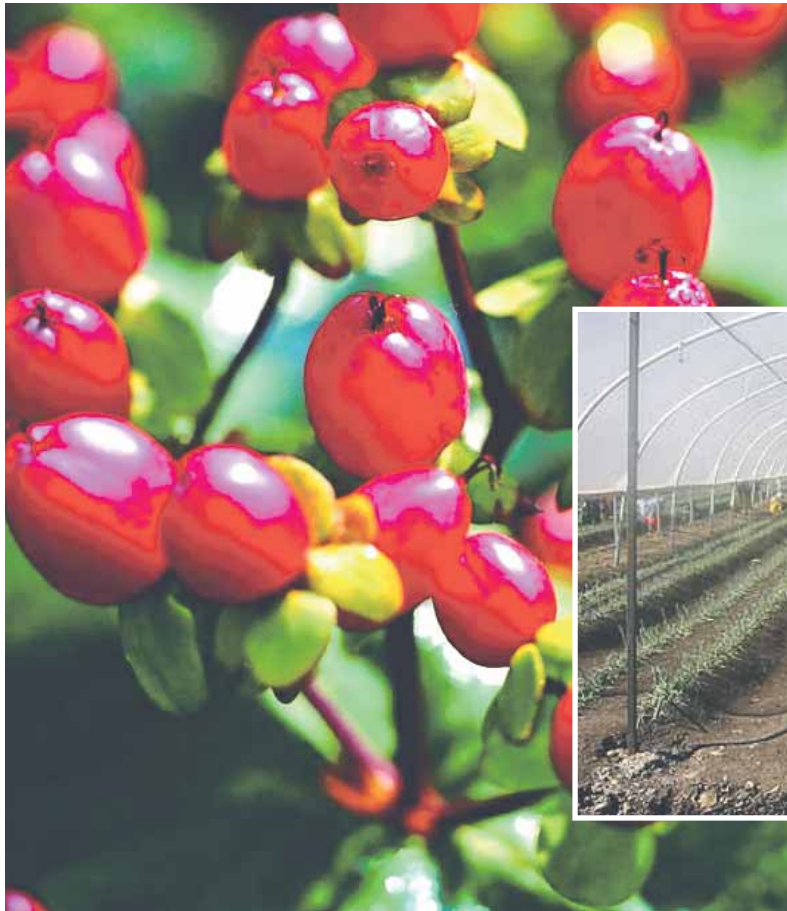
The farm is fenced with barbed wire and a natural corridor has been created to allow the wildlife, including hyenas and wild boar, to have access to the lake.

Peter Kolster, breeder of Hypericum:

'Ethiopia is one of the nicest countries in the world'

Peter Kolster is a reknown Dutch breeder of hypericum and producer of starter material for the ornamental foliage cultivation sector. The main office of the Kolster company is located in Boskoop, The Netherlands. Their line of hypericum, carrying the "Magical" trademark, is world famous. The Magical hypericum can be grown as sprays in Ethiopia, and this is a product in great demand on the Dutch auctions. The price is currently € 0.40 per 80 cm stem of sprays, whereas single-stem hypericum sells for only € 0.20 per stem or less.

How did Kolster develop such a unique hypericum product? Kolster started hypericum breeding in the 1980s and were probably the first to introduce hypericum on the Dutch flower auctions. Since that time Kolster has sold hypericum varieties in 55 countries around the world based on royalty agreements. Ecuador has 30-40 hectares of hypericum production now, and they are exporting mainly to Japan and the USA though a little bit goes to Europe. Recently Kolster, realizing that Ethiopia would be ideal for the production of this product, took a big step and for the first time invested his own money abroad. The country chosen was Ethiopia. "We were looking for a high-altitude farm close to the equator where we could speed up our hypericum breeding," says Peter Kolster. "My search for the perfect farm coincided with the decision of my three Israeli partners to start a farm in Ethiopia. We are now four equal partners."



The names of the Israeli partners are: Daniel Ben-Tora (present General Manager of the farm), Yoram Lev Tov and Daniel Hassidoff. "We thought the Ethiopian climate would be ideal for producing good quality hypericum with bright colors. We chose a farm at 2600 meters, in Sendaffa, 40 km north of Addis. We leased 40 hectares from the government next to an existing

farm). "We applied for a PSOM subsidy for this farm (though not for the original Magical Farm), but as we did not get this financing subsidy this second farm is still empty", explains Peter Kolster.

"From our experience, hypericum is the product that is the most profitable, without a doubt. We expect that the hypericum breeding that we are able to do in Ethiopia will be also interesting for the highlands of in Ecuador, Zimbabwe and Kenya. But our primary goal, now that we have proven the great success of production of the product in Ethiopia, is to sell hypericum cuttings to other Ethiopian growers. We want to give them first choice of the product bred under their conditions. Of our Magical hypericum series, Magical Red is most sought after colour and we export it year-around to the auctions, but it is important to have the full colour range, and we have a colour range that goes from white to black. The only colour we do not have is blue hypericum, and that will probably not be available for a long time. All of these hypericum in the Magical series are very popular in the world."



hypericum farm. There we put in 10 hectares of hypericum in 4 different varieties of our Magical series. Then for diversification we added 6 hectares of carnations. We saved one hectare for hypericum breeding and motherplants and here you can find hundreds of other varieties. From the motherplants cuttings can be delivered to other farms in Ethiopia. The remaining 3 covered hectares are for the farm buildings and offices." The second phase at this location is also 20 hectares, (Ethiopian Bree-

ding Farm). "We applied for a PSOM subsidy for this farm (though not for the original Magical Farm), but as we did not get this financing subsidy this second farm is still empty", explains Peter Kolster. "From our experience, hypericum is the product that is the most profitable, without a doubt. We expect that the hypericum breeding that we are able to do in Ethiopia will be also interesting for the highlands of in Ecuador, Zimbabwe and Kenya. But our primary goal, now that we have proven the great success of production of the product in Ethiopia, is to sell hypericum cuttings to other Ethiopian growers. We want to give them first choice of the product bred under their conditions. Of our Magical hypericum series, Magical Red is most sought after colour and we export it year-around to the auctions, but it is important to have the full colour range, and we have a colour range that goes from white to black. The only colour we do not have is blue hypericum, and that will probably not be available for a long time. All of these hypericum in the Magical series are very popular in the world."



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Marc Driessen, manager Maranque Plants:

'We have been helped a great deal'

Maranque Plants Plc is an Ethiopian company dedicated to propagating chrysanthemum cuttings for Deliflor and young plants material for Beekenkamp Plants in Holland. Maranque Plants PLC is a joint venture of the Beekenkamp group and Marc Driessen, the general manager, who moved from the Netherlands to live in Ethiopia with his wife and two-teenaged children.

Maranque Plants is located 160 km southeast of Addis in a dry area, chosen precisely because it offers excellent conditions for growing chrysanthemum cuttings. Ethiopia offered a good alternative to Kenya and much lower costs than in Europe. The farm is on 30 hectares of land leased from the government and is currently at 7 ha of greenhouse and 2 hectares of seed propagation. It will have 13 hectares in production by 2009. Marc Driessen has applied to lease 100 additional hectares for planting trees. The reforestation project will provide organic material for the farm. The probability of getting the lease approved looks good, even though currently two 55-hectare sections are under contract, but those neighbouring farmers have not started building or planting on the land for the past four years and the government frowns on those who lease just to speculate on the property value of the lease.

Solid partnership

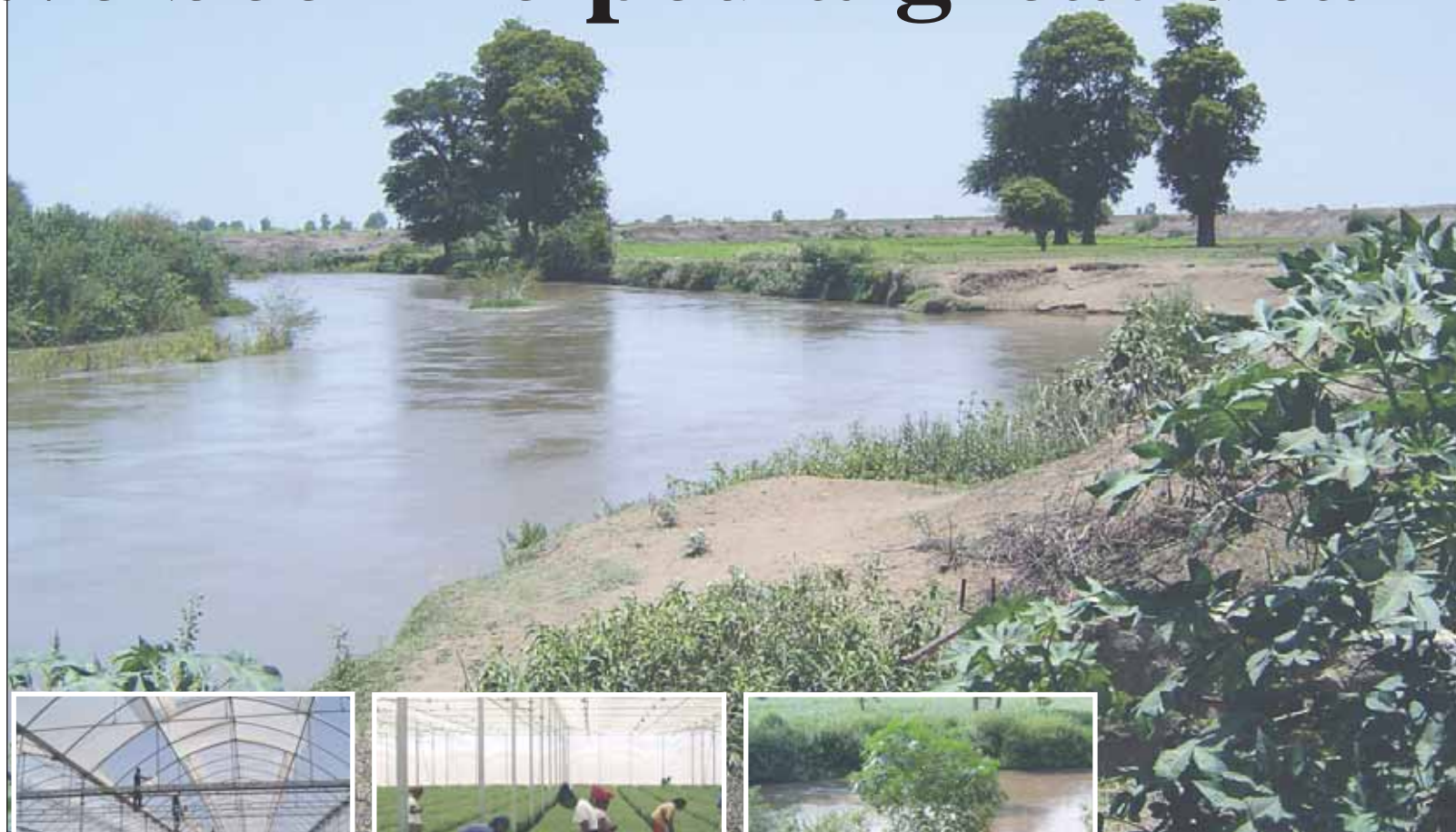
When Maranque Plants was started in 2004 there were only 5 to 10 floriculture companies in Ethiopia. Dümme had just started before they arrived. Marc Driessen says that the investment climate in Ethiopia has improved considerably, as EHPEA (the Ethiopian Horticulture Producing and Exporting Association), which was just in the start-up phase at the time, has made enormous progress in dealing with grower problems and solving them jointly. Many of the initial problems have been worked out now.

"Cooperation with Ethiopians was at first difficult, but once you have reached a partnership, it is a very solid one," says Mr. Driessen.

"In the last three years there have been many changes in Ethiopia. In particular, visiting the governmental institutions to get things arranged has become much easier. At many places you are welcomed instead of searching for the right door. A good example is the Federal Investment Authority, which today is very open



Marc Driessen (left), Alphons Hennekens (middle) and Peter Persoon (right) during the opening ceremony of Maranque Plants.



and very interested in getting investment in the country. Procedures have been shortened and made more clear and are in English. The personnel there see it as their obligation to serve the customer and that is a big change. The Ethiopian authorities are really listening to the growers. In December 2005 there was a meeting with the Prime Minister at which all the growers were asked to attend. This resulted in a charter cargo plane at the peak period of production."

