



COMBATTING POTATO CYST NEMATODE (PCN) IN KENYA

Mainly grown in the highlands of Kenya, potatoes are an important staple food and cash crop and play a significant role in national food security, nutrition, poverty alleviation and income generation. In 2015, Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) was first detected and confirmed in Kenya, posing a serious threat to potato farmers, most of whom are smallholders in rural areas. If uncontrolled, PCN can lie dormant in soil for 20 years and cause up to an 80 percent reduction in Kenya's potato yield. Therefore, the Government requested emergency assistance from FAO to take immediate measures to identify and halt further spread of the pest, as well as to develop a long-term management and control strategy.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project strengthened capacities of technicians from government research institutes, extension service workers and universities in field sampling, extraction and identification techniques. Soil samples from 20 affected counties were collected and analysed, and a PCN distribution map and severity indices were created. Training, awareness building and education materials were designed and distributed to seed producers and potato farmers, and, through mass media, public awareness and education programmes reached more than 7 000 farmers directly, and over 200 000 indirectly. Infected farms and plots were sanitized and PCN-free seed and resistant seed potato varieties were distributed.

IMPACT

Enhanced potato productivity will contribute to improving livelihoods and generating income for smallholder farmers across the value chain. Training of stakeholders in PCN management and control methods, and enhanced knowledge and skills of potato producers, will help halt further spread of the pest within and outside Kenya's borders. The survey and results of the project helped the Government develop a comprehensive, long-term strategy for the management and control of PCN and will further contribute to finding a sustainable solution to combatting PCN.

KEY FACTS

Contribution

USD425 000

Duration

June 2016 – May 2017

Resource Partners

FAO

Partners

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MoALF)

Beneficiaries

Potato farming households; potato producer associations; seed producers and potato agro-industries; agricultural and technical staff from government institutions and universities; public and private extension service providers; local businesses

ACTIVITIES

- Institutional capacities strengthened for soil sampling, extraction and PCN identification.
- Field survey implemented in 20 counties, samples analysed and PCN distribution maps created.
- National PCN management strategy developed.
- Support for sanitation of infected farms and seed plots provided and PCN-free seed and pest-resistant varieties distributed.
- Training, awareness building and education materials on PCN control and management designed, developed and distributed.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Project Code
TCP/KEN/3602

Project Title
Emergency assistance for the control of Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN)

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