

Release of three improved varieties for the expanded potato market in Kenya

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Abstract

Current potato varieties have not fully met the market demands of the rapidly expanding Kenyan potato industry. Newer varieties with tolerance to the major diseases, higher yields, better storability and processing qualities are therefore required. Through a collaborative research, six promising late blight tolerant clones initially from the International Potato Centre (CIP) were evaluated in National Performance Trials (NPT) in six potato growing regions. Three clones namely: 393385.39, 393371.58 and 391691.96 were released by the National Variety Release Committee (NVRC) under the respective names of Sherekea, Kenya Mpya and Purple Gold. Sherekea had high yields (40-50T/ha), high tolerance to late blight and to major viruses, attractive red skin color, good storability, good cooking and processing qualities. Kenya Mpya had high yields (35-45 T/ha), high resistance to late blight, good chipping and mashing quality, short dormancy (75-90 days), early tuber bulking and early physiological maturity (90-105 days). Purple Gold had moderate to high yields, excellent crisping and good chipping, Table, cooking and mashing qualities, long dormancy and very good storability. The new varieties are expected to respond to various demands of the potato industry while increasing the varietal options available to the farmers.