Overwhelming natural beauty of the countryside

Ethiopia has a climate that is very conducive to good flower projects. Besides that Mr. Driessen considers Ethiopia a very nice place to live. "Compared to other African countries there is almost no criminality. Even in Addis Ababa you can go at night without any problem. My children are at Sanford school (an English international school) where they have to attend every day of the working week. The farm is 2,5 hours drive so most of the time my wife drives to the farm on Friday afternoon and the family spends the weekend on the farm. This is very

nice. We watch the beautiful sunsets every evening. Once out of Addis the nature is overwhelming and every time you drive to the farm the scenery is new or changing. Privately we have more rest in our personal lives. In Holland we had to plan our agendas to coordinate with that of family or friends. Here we just call each other and meet."

Almost comparable to Ecuadorian quality

One problem that remains in Ethiopia is getting easy and efficient international communications but Mr. Driessen notes, "we have been greatly helped by the Minister of Trade and Industry. We now have six phone lines at the farm. The connections to Internet are pretty good at 6kbs in the daytime and even faster downloading at 25kbs is available in the evening. This is very important in an ever-changing world market and being able to serve our customers' demands. I can even read the Dutch newspapers in the morning," Marc Driessen says, with obvious satisfaction. Why is Ethiopia so popular amongst Dutch entrepreneurs? "First of all I hear from a lot of Dutch growers saying that the quality of the flowers grown in Ethiopia can be much better than in other similar countries. Clients particularly notice the colour intensity of the flowers. Quality is in fact getting close to that of South America. There is a possibility to grow flowers at many different altitudes in Ethiopia so, given the many different microclimates, there are many different kinds of flowers found here. Water, labour and other infrastructure is available and the country is really developing."

Training institute

At Maranque Plants, some of the 500 employees are transported to the farm each morning in four buses. "All of the training is on the job. The skills needed in a propagation company like ours are high. Our customer in Holland expects us to be able

to produce the quality of cuttings produced in Kenya and in Uganda, which have been operating for seven years. For that reason I have brought in one more Dutchman, bringing the number of my compatriots here at the farm to four. This last man dedicates himself just to propagating and his main job will be to train the staff in doing this. Eventually we hope that there will be a proper training institute for the horticulture sector."

Open discussion

Most of the problems that we have had at Maranque Plants PLC were common to those of other companies. With help of the EHPEA lots of problems have been solved or are being solved. The Ministry of Trade and Industry is paying a visit to all the farms on yearly or half yearly basis. He listens very carefully to get all problems listed and then tries to give assistance in solving the major challenges of the start-up horticultural sector. "The Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Girma Biru, visited our farm in his half year regular visit at the beginning of January. He spent one full hour inside the company and during this visit he asked a

lot of questions about how and what we were doing. Accompanying the Minister were many representatives of different Ministries and other government bodies. They were there to see what our problems were with their specific institutions and they were there also to see where they could improve their relationship with us. After the tour of the farm the Minister and his people had tea in our canteen and we thoroughly discussed many subjects related to horticulture and also some issues related only to Maranque Plants. This was a very open discussion, which I would have thought impossible in the first weeks that I was in Ethiopia. In this discussion Board Members of the EPHEA also joined us and this helped to get things clear.

After this visit the Minister went to the next farm where he also spent a lot of time. The Minister of Trade and Industry has told us that the Government is preparing an additional 1000 ha of land near Addis Ababa for Horticulture." Meanwhile, Maranque Plants ships out one thousand boxes of chrysanthemum cuttings and other plants to the Beekenkamp group in the Netherlands. The operation is not only successful, but an inspiration to other farms and other would-be foreign investors.



Maranque Plants Plc is an Ethiopian company dedicated to propagating chrysanthemum cuttings for Deliflor and young plants material for Beekenkamp Plants in Holland



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Further expansion of Florensis Ethiopia depends on the garden plant market



The Dutch branch of Florensis is one of the leading propagators with an extensive assortment of border annuals and biennials. The company's operations are largely mechanised and automated. Cuttings from various countries are grown on to become young plants. After about four weeks they are sold on to growers who grow them on to produce the flowering end product. Construction started on Florensis Ethiopia in July 2005. In the meantime the cuttings nursery is in full production and Jaap Anker, the coordinating manager for Africa, has to think long and hard to remember exactly when production commenced. "Last year we started with 15,000 m² of test production. A further 22,000 m² were added immediately and the plans for further expansion this year are already prepared." The farm will then have 6 hectares of greenhouses. Whether or not the production facility will be expanded even further depends on how sales of garden plants grown from cuttings develop.

The reason why Florensis built a farm in Ethiopia was based on a need to spread the risk and to expand the production area. The firm was unable to add any more greenhouses in Kenya. Generally speaking unrooted cuttings are grown in Africa for a wide range of garden plants and it is specifically for this type of cultivation that Ethiopia has a climatological advantage over Kenya. "And we are assuming that some products will be easier to grow in a climate that is just that little bit different. The climate is slightly more stable and this can be an advantage, especially for perennials."

Contact partners via the embassy

Florensis Ethiopia was founded by Florensis and its Ethiopian partner. Thomas Matanovich and his wife run a travel agency. Contact with them was facilitated through the Dutch embassy. Florensis was keen to grow plants in Ethiopia but had no knowledge of the country. Matanovich was looking to invest in branches outside the world of travel and was interested in horticulture. There were thus good reasons for the parties to work together. "In the early stages it is particularly important to have a partner who knows the country", says Léon Duijnsveld, Production Director at Florensis. "Matanovich has contacts and knows all the official paths." The construction of the farm was preceded by a 2 to 3 year period of orientation and a great deal of paperwork and lobbying.

Duijnsveld visits Ethiopia twice a year on average and holds a telephone meeting with the managers of Florensis Ethiopia once a fortnight to discuss business.

Anker supports the horticultural engineering side of the production process in Ethiopia. His contacts with Florensis Ethiopia are more intensive. He travels there about five times a year and has weekly telephone contact with the production facility. "Most questions are fired at me over the Internet. If anything goes wrong in the Netherlands you simply make a phone call and within three quarters of an hour there is someone at the door. Ethiopia is another world. If anything unforeseen happens there you have to fix it yourself."

Great human resources potential

"Ethiopia is a developing country", says Duijnsveld. "Horticulture is still in its infancy there, although things are headed in the right direction. For example, we are very pleased with the refrigerated freight handling facility that has been open for six months and which allows us to condition the products more effectively at the airport."

Logistics, transportation and transport to the Netherlands are very time consuming. Two Dutch managers work at the plant, Ronald Vijverberg and Aswin Endeman. They are knowledgeable about cultivation techniques and logistics. Anker and Duijnsveld are genuinely pleased with the local staff. It was not difficult to train people for horticulture. Duijnsveld: "The people are cooperative and well intentioned. They have a good mentality. There is great human resources potential in terms of people with an agricultural background, although it is more general than what we are accustomed to in the Netherlands. In the Netherlands we have specific vocational training for jobs in horticulture."

At peak times Florensis Ethiopia employs around 300 people. The employees live within a radius of 20 to 30 km of the nursery. The company has organised bus transport with various stopping points. Together with other horticultural businesses the employers around this part of Lake Koka, provide jobs for some 3000 people.

The villages in the surrounding area are growing as a result of the growth in horticulture. "However, in view of the size of the population of Ethiopia this can never be a problem", is Duijnsveld's opinion.

Florensis propagates a wide range of cuttings of annual and perennial garden plants and Pelargoniums. The young plants are supplied to growers in the Netherlands, Germany, England, France, Italy and other European countries where the plants are grown on. Florensis has production facilities in the Netherlands, Germany, Kenya and Ethiopia

PSOM offers opportunities for businesses



The Programma Samenwerking Opkomende Markten (PSOM) [Emerging Markets Cooperation Programme] offers financial support to businesses with plans for investment in emerging markets in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. The programme supports pilot investments by Dutch companies which will be working with a local company in one of the countries concerned. Florensis Ethiopia took advantage of the PSOM scheme as the first producer of perennials cuttings in Ethiopia. They encountered many uncertainties. Léon Duijnsveld says: "We didn't know what obstacles we would come up against:

perhaps as a result of a lack of awareness of local laws, when applying for various licences, unfamiliarity with effects of the climate on plant growth, uncertainty about finding sufficient qualified local staff, and so on. With PSOM we launched a pilot covering 15,000 metres. The pilot would determine whether the expansion plans would go ahead. But the pilot phase and the test production were successful, so we implemented the expansion immediately afterwards. PSOM removed some of the financial risks and helped us to make a start in Ethiopia."

Good water for irrigation with a borehole and reverse osmosis



Florensis Ethiopia gets its water from a borehole 50 to 60 m deep. This depth ensures that the water is 100% disease free, a huge advantage for floriculture. In addition the borehole makes the nursery much less dependent on water from the river. The water comes up out of the ground at a temperature of some 50°C and is cooled off to 30°C by means of a heat exchanger. It is subsequently directed along an osmosis system. In this system the water is pushed through membranes at high pressure. The salts in the water are removed and the purified water is directed via distribution pipes to the drip system used for the parent plants.

Red Ash is easy to disinfect

Florensis Ethiopia does not cultivate directly in the soil. The parent plants are in planted in bags filled with Red Ash and are watered and fertilised via a drip system. The water is pumped up from an underground river. In the Netherlands an artificial substrate of rockwool would be used. "The Red Ash is simply dug up locally and sieved. It is clean. We have no problems with weeds and Red Ash has a good air to water ratio", says Anker. In Kenya he had experience with a similar substrate, i.e. pumice. At the end of every season the parent plants are cleared out and new plants are set in bags of clean Red Ash. Soil disinfection using methyl bromide

is not an option. The use of this substance is prohibited in the Netherlands. The Netherlands has strict legislation governing the use of pesticides in a bid to pre-



vent problems with health and the environment. Duijnsveld: "We apply exactly the same rules here. We do not use methylene in Ethiopia for ethical reasons."

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Growing is easy, transport is challenging

"For six months of the year African roses are quite simply better than Dutch ones", says Jeroen van der Hulst. "However, I have to say that this applies when they are in the greenhouse. The quality is less easily appreciated at auction due to the problems that occur between harvesting and selling. Growing is easy; transport is challenging. As far as African roses are concerned there is a great deal of room for improvement in this area", says Van der Hulst.

Van der Hulst has worked for flower growers, the TFA import flower auction and in research. This is where his knowledge of cultivation, trade and the effects of quality on price comes from. He travelled to Africa many times. Jeroen established a business in 2004: FlowerWatch Quality and Coolchain Management. Currently he and three other people are engaged in improving the quality of African flowers. It is often difficult for African growers to meet European quality requirements. There are huge differences between Europe and Africa. African flower farms easily cover 10 to 20 hectares. Horticulture in the Netherlands is on a much smaller scale. Many rose nurseries are only 1 to 2 hectares in size and only the really big ones can cover 4 to 10 hectares. An even more important difference according to Van der Hulst is the fact that Africa has no flower growing culture and this makes it difficult to gauge what quality demands are likely to be made on flowers. Often when a shipment of beautiful



flowers from Africa arrives in the Netherlands, it has lost a lot of its good looks along the way. The shipment is inspected at the auction, the price for the flowers drops and the grower suffers a considerable loss. Van der Hulst and his staff inspect the shipments when they arrive at the auctions. They photograph them and report on the appearance of the flowers following transport and what has gone wrong. They then provide advice on how to avoid these problems in future. The support is effective. "Farms can

prevent many mistakes with the aid of inspections and feedback. The best result we have booked so far has been that a number of growers have made the transition from day trader to annual contractor. This provides them with more income and more security", says Van der Hulst. In the direct market growers no longer take the flowers to the flower auctions where they are dependent on the day prices they can achieve under the clock. They often supply directly to retail chains and agree prices and quantities before-

hand. "However, this also means that they can find themselves facing a claim if it turns out afterwards that something went wrong", says Van der Hulst. The grower is not on the spot and it is useful if an independent quality inspector is on hand to determine what is going on. "He sees plenty of opportunities for his company. "It makes no difference if the flowers on display in the supermarket are from Africa or the Netherlands. It would be fantastic however, if every bunch of flowers in the supermarket was sold to a

Problems after transport

Different stages of maturity: one flower is still shut and another fully open. Flowers that are harvested when too mature or still immature. Buds from which petals have been picked.

Pests and diseases: black margins on petals, Botrytis, mildew, caterpillar damage.

Transport damage: Damaged boxes, flowers packed too loosely in the boxes, transport at too high a temperature

satisfied customer. Unfortunately we still have a long way to go."

