

The Procurement Problems of the
Passion Fruit Industry of Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The underlying causes of procurement problems of the passion fruit industry are investigated.

The background of passion fruit production and marketing is examined, including the history of the Kenyan industry.

The review of literature indicates that only limited studies of the economic aspects of passion fruit production in general have been published and studies specifically on the Kenyan industry are very rare. Reports by Lippmann, on Kenyan cultivation, contain important experimental information which is particularly relevant to the industry's production, marketing and procurement problems. The study objectives included finding out why Kenyan farmers have not grown the quantities of fruit for which the Thika processing plant, established in 1971 with a fresh fruit capacity of 14,000 tons per annum, was designed; how farmers could be persuaded to grow more fruit; to identify and examine production constraints; and, lastly, to offer some solutions to these problems.

The production and marketing system of passion fruit processed by the Kenya Fruit Processors Ltd. (K.F.P.) is studied. ~~The~~ services provided by the K.F.P., the area under cultivation and the number of farmers registered with the K.F.P., are also discussed.

In order to achieve the objectives, a combination field and desk research study was designed. Using non-random sampling, personal questionnaire interviews were conducted among 100 farmers: 60 Passion Fruit Growers, 20 Former Passion Fruit Growers and 20 Coffee Producers.

The most common complaint of growers was found to be the low ex-farm price.

The profitability of growing passion fruit is analysed, present average net returns are calculated, and the estimated average net returns - if Lippmann's recommendations are adopted - are given.

Producers regard Brown Spot Disease as the major problem in passion fruit cultivation, followed by the lack of posts required for trellising the vines.

The profitability of growing passion fruit compared to the alternatives of coffee and pyrethrum is analysed.

The main conclusions include:

1. closer contact between H.C.D.A./K.F.P. field staff and growers should be developed,
2. a growers' association should be seriously considered,
3. an intensive education programme should be undertaken to teach farmers the most efficient husbandry methods,
4. the Kenyan Government should give a higher priority to the development of research on passion fruit production and marketing.

and

5. the possibilities for the Kenyan Government and its passion fruit producers on the one hand, and Governments and producers of countries like Brazil on the other hand, to work closely, should be investigated.