

Introducing a New Tomato Variety: The Tanya Story in Hai, Tanzania

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The Tomato Challenge

A problem with tomato production is that tomatoes are a perishable crop. In Hai the variety Maglobe is mainly grown. This variety has a short shelf life and is not demanded by the domestic consumers and tomato sauce processor. For this variety farmers receive low prices in the local and distant markets in Dar es Salaam, Tanga and Mombasa in Kenya.

Finding the Right Variety

Faida MaLi in collaboration with farmers and District staff conducted the research in 2005. The research was carried out at Dar es Salaam and Tanga area and during that research farmers were able to get orders for Tanya variety. Due to that buyers from Tanga came into the Mudio village to buy from the farmers.

Following the Business platform meeting of key players held on June 2005, the Tanya variety of tomato was found to be highly demanded by both local consumers and processors. The variety has a long shelf life compared to other varieties which means that it can be transported up to the far markets beyond the borders. The transport is also more cost effective because of the small size and less waste with the Tanya variety than with the larger and more perishable Maglobe variety.

A Field Demonstration

In March to June 2006, the Tanya variety was introduced on a demonstration plot with five farmer groups in Mudio Village; 500 grams of seeds were distributed to the farmers to be planted in 5 acres. These seeds were bought from Tengeru Horticulture Research Institute.

As the demand for this variety was seen to be high, it was agreed that the issue should be introduced to the farmers' quarterly feedback meeting. Quarterly feed back meetings are attended by forty farmer group representatives, District focal person and Faida MaLi. Following that introduction more farmers showed willingness of growing the variety

and they asked for the seeds so that they can prepare a nursery ready for sowing in January and transplant on early February to early March. At this meeting the extension officer trained farmers on the cultivation and agronomic practices of the new variety. The seeds and other advice was provided by staff from the Tengeru Horticulture Research Institute.



Hai Core Group Offices

Higher Prices and Profits

Prices for tomatoes vary with the season. From June to December there are lots of tomatoes so the price falls. From January to May there is a higher price. Whereas the Maglobe tomato price varies between 1,000/- to 6,000/- Tsh per crate the Tanya variety varies between 2,000/- and 20,000/- Tsh per crate. Usually one crate of tomato has the weight of 40 to 50 kg depending on the size and weight of the tomato. Since the Tanya variety in Mudio village was grown for demonstration only there was no prior agreement on the price with the buyer. However, farmers managed to sell three hundred crates for the price of 3,500/- Tsh per crate. They sold at that price because they started harvesting in July to August 2006 where the price was not very high. Still 3,500/- per crate was twice as much as the 1,500/-Tsh being offered for the Maglobe variety. They actually produced 332 crates from the five acres but they kept thirty two crates for home consumption among themselves. Therefore, the gross income generated for that growing season was 1,050,000/- Tsh. The costs incurred in sowing to harvesting is 486,500/- Tsh so they made a profit of just over half a million shillings.

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¹ Story based on interview with Clarence Chitemi, Eva Mallya and Matilda Foy by Anne Dennig in August 2006