Transport by sea

Van der Hulst and Transfresh are researching the possibilities of transporting cut flowers by sea. Transfresh is a member of the Chiquita Group. So far twenty successful shipments have been carried out, between Central and North America and the Netherlands and between Africa and the Netherlands. The flowers are transported in special containers at a constant temperature of 0.5 C. Van der Hulst: "Flowers are not nearly as perishable as is commonly thought. It is almost impossible to see any difference between fresh flowers and flowers that have been transported for two to three and a half weeks at 0.5 C." He bases the good results on the fact that in airfreight there are several links between the farm and the final destination, while in the case of sea freight there are only three.



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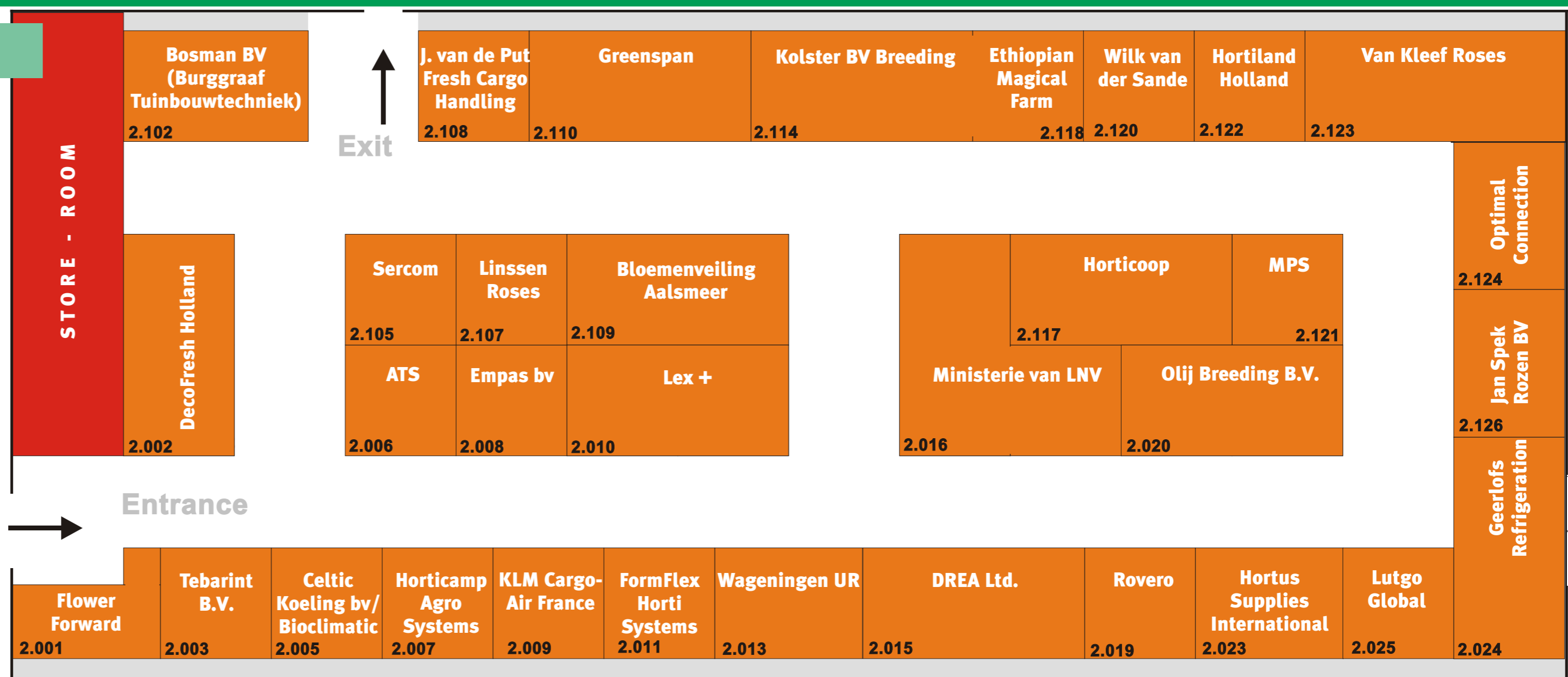
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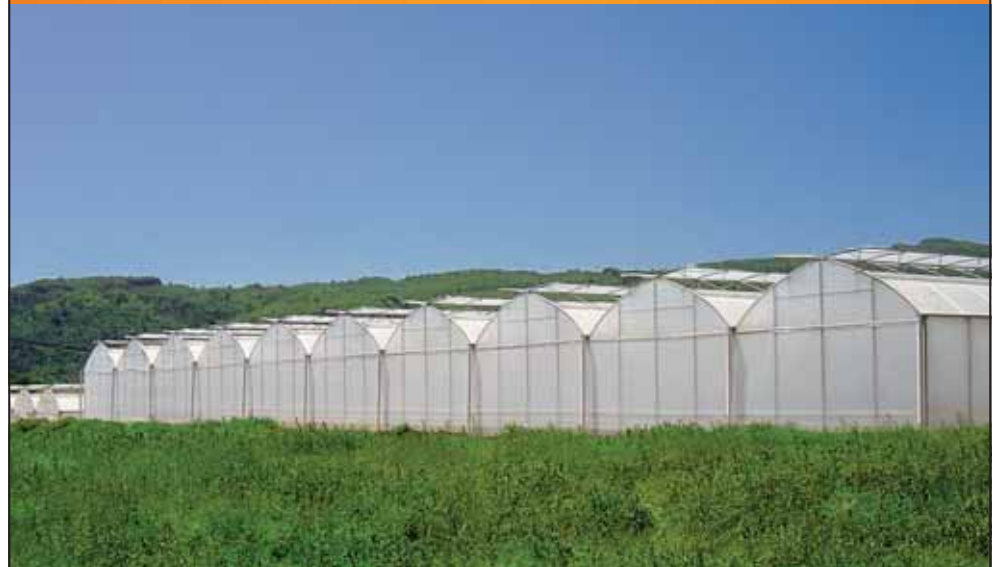
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AT HOME IN POLY GREENHOUSES ALL OVER THE WORLD

Yidnekachew Ayele, general manager of Minaye Flowers: 'Go right out and get involved in floriculture'



"Welcome to Ethiopia," says one of the successful young Ethiopian flower growers, Yidnekachew Ayele, General Manager of his family farm Minaye Flowers. Minaye Flowers is a 100% Ethiopian-owned export floriculture operation set on 20 ha of land, 50 km southeast of Addis Ababa at an altitude of 1950 meters.

The Minaye rose farm was started in December 2004. Exports from the first 6.50 ha began in August 2005. In the 2005 shipping season Minaye Flowers' export were valued at € 1.2 million and in the current season ending June 2007, they expect to export roses valued at € 2 million. By next year they will have 14.5 ha in production and they have asked for 20 ha more land, and plan to have 16 ha more in production by June 2008. "I would say we are becoming an important player," Yidnekachew Ayele says with pride. The family business is in the import, retail & whole sale & service rendering in various sectors.

Yidnekachew Ayele went to the US to get a BA in business management

in Minnesota, returning in 2003. "We saw that roses were an emerging industry.

We carefully studied the industry, got to know the players, and saw the Ethiopian advantages of climate, weather and freight costs, we then decided to be part of the industry. I visited Kenya, the Netherlands and studied the Flower business, their economies of scale and good flower quality and the importance of having a large industry with many years of experience. In Zambia, which also had a nice start, I learned that even smaller-headed roses had a separate market share that can bring profits."

In both countries Yidnekachew Ayele learned the importance of using the proper growing techniques. "I learned the importance of dealing well with different stakeholders. I also saw the importance of a supportive government.

Let me state right here that the commitment and attention of the Ethiopian government to the floriculture export sector has been a key factor in the success of our booming industry today. My advice to potential Ethiopian investors is to not hesitate. Go right out and get invol-



President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria visits Minaye Flowers in december 2006, the person explaining the farm to the president is Yidnekachew Ayele.

ved in export floriculture. Ethiopian investment will be good for the sustainability of the industry. But I advise potential investors also to go into the business realizing that it is a time-sensitive industry and you must expect to be right on top of it at all times, 365 days a year."

Ethiopian highlands are unique

"The inauguration of Oda Flowers' Sebeta farm, and the Meilland demonstration unit in Ethiopia, January 13, 2007, was a remarkable occasion for all of us," says Bruno Etavard, director of the License Department at Meilland International. "We were particularly honored with the presence of H.E. President Girma Wolde Giorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia."

On the occasion Mrs Nadine Meilland presented a commemorative book, "The Grand Rose Family" to H.E. Girma Wolde Giorgis. Meilland started looking at low-energy production areas for roses during the oil crisis of 1973. "We took the decision then to observe varieties in countries like Ecuador and Colombia. We were welcomed as an industry in those countries

because growing flowers for export contributed a good source of employment in the rural areas for a permanent labor force, thus slowing the migration to the cities. It taught people to grow roses, and it brought foreign exchange income to the country. It is only recently, since we signed our first contract there, that we have understood the potential of the rose industry in Ethiopia," recounts Mr. Etavard.

"For us, different from growing roses in other part of the world due to the specific conditions. We are keenly interested in learning the unique characteristics of growing in Ethiopia so that we can advise our clients properly." Two hundred Meilland rose varieties are planted in a 3000 square meter demonstration plot located at Oda Flowers Pvt. Ltd. Co. Farm in Sebeta situated at the altitude of 2300 meters above sea level (m. asl). Oda Flowers Plc is

committed to producing and selling quality cut flower roses into the international markets using the latest technologies and know-how, and showing the possibilities for future development of Ethiopia in the sector of horticulture. Some of the very latest varieties created by Meilland like 'Moulin Rouge' are already exploited by Oda Flowers, a French-Ethiopian Company. There at Oda Flowers, Meilland will be selecting new rose varieties for Ethiopia. The hybrids selected may be the same or different from the ones selected for Kenya or other African countries. "We will be double-checking our research," says Bruno Etavard. "Kenya and Ethiopia have their own pluses and minuses as growing areas. There are market complementarities in Europe between the roses produced in Ethiopia at higher altitudes with a longer production cycle, and those



Nadine Meilland offers the book to H.E. Girma Wolde Giorgis.

grown in Kenya certainly for different market segments. It will be up to the rose grower to choose according to his own specific market." Mrs Lemlem SISSAY, General Manager Oda Flowers is representing Meilland International for the commercial introduction of the varieties in Ethiopia after evaluation.

Adugna Bekele, owner of Dugda Floriculture

'The results so far are satisfactory'

Dugda Floriculture is a farm of 35 hectares located at 1950 meters. Of the 35 hectares, Mr. Adugna Bekele, the owner, an Ethiopian, has, with the help of one consultant from Israel and a technician from Kenya, planted 14 hectares of roses. This is the first time that Mr. Bekele has invested in floriculture. Before he was in various businesses including transportaion and maunfactures, so this rose farm represents a diversification effort on his part. The results so far are satisfactory.

Dugda Floriculture roses are being exported to FloraHolland and the VBA auction in the Netherlands. The prices of Valentine's Day 2006 were very good, and the prices of Valentine's Day 2007 were down perhaps 25%, due, Mr. Bekele says to very cold weather in Europe. This year's Valentine's Day prices were good for red, but he only has 15% red planted on the farm.

Mr. Bekele will continue to expand the rose plantings on his farm. He will be adding 10 more hectares in 2007 for a total of 24 hectares. He also plans to continue to be very active with EHPEA and in the expansion of the industry of the whole. Eventually he would like to diversify furthur into the production and export of fruits and vegetables.

Alim Shamji manager of Golden Rose Agrofarms

'Golden Rose is MPS and FFP certified'

"Ten years ago Ethiopia had no rose farming industry," says Alim Shamji, who works with his brother, Ryaz Shamji, to manage the family-owned Golden Rose Agrofarms. "That is when we began highland farming of roses at 2063 meters. It took an idea, consultants, a feasibility study and patience to acquire first the licences, then the land and then a bank loan."

In the seven years since 2000, Golden Rose has developed into a 20 ha rose farm and 2 ha of hypericum. In addition the farm has a 3600 m2 propagation unit, a packaging factory for boxes, a bunching paper production and an input trading license for fertilizers and pesticides. "Golden Rose employs approximately 1000 people half of whom are women. The site is near Tefki, 42km from Addis Ababa on the recently completed Jimma highway. One of the most satisfying consequences of

the farm investment in Tefki is the development of the local community as Tefki village recently applied for a change of status to that of a Town", says Alim Shamji Golden Rose is MPS and FFP certified and has applied for FLO registration. As a direct result of the input of Sunflor in Switzerland, Golden Rose has up-graded its post harvest systems to maximise end-quality presentation to its direct customers in Germany, Norway and Switzerland amongst others.

