Regional tea exports marginally increase despite bad weather



Workers pick tea at a farm. Results from the Mombasa Tea Auction indicate that East Africa has recorded a marginal improvement in tea exports. FILE PHOTO

Tea growing in the region is being supported by the improving volume of exports as seen at the Mombasa Tea auction. **Dorothy Nakaweesi** writes.

Uganda and Rwanda registered highest sales at the latest Mombasa Tea auction held at the beginning of the year despite distressing weather problems.

The auction which was carried out on January 3 to 4, this year, saw a total of six countries offer tea from the usual nine members.

Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and DR Congo participated in the auction while Malawi, Madagascar and Mozambique did not take part.

According to the report from the East African Tea Export Auctions, a total of 8.5 million kilogramme bags were sold up from 8.2 million kilogramme bags sold the previous year.

"The regional countries realised a 2.7 per cent increase in the commodity sold from what was exported the previous year," the report stated, in part.

Country performance

The report further shows that Rwanda recorded the biggest sale in the region with 26.2 per cent to 420,000 kilogramme bags sold up from 310,000 kilogramme bags sold the previous year.

In the same period Uganda exported a total of one million kilogramme bags up from 993,000 kilogrammes sold the same period last year, indicating a 9.1 per cent increase.

Burundi recorded a 2 per cent increase to 156,000 kilogramme bags up from 152,000 bags sold the previous year.

Kenya, the market leader, registered a slight increase of 0.9 per cent to 6.79 million kilogrammes up from 6.73 million kilogramme bags exported previously.

In the region Tanzania was the only country which recorded 18 per cent drop in sales when it exported 67,000 kilogramme bags down from 79,000 kilogramme bags sold the same period last year.

Despite the increase in the tea exports, there was a decline in the product offered at the auction. The region players offered 9.4 million kilogramme bags down from 9.7 million kilogramme bags offered the same time last year.

Reaction

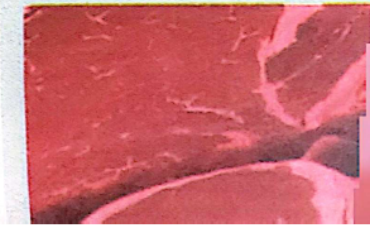
In an interview with *Prosper Magazine* about the product performance, the executive secretary Uganda Tea Association, Mr George William Ssekitooleko, said the weather distressed the crop in the region which is the reason why some countries did not participate in the auction.

"The other reason for this performance could be related to farmers not putting in much effort because of the low prices at the global market," he revealed.

AVERAGE COMMODITY PRICES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

WEEKLY MARKET REPORT, JANUARY 13

Item (kg/tin)	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western
Agwedde Beans	3,000	2,600	1,700	-
Apple Bananas	1,850	2,250	1,900	3,000
Beef	9,200	8,900	10,000	9,000
Cassava Flour	1,500	1,500	1,900	1,000
Cassava Fresh	1,500	1,550	900	2,000
Cavendish (Bogoya)	3,400	2,900	3,150	3,000
Coffee (Arabica)	2,250	6,000	-	-
Cow Peas	4,500	3,650	2,200	4,500
Exotic Chicken	12,500	11,900	10,800	15,000
Exotic Eggs	9,550	9,700	11,800	9,000
Goat Meat	11,050	10,300	10,100	10,000
Groundnuts	4,450	4,050	3,600	4,000
Irish Potatoes	1,500	1,350	2,000	2,000
Kayiso Rice	2,850	2,650	2,650	3,500
Local Chicken	18,900	14,050	19,000	15,150
Local Eggs	17,700	13,000	12,400	15,000
Maize Flour	2,100	1,950	2,000	1,200
Maize Grain	1,200	1,050	1,050	1,000
Matooke (bunch)	22,450	23,500	17,400	15,000
Milk	1,350	1,450	1,300	1,000
Millet Flour	2,850	2,650	2,100	3,000
Millet Grain	2,050	1,950	1,800	2,000
Nambale Beans	2,650	2,700	2,200	2,500
Nile Perch	12,250	11,100	10,600	12,000
Orange S. Potatoes	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Pineapple	2,750	2,550	2,900	2,500
Pork	9,500	9,000	-	9,000
Processed Honey	11,850	11,850	11,850	11,850
Red Irish Potatoes	1,500	1,350	1,450	
Simsim	5,000	4,700	3,650	
Sorghum Flour	2,500	1,800	1,450	2,0
Sorghum Grain	1,900	1,050	1,000	1,0
Soya Beans	2,800	2,050	1,800	3,0
Sun Dried Cassava	1,200	900	1,100	
Sunflower	1,600	1,650	1,100	
Super Rice	3,500	3,200	3,200	3
Tilapia	7,000	11,000	14,900	
Turkey	82,500	44,100	-	
Unprocessed Honey	-	7,000	6,000	
Upland Rice	3,000	2,650	2,700	
White S. Potatoes	1,200	1,600	1,000	
Yellow Beans	3,000	3,150	2,550	



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