"Our family is all born in Uganda but based in the UK now. Both my older brother and I went to the University of Texas, Austin. Since the year 2000 when Golden Rose pioneered in the Ethiopian floriculture industry, the country has a veritable international community of floriculture investors, managers and propagators both local and foreign (Kenya, Holland, Israel, India, Ecuador and the UK.) with approximately 600 ha of floriculture that have developed in the 4 years since the government incentivised the sec-



Alim Shamji of Golden Rose Agrofarms was one of the exhibitors of Horti Fair 2006.

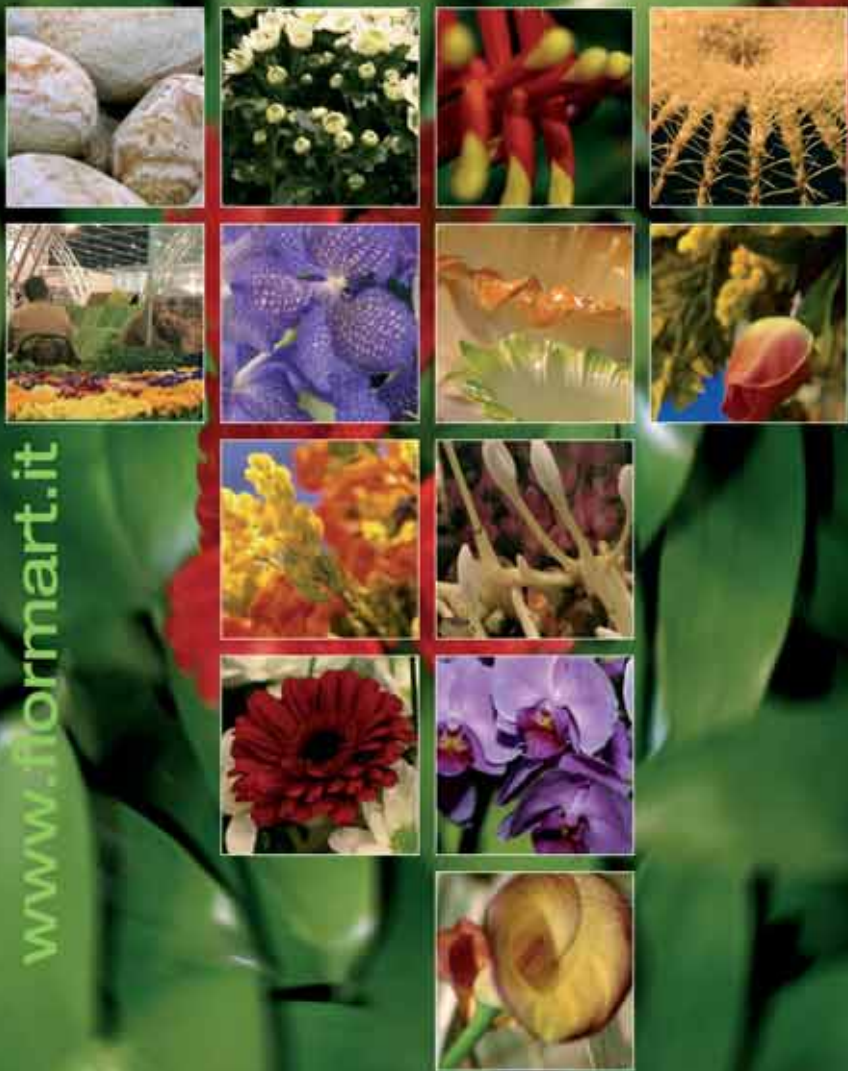
tor specifically", explains Alim Shamji. Ryaz Shamji, the General Manager is recognized as an industry leader

with his appointment to the newly established Ethiopian Investment Commission Advisory Council.



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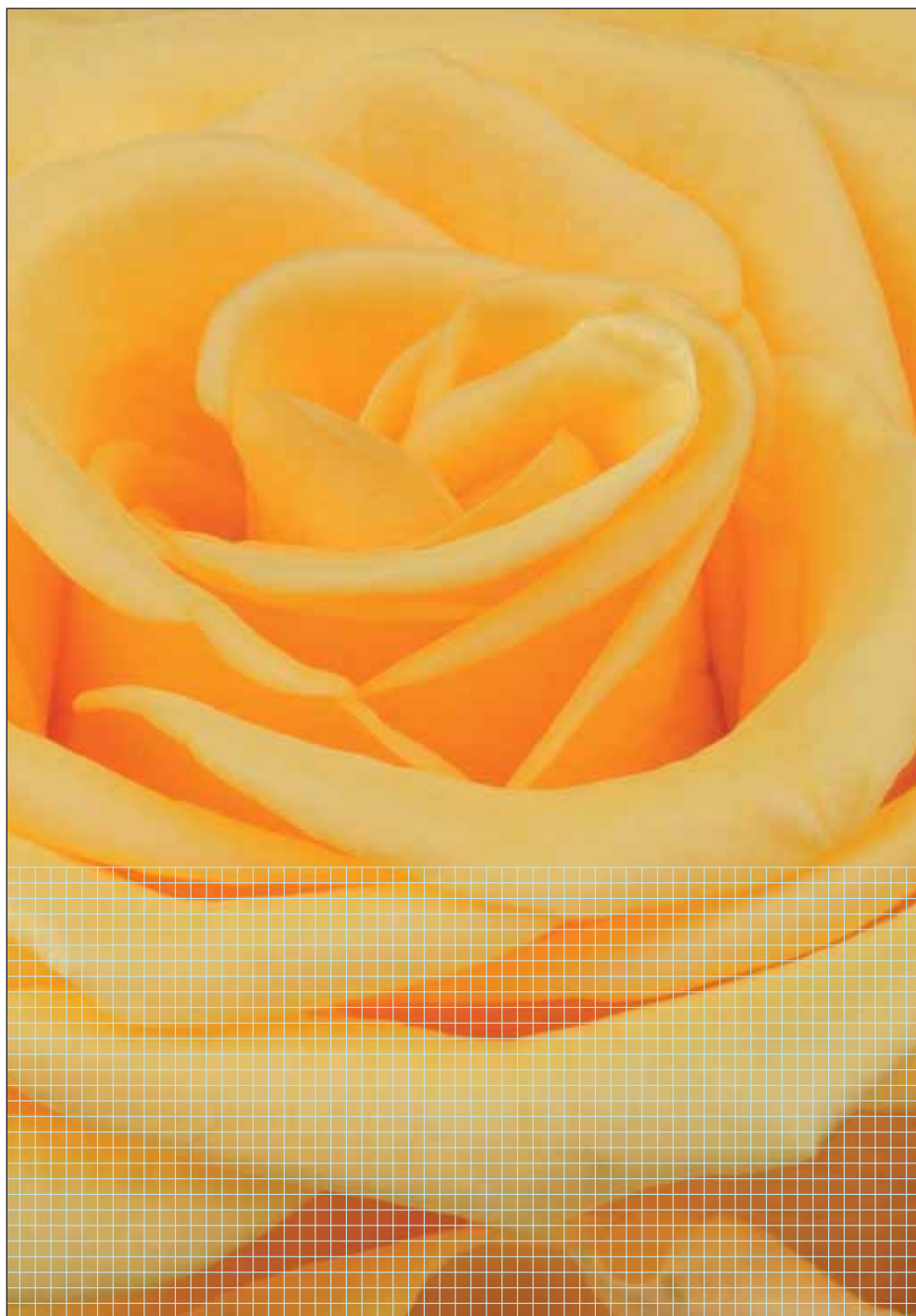
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'Do not be scared off by Dutch open heartedness'

DELFT - Mesfin Kinfé was born in Addis Ababa and has lived and worked in the Netherlands for more than 25 years. One unusual thing about Kinfé is the fact that in his working life he specialised in horticultural engineering long before horticulture took off in his home country. He talks about living and working in the Netherlands, his unbreakable link with Ethiopia and his wish to help the people of his home country.

On the day in April when Mesfin Kinfé arrived in the port of Rotterdam the weather was cloudy. The year was 1980 and there are many reasons why that year has stuck in his memory.

The first was the climate shock. Walking through the city on the River Maas, he was amazed to see people walking through the streets clad in shorts and T-shirts. When he had left Khartoum a month earlier it was the height of summer and as far as the temperature in this astoundingly flat country was concerned, it seemed as though the sun hardly had the power to produce heat. Wherever he walked the sound of music came from open pub doors. The song he heard was nearly always the latest hit by popular Dutch singer Andre Hazes. "The name of the song was Een beetje verliefd (A little in love). We took the text quite literally. At the time there were eight of us, all from Ethiopia, and within the shortest time we had all married Dutch women", says Mesfin, who has since divorced his first wife. He remarried last year and his new wife is Ethiopian.

University of Horticulture

Once in the Netherlands Mesfin showed his mettle. He took the entrance examination for the Technical University of Delft and started on a course of study.



Unfortunately the language barrier put an untimely end to his studies. In 1986 Mesfin started work in the technical department of horticultural supplier Brinkman. I developed into a genuine engineer. Basically, I can now construct a substrate unit all on my own." All the credit goes to his employers Brinkman. 'I actually work at the University of Horticulture. Brinkman has been operating for more than 120 years and wherever you go in the Dutch horticultural sector, you will meet someone who has worked at Brinkman.'

Secret hope

Now that floriculture is expanding rapidly in his home country, his desire to help his fellow countrymen has intensified. "On the one hand there

is nothing I would like better; I go home several times a year and have already carried out some jobs there. Quite often the Ethiopians are unable to believe their ears. A compatriot who knows a lot about horticultural engineering - that is something quite unique. On the other hand the fact cannot be avoided that the standard of living in Ethiopia is much lower."

Somewhere in his heart he holds the secret hope that his employer will follow in the footsteps of colleague/competitor Horticoop and open a branch in Ethiopia. "I would really like that. Whatever: the levels of high technology we are familiar with in Dutch farms have to be of some interest for Africa. Obviously they do not yet have a use for a computer that allows 200 ventilation

windows to be opened at the push of a button, but there is plenty of demand for basic materials such as pH and EC meters, pumps and irrigation techniques."

Authenticity

The Dutch-Ethiopian is not at all surprised that, within a short period, the mainly agricultural country of Ethiopia has grown to become Africa's second largest exporter of cut flowers. The Dutch often only know three things about Ethiopia: Haile Selassie, the young marathon runner Haile Gebreselassie and starvation. This is annoying. "Ethiopia is also the source of the Blue Nile, which together with the White Nile and the Tekeze River, which also rises in Ethiopia, forms the river Nile."

Another unique fact in his eyes is that, apart from its short occupation by Mussolini in 1936, the country has never been colonised and this gives it great authenticity. "For example, the road map of Addis does not exhibit the English rectilinearity that is found in neighbouring countries. And Amharic has survived the centuries," says Mesfin, who speaks Amharic with his wife at home.

Open heartedness

At work and with his mainly Dutch friends he normally speaks Dutch. Speaking the language of a country generally helps one to understand the mentality of its population. What are the Dutch like in daily relations? Mesfin specifies honesty as the greatest Dutch virtue. "Generally speaking they are also extremely direct and perhaps just a little frugal. This is not appreciated in Ethiopia. Here the people easily assume that Europeans are rich and expect gifts from them. Tips for Ethiopians who want to do successful business with the Dutch? Remember that they are very hard workers, which sometimes makes them seem impatient.

Another tip for Ethiopians: do not be scared off by Dutch open heartedness. It is perfectly normal for diseases like cancer to be discussed quite openly."

In church

In the Netherlands, 10 hours flying time from Addis Ababa, Mesfin still keeps his ties with his home country alive. As an active member of the Ethiopian Orthodox fellowship, he can nearly always be found in church on Sundays. Two months ago the church moved to new premises in Pernis, not far from Rotterdam. "We pray and sing a lot there and dress in traditional Ethiopian costume. On 11 September this year we will be celebrating the Ethiopian millennium with a huge party."

Eet smakelijk - Enjoy your meal

In the town of Delft Admassu Gessesse runs a restaurant called Abessinië that specialises in Ethiopian food. He is just as happy to eat his national dish of "injera" (Ethiopian flat bread) as a typical Dutch smoked sausage, but only if it comes with kale or sauerkraut. A story about typical Ethiopian and Dutch eating habits and about the Dutch celebration of "Sinterklaas".

Admassu could hardly believe his eyes when he first came to the Netherlands 26 years ago. It was the end of November and in every town and village he entered, he saw the same strange character on a horse, being greeted and sung to by hordes of people - especially parents with children. He followed the long, wavy grey beard, mitre, robe and staff and came to the conclusion that this must be some venerable and aged bishop.

Tradition

Later, after he had found a refuge in a Catholic monastery in Utrecht with the aid of Amnesty International, the monks explained the matter to him. What he had witnessed was part of a national celebration and the old man with his lovely, but false, beard symbolised St. Nicholas or, as the Dutch call him Sinterklaas. Dutch parents tell their young children that this Bishop and children's friend lives in Spain. Every year, in mid-November, he sets off for the Netherlands by steamboat, where he arrives in time to celebrate his birthday on 5 December.



Admassu enjoys the Sinterklaas celebrations. "When my children were small I used to take them to the Sinterklaas party at the place where I worked."

Nile perch

Although Admassu was an artist originally, he had to learn a trade so that he could find work in the Netherlands and he chose to train as a cook in Zandvoort. The transition from canvas to kitchen was never a problem for him. "Cooking is similar to painting because it allows you to put a great deal of your own creativity into it." He had more problems with the preconceptions exhibited by his fellow

trainees and teachers. "I discovered that they knew much less about Ethiopia than we knew about Europe. They were often amazed at my stories about our rich Ethiopian gastronomic culture and about injera. They also found it difficult to believe that I could be familiar with Western food. In fact my brother used to work in one of the luxury hotels in Addis and I visited him there occasionally. I was no stranger to food such as shrimps, whiting and Nile perch. There were also many questions about famine. I actually never saw any signs of famine in Addis but I do remember that we collected money at school for the starving poor. Ethiopia is a gigantic

country and most of the famine was experienced in the North."

Culinary concessions

In 1993 Admassu decided to start his own business. "Chinese, Greek, Mexican: the Netherlands already had so many representatives of international cuisine, that I felt sure there was still room for something new." In Delft, one of the most picturesque towns in the Netherlands, Admassu now runs a restaurant called Abessinië, which seats forty and offers not only Ethiopian food but also other African specialities. Because he is so far from his home country it is impossible for Admassu not to make the occasional culinary concession. However, he is careful to ensure that his food is as authentic as possible. "If Ethiopians come here to eat, they can easily recognise the flavours of their home country." When compatriots sit down to eat in his restaurant Admassu tends to make the dishes spicier than normal. "There are always a few adjustments to be made. For example, the real Ethiopian injera is made with teff, a round grain that is not available in Europe. However, I am able to import my kebe from Ethiopia. Dutch butter contains 80% fat and I feel that this is too much of a good thing. Kebe contains more fat and is seasoned. Nowadays globalisation means that there are few things we cannot get hold of. I can buy typical Ethiopian herbs and spices such as berbere and metenta in Indonesian shops."

Between gommen and curly kale

Admassu has been married to his Dutch wife Christina since 1982 and is therefore familiar with the Dutch table and the obligatory "Eet smakelijk" - the two words the Dutch use to say "enjoy your meal". He loves curly kale or sauerkraut with smoked sausage and when his children used to ask for these dishes, he had no problem preparing these typically Dutch meals. "The taste of curly kale is similar to that of the Ethiopian gommen, except that gommen has much longer and broader leaves. Sauerkraut has some similarity to the slightly acidic flavour of our injera.

His home country still calls to him. "The last time I went to Ethiopia was last March. I went there with a Dutch trade mission on meat processing to check out the possibilities of establishing a slaughterhouse in Southwest Ethiopia." "The area there is populated by nomads who keep sheep, goats and cattle. At the moment they sell nearly all their livestock to Sudan and earn very little.

The establishment of a slaughterhouse would cause a considerable improvement to the standard of life of the people in this region."

These words lead seamlessly into the information about Ethiopia on the last page of the menu in Admassu's restaurant: "It is considered a disgrace if someone thinks they can make it without the help of others: that person is an egotist."



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Holland: Small Country, Great Partner

Dutch agriculture is famous for a reason: Holland may be a very small country, but its inhabitants have managed to turn it into a global agricultural powerhouse. Turning their spatial limitations into a distinct advantage, Dutch farmers and growers are skilled innovators who use high-tech research and training to create endless streams of niche plant varieties, fresh and processed food products and technologies to boost productivity and quality.

Furthermore, the Netherlands is a global leader in trading and processing agro products. The position of the Netherlands as the second largest exporter of agro products is facilitated by its excellent infrastructure, with its focal points of the Port of Rotterdam and Schiphol Airport.

Dutch floriculture: quality, innovation and sustainability
Holland's leading position in agriculture is notable in the ornamentals sector. When it comes to breeding, growing and marketing bulbs, flowers and plants, the country's reputation is second to none. Floriculture alone accounts for a quarter of the production value of the Dutch agricultural sector. Dutch bulbs make up over 80 percent of all bulbs exported throughout the world. Greenhouses in the Netherlands

cover an area of 6,000 hectares, equivalent to 12,000 soccer fields. Breeders, propagators, and growers deliver a unique range of products year-round, all of them certified by government-overseen inspection agencies that scrutinize everything from purity and uniformity to moisture and pests. Companies that supply these high-tech production systems have formed a business sector in their own right. Moreover, the Netherlands is the hub in international flower trade, and Dutch auctions and trading houses are a key platform for the global flower trade. Of all cut flowers and plants traded worldwide, more than half passes through Dutch auctions. The Netherlands horticulture sector is also a leading player in the production, import and re-export of vegetables and fruit, and is gaining a growing profile as a service provider for European supermarket chains.

Chain Cooperation
Of course, rapid distribution is crucial when trading perishable goods such as flowers and plants. Close cooperation within the supply chain, as well as Holland's well-maintained infrastructure, enable the Dutch to meet that challenge. In fact, the sector's logistics are mind-boggling. Flowers and plants are trucked in or flown in through Schiphol, Amsterdam's busy airport, which together with the Port of Rotterdam plays a

vital logistical role. At auctions, lots are broken apart and sold; a few hours later, deliveries have been assembled and are already on their way. A flower that emerges in a Dutch greenhouse could be sold in Paris or New York by the end of the day, thanks to highly advanced systems controlling the sorting, packaging and reassembling of batches of flowers and plants. Growers, auctions, traders, and distributors have teamed up to make logistics even more efficient. The same is true for the fruit and vegetable sector.

The Dutch owe their leading position to a tradition of combining fierce competition, supply chain cooperation and a strong focus on innovation. Public and private organisations work closely together to provide high-tech responses to new market demands. The sector can be seen as a well-oiled machine in which all parts of the supply chain work together smoothly.

The ornamentals sector is becoming increasingly internationalised, and many Dutch growers have relocated to other countries such as Ethiopia. Suppliers of equipment and growing material are achieving great success, and wholesalers source their products from all over the globe, as you can see for yourself at the Dutch Pavilion.

All these reasons have led to what people throughout the world will eagerly affirm: Holland: Small Country, Great Partner.



For more information about the Dutch floriculture:

www.agriculturefromholland.nl
Information on producers and exporters in the agricultural sector in the Netherlands.

www.avag.nl
Trade organization for contractors and fitters in glasshouse horticulture in the Netherlands.

www.bulbsonline.org
The International Flower Bulb Centre provides the Dutch flower bulb growers and traders with international promotion for their flower bulbs and bulb flowers.

www.vbn.nl
The Dutch flower Auctions Association

www.flowercouncil.org
The Flower Council of Holland promotes the sale of floricultural products from the Netherlands on behalf of the growers and traders.

www.foodfromholland.nl
Information on producers and exporters in the food sector in the Netherlands.

www.minlnv.nl
The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands.

www.minlnv.nl/pd
Plant Protection Service (PD) of the Netherlands

www.plantum.nl
Dutch association for breeding, tissue culture, production and trade of seeds and young plants.

www.naktuinbouw.nl
Netherlands Inspection Service for Horticulture promotes and monitors the quality of products, processes and chains in horticulture, focusing particularly on propagation material.

www.minlnv.nl
The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands.

www.pph.nl
Plant Publicity Holland promotes the hardy nursery stock from the Netherlands.

www.wur.nl
The Wageningen University and Research Centre (Wageningen UR) in the Netherlands provides education and generates knowledge in the field of life sciences and natural resources.

24 hours at a Dutch flower auction

A flower auction is more than just the clock and an auction room filled with traders. Dutch flower auctions are often huge complexes with thousands of customers and staff. An illustrated article on the operation of a Dutch flower auction.

16.00 - 04.00 hrs.

Growers from all over the country ensure that their flowers and plants arrive punctually and in good condition. Deliveries arrive in the evening and at night, not only in the growers own trucks but also in the vehicles of collective floricultural transport organisations.



16.00 - 04.00 hrs.

Around 99% of cut flowers are moved to huge refrigerated units immediately on arrival at the auction. In this way the freshness and quality of the products can be guaranteed.



04.00 - 06.00 hrs.

Most growers inspect their flowers and plants themselves. The quality inspectors of the auction make random checks to see whether the grower has properly evaluated the flowers and plants. The quality of the information is also checked: what is written on the consignment note must also actually be delivered.



06.00 - 09.30 hrs.

The auction rooms with the auction clocks are the throbbing heart of the auction. The price is determined by the Dutch system: the first buyer to press the button not only determines the price, but buys the batch at the same time. Every morning tens of millions of flowers and plants change hands via the auction clocks. Thousands of transactions take place between grower and buyer in the space of a few hours.



06.00 - 11.00 hrs.

The distribution hall resembles an anthill: it is teeming with people, flowers and plants. It appears chaotic, but everyone goes straight to his goal.



07.00 - 13.00 hrs.

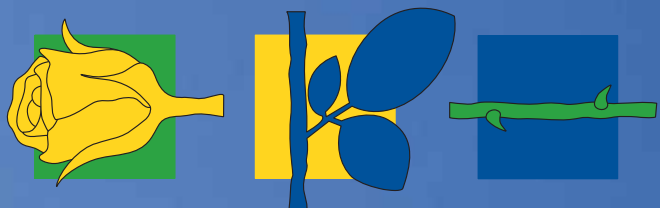
Within a few hours after the purchase, the businesses established at the auction receive the flowers and plants at the front door. The flowers and plants are fresh when they arrive at the auction, and it is important that they remain so on their route to the consumer. The earlier they are with the buyer, the faster he can process the flowers and plants and transport. This goes on day and night.



10.00 - 16.00 hrs.

Once the flowers and plants have arrived at the exporter's box they are processed by specialised staff. Cut flowers are frequently repackaged or used in mixed bouquets. The trend with pot plants is to finish the products off with added value elements. These can take the form of special pots, labels, wrappers and stickers.





Van Kleef Roses bv



Judith Zuurbier
Managing Director



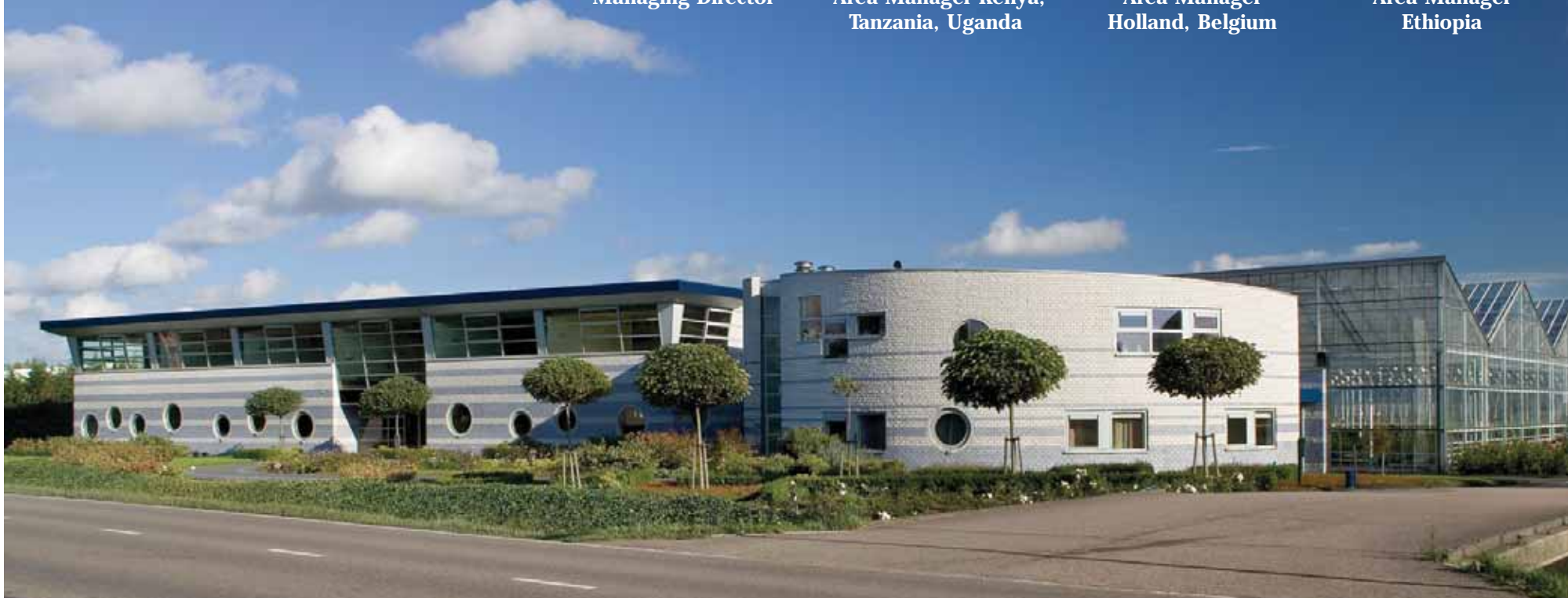
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Area Manager Kenya,
Tanzania, Uganda



Siebe Duivenvoorden
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www.agro-technical.com



Judith Zuurbier of Van Kleef Roses: 'Government continues to be very supportive'

Judith Zuurbier and her family are rose growers originally from the Netherlands. They went to Kenya, growing 18 hectares cut roses and testing the Van Kleef line of rose hybrids at 1900 meters at Lake Naivasha in 2001. Two years later, though very successful in Kenya, they were looking for further opportunities so they were looking for possibilities in Ethiopia. At the time, 2003 and 2004, the Ethiopian government was making things very attractive. "We went for a survey to Ethiopia in 2003 when there were only five growers in the country."

"We started our demo farm in 2005 just as the boom in Ethiopia began. We located it at 2250 meters, 350 meters higher than our farm in Kenya, to test the varieties on higher altitude. We are world leaders when it comes to varieties for high altitudes, and are developing a special line for Ethiopia's high lands. More recently we are doing cooperative testing of this high altitude lines, with four growers whose farms are up to 2600 meters: Menagesha Flowers, J.J. Kotari, Alliance/Holeta Flowers and Oromia Wonders Farm."

Lack of rose propagation material
There simply is a lack of rose propagation material. Some 70 hectares are all ready for planning but there is no planting material.



"These are very exciting times to be in Ethiopian export floriculture", says Judith Zuurbier.

Ethiopia currently has only three professional propagators. Ethio-plants, owned by Felix Steeghs, who worked ten years with Stokman in Kenya, has a big operation here. Then there is an Israeli operation, Joytech. And finally Michael Asres of Summit is propagating roses on

his farms. In addition, propagators in Kenya are trying to send plants to Ethiopia, but they are having terrible problems getting the plants in using passenger flights because the plants are often simply offloaded if the flights are full. "These 70 hectares of greenhouse in

Ethiopia that are not planted remind me a lot of the 1996-1997 period in Ecuador when a similar situation occurred. But Ecuador went to 1800 hectares, and here in Ethiopia the expansion is to 500 ha of greenhouse and another 200-300 ha coming on in 2007. So the scale of expansion is not quite so big. And then also, the market situation is quite different. When Ecuador was expanding, the market was expanding too. Now the European market is not growing seriously any more, the total scale of production will not grow. The Ethiopian roses will highly compete with European produced flowers."

Development

Whether the expansion continues in Ethiopia will depend upon the government. "If the government continues to be very supportive, the expansion will continue. And I must say that never, in any other country, has the government been as supportive of floriculture as the Government of Ethiopia. I imagine that even if there is a government change in a few years, the likelihood is that the support will continue because floriculture brings in a lot of development in the country. In any case, these are very exciting times to be in Ethiopian export floriculture", says Judith Zuurbier.



Ethiopian farmers do a good job

New investment introduces quality potato seed to the Ethiopian farmers

No flowers this time, no tulips: another famous agricultural product of The Netherlands is potato seed. The potato company HZPC Holland BV has its major market in the Mediterranean region and is trading around 400.000 tonnes of seed potatoes annually.

Farmers in these countries need high yielding varieties: HZPC is continuously creating new varieties. Potato will degenerate in one or two years time, due to the accumulation of diseases: HZPC will provide healthy and certified elite-seed. This combination of best seed and best varieties ensures the local farmers to gain the highest yields and the best profits. "The success of this strategy in Northern Africa, even in harsh climates, challenged me to start up a similar company in Ethiopia", tells the former head Research of HZPC, Jan van de Haar. He will move with his family to Ethiopia soon.

"Ethiopian farmers do a good job, but they urgently need quality seed."

Together with a group of investors, and stimulated by a PSOM-grant from the Dutch government, Van de Haar established a new seed company in Ethiopia, named Solagrow PLC. This company will introduce a commercial seed potato production system using HZPC-varieties and using the Dutch experience and knowledge in growing healthy seed. The temperate climate at high altitudes makes Ethiopia to the best country for year round seed production, either under irrigation or during the rainy season.

Last month 16 HZPC-varieties were imported via Djibouti and planted at several locations. Their performance is tested in the different climatic zones. Some varieties are typically bred for french fries or crisps, while the majority are high yielding table potatoes. Solagrow is starting up main offices in Debre Zeit (Oromia), just 50 km south of Addis Ababa. Cold storages, a grading and packing line and a molecular pathology lab will be parts of this potato demonstration centre.

Outgrowers at high altitudes in several regions in Ethiopia will be contracted and trained to grow seed for their local farmers.

With this investment and knowledge transfer, Solagrow aims to enable the Ethiopian agriculture to improve their own food production. Export of potatoes to the neighbouring countries will further enhance the local economy. Solagrow PLC can be contacted by mail to jjhaar@wxs.nl

(ADVERTORIAL)

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Growing carnations in Ethiopia

Carnations have been grown for the past 2.000 years. After a difficult period, the carnation is now again one of the most popular flowers and it is now being considered a very modern, trendy flower with good keeping qualities. They are available in many different colours and colour shades and easy to use in contemporary arrangements. Leading florists all over the world are using carnations in their creative bouquet arrangements.

Started with production facilities in Europe, the past few years there is a move to countries in Africa and Latin America. Not only for reasons of production costs, but also for better climate conditions, enabling to grow good quality carnations for a good price. Seeing the popularity of the carnation, it is impossible for European production facilities to meet with the demand. This can be met by importing flowers from Kenya and Ethiopia, since the USA market is already being supplied from Latin America. Seeing the benefits, it is not only recommended but also very lucrative to grow carnations in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has good climate conditions, there is sufficient water supply, it's close to the European market which is cost beneficial compared to other production facilities in Europe and Latin America, and Ethiopia has good transportation routings. The quality of the carnation flowers imported from Ethiopia so far, is being appreciated for their good quality. Reading the above, it can be concluded that starting carnation growing in Ethiopia is a very promising business activity. However technical support is indispensable for success. Since many years (started in 1929) P. Kooij & Zonen B.V. is worldwide one of the leading companies in breeding, selecting and propagating carnations. Situated in the centre of the world flower industry in Aalsmeer - Holland, P. Kooij & Zonen B.V. can offer you a wide,



Good quality carnations

colourfull and exclusive range of standard and spray carnations. Their cuttings are being produced in a highly up-to-date greenhouse under optimum climate conditions to comply with their high quality standards. Due to very strict rules with regards to hygiene P. Kooij & Zonen B.V. is able to keep their mother plants virus and disease free. The breeding department is always looking to develop new varieties/concepts but the actual introduction depends on the market acceptance.

Even special breeding projects are being initiated to select varieties that can be grown perfectly in climate conditions like they are in Ethiopia. Prior to the actual introduction of these varieties there will be always a testing period. Since many years a lot of the cuttings are being produced in P. Kooij & Zonen B.V. own production facilities in Colombia and Kenya. Seeing the cultural technical experiences in these countries - comparable climate conditions - P. Kooij & Zonen B.V. can provide you with the best technical support in case you decide to start growing carnations. Technical support on the spot is also possible.

For further information: P. Kooij & Zonen B.V./www.kooij.nl/ www.carnation-arrangements.com

FloraHolland excellent marketplace

Ornamental plant and flower production is a booming business in Ethiopia. In 2006, the acreage increased from about 200 ha to 400 ha. Sander Klaver, local area manager for FloraHolland in Ethiopia, expects the acreage to increase by a further 200 to 300 ha in 2007. The lion's share, some 80%, involves roses, but carnations, hypericum, eryngium and gypsophila are also grown. For 2007, the chrysanthemum will be an important newcomer. "Massive growth with immense opportunities, but also big risks", says Klaver. "Cultivation isn't a simple matter in Ethiopia, particularly the logistical lines in this country are long and this is where the challenges lie. It's a lot different from the Netherlands."

FloraHolland has a local representative in Ethiopia Sander Klaver, since October 2005. He is FloraHolland's representative for numerous growers, and the numbers of growers are increasing. Klaver: "When I arrived in October 2005, 6 Ethiopian growers were supplying at Flora Holland. Now, in February 2007, there are 22. FloraHolland is an excellent marketplace for increasing numbers of growers. This means that, together with colleagues from the various auction locations and the Intermediary Office, I am busy all the time looking for ways to improve the results of our growers in Ethiopia."

Klaver provides, a lot of advice to starting growers in particular, "What it boils down to is that growers have to take a good look at the possibilities and the limitations of the climate zone in which they grow, and that they take a good look around before making a decision. I do help starting growers by introducing them to possible partners, suppliers and give them a list of the various breeders and make market intelligence available." However, both newcomers and established growers need to know which varieties are good to cultivate at the



Sander Klaver

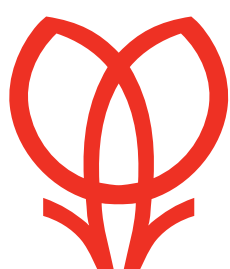
moment, notes Klaver. "By producing a good assortment analysis from a market perspective, we try to assist the grower in making his decisions. Together with the Intermediary Office, I actively search for ways in which growers can sell directly. The local area management plays an important role here, from both the supply and the demand side."

More and more growers are expressing an interest in marketing a proportion of their products directly. Klaver: "We have taken these signals very seriously. At the end of 2006, FloraHolland actively started to search for ways in which growers could sell directly." This has led to a sharp increase in sales. Direct sales has increased more than sixfold compared to last year.

Klaver is optimistic about the future of the ornamental plant and flower industry in Ethiopia. He believes that the Ethiopian government is right behind the industry. "On the one hand, the sector provides employment in a country with one of the fastest growing populations in the world. On the other hand, it attracts foreign currency, so that further investments can be made in the country."

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'The Ethiopian flower export industry is both exciting and promising'

"The Ethiopian flower export industry is both exciting and promising," says Erik Jan Hoorstra, Account Manager Ethiopia, for the Bloemenveiling Aalsmeer in the Netherlands. "Everyone from the farm owners to the employees from the villagers are willing to work to make it successful. The culture is right. There is a good attitude. This is basic for making an investment. The government is open and helps with farm start-ups. They are willing to invest into the future."

"Ethiopia has learned to produce quality roses with very bright colours, long stems and big bloom heads. What they also need is to focus more on the post harvest and control problems like botrytis, and improve the cool chain. Systems must be established to cool on time, keep cool, make sure the trucks have coolers and that they are being used properly, so that the Cool Chain will not be broken." Packing could also be more precise. Cardboard carton must protect the petal edges. These little details make a big difference. Then the air logistics need to be improved, says Erik Jan Hoorstra. "The fact that there is a lack of open and flexible competition among transporters out of Ethiopia is a problem, particularly in the summertime. Solutions are urgent."



Ethiopia is in the top 3

According to the 2006 Bloemenveiling Aalsmeer auction statistics Ethiopia is in the top 3 countries of average prices, but still a long way to go to the level of Ecuador.

Year 2006, Roses

Average price Roses:	The Netherlands	€ 0,334/per stem
Average price Roses:	Ecuador	€ 0,308/per stem
Average price Roses:	Ethiopia	€ 0,157/per stem
Average price Roses:	Kenya	€ 0,145/per stem
Average price Roses:	Zambia	€ 0,114/per stem
Average price Roses:	Uganda	€ 0,095/per stem
Average price Roses:	Zimbabwe	€ 0,094/per stem

Source: Bloemenveiling Aalsmeer



The objective at the Bloemenveiling Aalsmeer is to help the grower maximize quality so that he can maximize his returns and his profitability. "Now that 60% of the roses sold on the Bloemenveiling Aalsmeer clock are imported products, we work very closely together with the foreign growers and their importing agents to reduce the rejects. We encourage the growers to follow the two golden rules of top quality and shipping continuity. This way they

will develop a quality image with the buyers. Eventually the sales demand will be driven from specific clients. Direct business will develop with the Bloemenveiling Aalsmeer securing the payments from these foreign clients to the growers. In all of this, our goal is to optimize prices for our growers."

Bloemenveiling Aalsmeer has two strong sales-tools, the auction clock and direct sales. "We can offer many services to you growers from market

research, product launch, concept development, sales, individual custom marketing, prompt payment guarantee, quality testing and quality control advice. You can log into our IT system and get the price at which your product was sold and the average price of the day and the week. You can see how your quality compares with the average and your reliability index. The whole objective in Aalsmeer is to try to raise the Ethiopian quality and price-level, so

you can compete with the best comparable Ecuadorian products." The Ecuador roses have become a "tradename" in the market. "If the Ethiopia farms can improve on post-harvesting, coolchain, transport and reliability the price can be pushed up. "If you need further info, please do not hesitate to give me a call. Both Miss Tigist Gizaw, our sales representative in Ethiopia, and I are working to help you. She is here to aid potential investors with their

questions regarding banking, administration, breeders and consultants and also to help you grow and export the best flowers possible. We now have about 30 Ethiopian farms shipping to Aalsmeer. We look forward to the volume of excellent flower exports to Bloemenveiling Aalsmeer increasing as the farms grow, and as more farms produce the minimum volume and quality needed to work with our clock system."



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Around the clock
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15 varieties on display at Hortiflora and show-testhouse open house on the 23th and 24th of March

Olij Roses is definitely showing their faith in Ethiopia

Olij Rozen is a propagator, breeder and a grower/exporter of roses from Ethiopia. This will be the second time that Olij Rozen is participating in Hortiflora Ethiopia. They will have about 15 varieties on display at the show, and more to see at their show-testhouse open house on the 24th of March near Debre Zeit.

Olij Rozen is a family company located in De Kwakel, the Netherlands. For almost one century Olij Rozen has been a world-recognized volume producer of rose cuttings and rose topgrafts. They pride themselves in making rose varieties from almost all rose breeders worldwide. Propagation is in a completely climate-controlled 2-hectare greenhouse with four separate compartments in which the conditions are adapted to the growing stage of the young plants. Transport on rolling tables is automated and computers track the location of each single small rose plant. Pending the availability of budwood, time between ordering and delivery is 7 to 8 weeks. Topgrafts on Natal Briar and Popeye can be delivered year-around. Topgrafts on Inermis can be delivered from December until August. Topgrafts can be used in cocopeat or rockwool substrate or directly in the soil. Cuttings are mostly used on substrate of cocos or rockwool and are used when growing conditions are optimal.

Sensational rose varieties

Olij is a not only a propagation company. Through their Olij Breeding division, started in 1980, they have developed such sensational rose varieties as 'Red Berlin', 'Cézanne'-family, 'El toro', 'Blizzard' and 'Kiwi'. Among their recent Hybrid Tea introductions you will find 'Rockefeller', 'Latina', 'Euforia', 'Cinnamon' and 'Dreamliner'. 'Double Party' and 'Calabria' are two lovely introductions in the mauve-purple and grey-red bi-color group. Some real exclusive varieties are 'Hypnose' (old pink lavender with green outside petal) and 'Silverstone' (real lavender), both being planted in Ethiopia. Olij Breeding also has a dependable series of medium length bouquet roses including 'B-Happy', 'Olympia', 'El Toro', 'Torero', 'Gentle', 'Artic', 'Only White', 'Only Yellow', 'Red Sky', 'Ruslana' and 'Thunderbird'. They reflect the Olij objective of breeding their roses for both



productivity and long vase life. In addition to the long large and medium-flowered roses, Olij Breeding offers eleven spray roses denominated the Sensation Series.

Offices in seventeen countries

Olij Roses has offices in seventeen countries. They represent Bot@nic Roses worldwide. And they represent Spek Rose breeding in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and other parts of Africa.

The worldwide sales operation is run by Mr. Philippe Veys (p.veys@olijrozen.nl). Local sales offices are run by local managers. The sales office in Kenya and East-Africa is run by Shirley-Ann McConnel, (sam@olijkenya.com). The Olij rozen office in Ethiopia is managed by Brook Tekle Wolde (info@olijethiopia.com).

In Kenya, Olij Roses has a nursery of about 9 ha under plastic out of which they export fresh cut roses daily under the marketing name of Only Roses. That farm has existed for 3 years. The main goal of the farm is to select new varieties under

the Kenyan circumstances and introduce them into the market. By doing this, Olij roses can obtain market information, which it shares with its clients.

Debre Zeit

After their experience in Kenya, Olij Roses decided about a year ago to start a nursery in Ethiopia as well. After studying the different possible locations Olij roses decided to start their farm in Debre Zeit on a 20 ha plot land at 1900 meters above sea level. Construction began in May 2006 with the digging of a 7000 m³ water reservoir and the building of two greenhouses of 2,5 ha each. Planting began in September 2006. The first production started in December and roses are now on display in the show house and the test house. Varieties planted commercially at this moment are 'El Toro', 'Only Yellow', 'Artic', 'Infrared' and 'Hypnose'.

Olij Roses has decided to expand their Ethiopian farm with 2 more greenhouses of 3.5 ha each. The leveling and construction for this

has been started.

The reason Olij started a second farm in Africa so near to Kenya was the Ethiopian climate. "By this Olij Roses means the climate as temperature, light...which is near to perfect for growing roses in Ethiopia but also the political climate which is doing a lot of efforts to get this business rolling, knowing that the international rose business is an extremely demanding business," says Philippe Veys.

"Obviously the rose-industry is still very young in Ethiopia and a lot of problems have been tackled so far, but a lot of challenges are still laying ahead."

Fresh product

"The main problems", according to Philippe Veys, "is still the availability of the supplying industry. To produce flowers there is need for a lot of inputs, which at this moment are difficult to find in Ethiopia. A lot of time of the management still goes into the organization of getting chemicals, fertilizers and boxes on the farm."



Another problem is still the freight out of the country and the handling of the product in Brussels. "A lot can still be done in this area to improve which is definitely extremely important for this 'fresh product'. Ethiopian growers can produce a very high quality product, which has a big demand on the market, but at this moment it is still quiet a challenge to bring this product correctly and on time into that market. But, Rome wasn't built in a day either and the whole business community, together with the government, will have to work on improving the Ethiopian floral export industry more."

Olij Roses is definitely showing their faith in this country by investing in their own nursery and to select varieties for the Ethiopian growers. "You are all welcome to visit Olij Roses on their booth during the Hortiflora Ethiopia 2007 and you are all welcome to visit Olij Roses on their farm during the open house on the 24th of March or any day by contacting Mr Brook on +251- 911-507229."



Achterweg 73
1424 PP De Kwakel
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info@olijrozen.nl
www.olijrozen.nl



Philippe Veys: "You are all welcome to visit Olij Roses on their booth during the Hortiflora Ethiopia 2007."



Brook Tekle Wolde will gladly show visitors around.



Kokebe: enthusiastic supervisor.

Ethiopian Netherlands Horticulture Partnership in full swing

Horticulture exports from Ethiopia are growing very rapidly and are an important element in the country's efforts to diversify exports and to contribute directly to economic development and poverty reduction. Also the sector enables a great number of people to acquire a wide variety of modern technical and managerial skills. All parties agree that joint efforts on a wide range of issues are needed to secure a further well balanced growth of the sector and increase the societal benefits in terms of employment and foreign exchange earnings and to minimize the possible negative impact on the natural resource base.

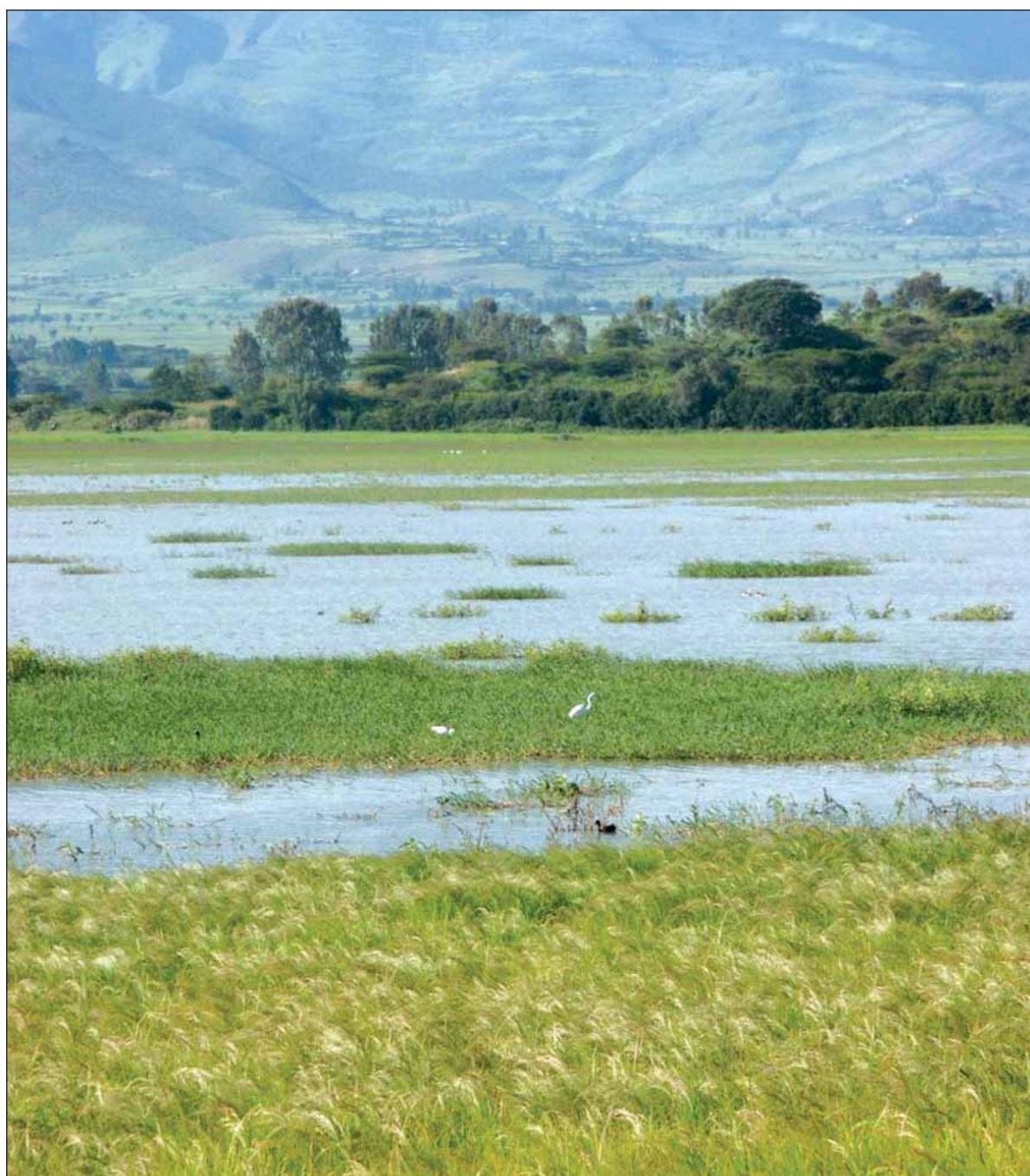
The Netherlands' Government has committed itself to contribute to strengthening the enabling environment of the horticulture sector in Ethiopia through a public-private partnership program. The major Ethiopian stakeholders in the horticultural sector agreed that that the partnership is to contribute to:

- A competitive, demand driven, self sustaining and innovative horticulture cluster well connected in international networks.
- Environmentally and socially friendly production.
- Human resource development and enlarging the positive spin-off on local, regional and national social development
- Enlarging the positive spin-off on the local, regional and national economic development.
- A strong international reputation of the Ethiopian Horticulture Cluster
- An institutional framework which enables the sector to meet (future) market demands and opportunities and to operate in a socially and environmentally friendly and broadly accepted manner.
- Strengthening the cooperation between Ethiopia and the Netherlands

In close collaboration with the private and public sector organisations with facilitation of Wageningen UR, a programme of activities in the partnership was drawn. Top priority was given to training, code of practice and Integrated Pest Management of which implementation has already started in. Hereafter some of the major activities and its results are described.

Practical training facility

The fast growing industry requires a growing supply of staff equipped with relevant and practical technical knowledge. All stakeholders in the sector acknowledge there is an urgent shortage of technical experienced staff at various levels: owners, managers, administrators, supervisors and attendants. Within Ethiopia currently no floriculture industry specific practical training programme exists. In this situation



Joint efforts are needed to minimize the possible negative impact on the natural resource base. Photograph: Alex Mulder

many commercial companies have to resort to in-house training for their staff individually on an ad-hoc basis. At the end of 2006 a taskforce formulated a strategic plan for the period 2007 - 2012 to establish sustainable, industry-led and practically oriented capacity building programmes which facilitate the floriculture sector development in Ethiopia. The plan consists of two core elements:

* Immediate start of short-term training programs on pest- en pesticide management and post harvest management and marketing.

* Development and implementation of an integrated long term training and research program for the horticulture sector (2007-2012). The aim of the long term program is to get into place industry oriented formal and informal training which is well connected to research and develop-

ment activities. Jimma University together with EHPEA Ministries of Trade and Industry and Agriculture and Rural Development have formulated a proposal which is presently being discussed with NUF-FIC (Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education). A well-experienced expatriate training coordinator has been appointed and will commence activities in March 2007.

Code of Practice for the floriculture sector

EHPEA together with the government have identified a national code of practice as a prerequisite for reinforcing the reputation of Ethiopian flowers on the international market. Also will the code serve as response to local concerns regarding environment and labour conditions in the fast growing flori-

culture industry. To obtain a good basis for this process two activities were implemented:

* an analysis of standards and labels in markets Ethiopian entrepreneurs are active or want to be active.

* a field survey of present practices together with a rapid environmental impact analysis.

With this background information workshops with growers were conducted in November 2006 en February 2007. In these workshops the design and content of the code is developed and discussed with Board of EHPEA. During the process representatives of Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Environmental Protection Authority participated in the discussions. At time of writing the final draft of the code is being prepared.

The Board of EHPEA is very much committed to reach as soon as possible agreement on the code with all parties concerned. Of course this will be followed by an intensive implementation program, in which the earlier mentioned training program will play an important role.

Capacity building phytosanitary unit

Jointly with the Crop Protection Department (CPD) in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD), EHPEA and Dutch experts, a review was done on the phytosanitary standards and systems in the export-oriented horticulture and on the approach and conformity of the pesticide registration system in Ethiopia in relation to international standards and regulations. On the basis of the findings and conclusions of the mission experts of both countries developed a plan of action that leads to the creation of phytosanitary services that facilitate and support the sustained growth and development of the export-oriented flower and vegetable sector in Ethiopia. To achieve this, the proposed activities will strengthen phytosanitary capacities and sector arrangements pertaining to (a) export inspection and certification systems, (b) phytosanitary monitoring and surveillance (including diagnostic support) and (c) pesticide registration and control services.

Integrated Pest Management

There is high commitment for introducing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in Ethiopian rose production. IPM can make production more environmentally friendly by reducing dependency on pesticides, and at the same time reduce the costs of production. To enable this a comprehensive research & development plan has been developed in close cooperation between the ministry of MoARD, the Ethiopian Agricultural Research Institute, EHPEA and Wageningen University and Research Centre. If formalities allow, trials will start on 4 farms with controlling two-spotted spider mites through the use of biological control agents. On the experience gained scaling up and widening of the research and development activities are planned. Other identified activities have just recently started such as the identification of competitive product-market combinations for fruits and vegetables; some are yet to be started such as support on relevant market information service and research on suitable locations for new floricultural production sites

For further information on the activities in the partnership programme contact:

EHPEA [ehpea@ethionet.et] or the Agricultural Counsellor at the Royal Netherlands Embassy [geert.westenberg@minbuza.nl]





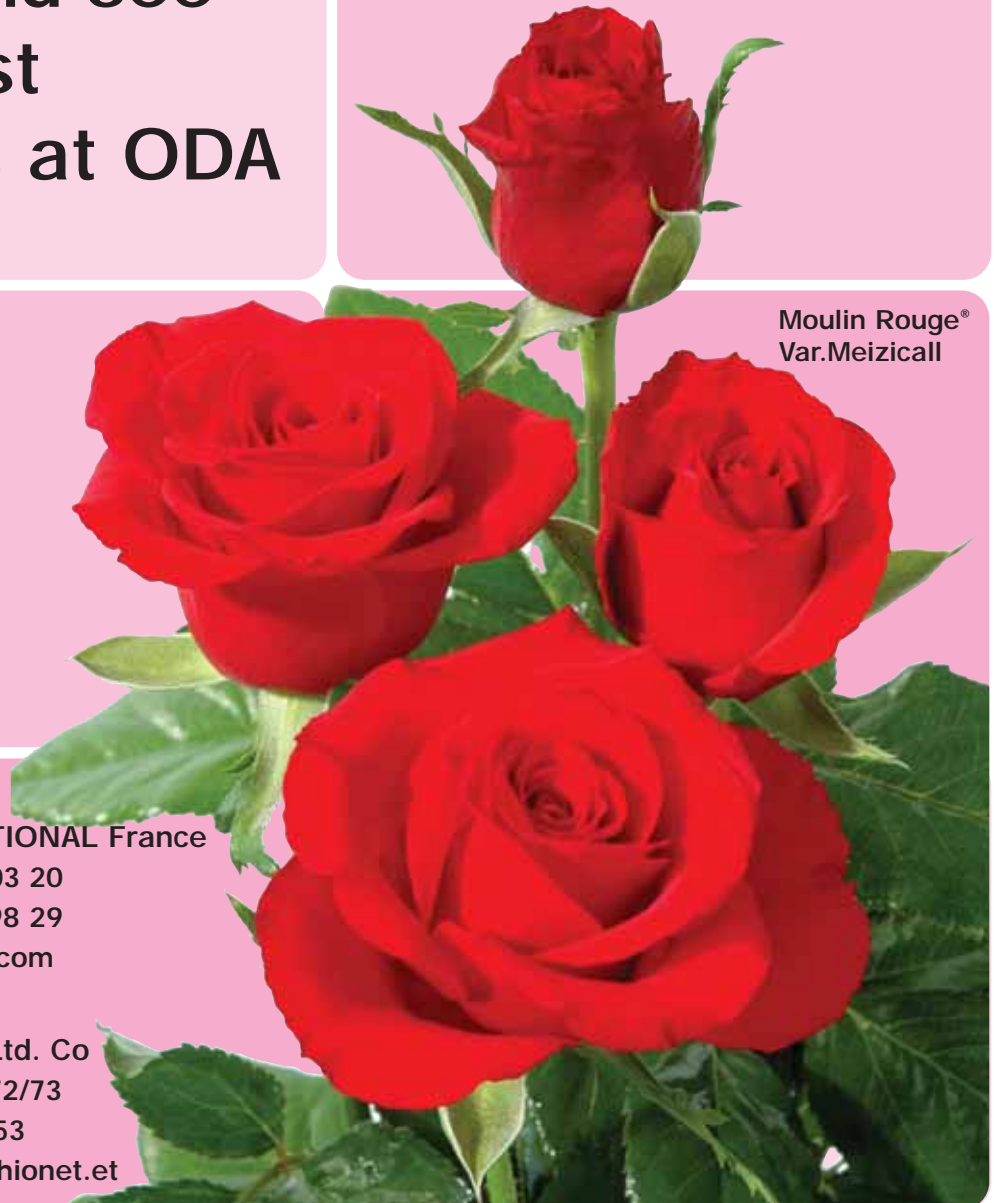
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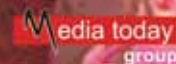


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Hortiflora Ethiopia 2007

The show format in Ethiopia this year is unique

The Ethiopian Horticulture and Floriculture industry is developing at a very fast pace. The country is expected to be one of the leading exporters of cut flowers and fresh produce within just three to five years according to Mr. Tsegaye Abebe, Chairman of EHPEA, the association that is organising HORTIFLORA EXPO 2007, in close cooperation with HPP Exhibitions. The event will take place from March 21 to 23 in the Addis Exhibition Center, Addis Abeba.

This is the second time such an event has been held. Expo 2005 was held in the United Nations Building and there was 1000 m² of exhibition space. But now in 2007 they had to move to the larger space in the downtown Addis Expo Center. The space has doubled in line with the great expansion in floriculture going on in Ethiopia. Not only is the show larger, but EHPEA has decided to make it a Biennial Trade Fair.

Ethiopia, in many ways, can be compared with the rapid development of the floriculture industry in Ecuador that also took off as a rocket in 1992. Although the circumstances are not exactly the same, there are many characteristics that look a like. To name a few: climate, altitude, landscape and proximity of international airport in relation to the location of the flower farms.

The show format in Ethiopia this year is unique. In Ethiopia the government has put horticulture, all of horticulture, not just flowers, as a very high priority. So in this Ethiopian exhibition they have also invited producers and exporters of oranges, grapes, avocados, green beans, apples, pears and peaches. Production of vegetables and fruits still takes place on a modest scale in Ethiopia, but is expected to take off soon.



Hortiflora Ethiopia in 2005.

The objective of the trade fair is to introduce the growers to the buyers and the buyers to the growers. The HORTIFLORA EXPO 2007 will not only serve as a platform for exhibiting suppliers that want to meet Ethiopian (based) growers, but as well for exhibiting growers who want to meet visiting international buyers.

For this reason farm tours will be

organised as well during the exhibition.

One hundred exhibitors are expected at HORTIFLORA EXPO 2007 this year, about one third Ethiopian, two thirds from other countries of which one third Dutch.

International exhibitors will be coming, amongst others, from Israel, Kenya, South Africa, France, Holland, Germany and Belgium

with suppliers from Italy and Spain as well. Visitors to HORTIFLORA EXPO 2007 are expected to be 80-90% Ethiopian businessmen, but there will also be industry related attendance from Kenya and other East African nations. It will be a window on to production of these products around the world, because there will be many foreign companies involved.

For those who did not participate in HORTIFLORA EXPO 2007, but would like to do so for the next show contact www.hppexhibitions.com. If you need any personal assistance or if you have any questions or remarks please contact Melvin Brehler at melvin@hpp.nl or call +31-20-6622482. For further information go to the HPP internet site, www.hpp.nl.

Events during Hortiflora

Wednesday 21 March

Workshop: "How to ensure top quality flowers for your clients?" Post harvest management and cool chain management. Presented by **Jeroen van der Hulst** of FlowerWatch and **Marcel Orie** of VBA.

Time: 11.00-12.30 hrs.

Location: cinema on the exhibition ground.

Organized by the Agricultural Office of the Royal Netherlands Embassy.

Thursday March 22

Seminar "Future market for flowers, fruits & vegetables". The seminar will be opened by his Excellency Minister Girma Biru. **Sandra Könings**, international trend watcher and marketer will give a presentation.

Time: 14.00 - 16.30 hrs.

Location: cinema on the exhibition ground.

The seminar is organized by the Ethiopian Netherlands Horticulture Partnership.

Friday March 23

Workshop "MPS as marketing and management tool". Presented by **Piet van 't Hoff** of MPS. Workshop "More and better flowers through intelligent fertigation". Presented by **Ewoud Schurink** of Horticoop.

Time 11.00-12.30 hrs.

Location: cinema on the exhibition ground. Organized by the Agricultural Office of the Royal Netherlands Embassy.

FUN FACTS ABOUT THE NETHERLANDS

Did you know that.....

- "the Netherlands" and "Holland" are used to describe the same country?
- one quarter of the Netherlands is below sea level?
- the International Court of Justice is at the Peace Palace in The Hague?
- the Netherlands has approximately 480 inhabitants per square kilometre?
- with only 0.008% of the world's area, the Netherlands is the world's third largest agricultural exporter?

- the Netherlands was one of the European Union's founding nations?
- the Netherlands has at least 15,000 km of cycle tracks?
- Dutch is also spoken in Belgium, northern France, Suriname, the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba?
- the Netherlands still has about 1,000 traditional working windmills?
- the Dutch are the tallest people in Europe?
- Amsterdam is entirely built on piles?
- the Netherlands always has a coa-

- lition government, which makes it a country of compromises?
- the Netherlands has nearly 1,000 museums, with 42 in Amsterdam alone?
- when your plane arrives at Schiphol, it lands 4.5 metres below sea level?
- the Netherlands has the highest cable density in Europe?
- Amsterdam has 1,281 bridges?
- when Dutch schoolchildren pass their exams, they hang a Dutch flag and a school bag outside their homes?

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Holland Hortinews is a special edition of Bloemenkrant on the occasion of Hortiflora Ethiopia. Bloemenkrant is a weekly newspaper. No portion of editorial may be reproduced in any form without written permission of the publisher. Publisher is not liable for advertisements using illegally obtained images. ©Copyright 2007. All rights reserved.



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