

EAC tea exports record 16% rise - auction report



Farmers pick tea leaves. Uganda sold 1.1 million kilogramme bags up from 960,000 kilogramme bags exported in May last year. FILE PHOTO

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East African countries have recorded an increase in both tea production and export volumes, the latest auction report has indicated.

Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania all registered a 16 per cent increase in exports at the Mombasa auction held on May 28 and 29, a performance experts attributed to the rains the region has been experiencing.

According to the report from the East African Tea Export Auctions, more than 9.6 million kilogramme bags of tea were sold up from 8 million bags sold around the same time last year.

The five East African member states plus Mozambique participated in the auction out of the 10 countries on the auction list.

The other countries on the list but did not trade include; Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Madagascar, Ethiopia,

Response

In an interview with *Prosper Magazine* about this performance, the chief executive officer Uganda Tea Development Agency- a conglomeration of three-factories (Kayonza, Buhweju and Igara), Mr Ignatius Byarugaba attributed the increase in volume to the government's free seedling distribution strategy.

"We have seen many people grow tea and this is one of the reasons the volume in Uganda has increased," he said.

He said UTDA is moving into direct

exports to markets such as Pakistan and United Kingdom.

"We also have direct exports prospects in Russia, Iran and Egypt which are some of the biggest buyers of tea," Mr Byarugaba said.

Uganda Tea Association (UTA) executive secretary George William Sseki-tooleko said rains have facilitated the

TEA IN NUMBERS

VALUE OF EXPORTS

2018 **Shs1.1 million**

UGANDA'S EXPORTS

12%

PERCENTAGE RISE IN UGANDA'S TEA EXPORTS

crop yield in the region.

Performance

The auction report further shows that Kenya exported 7.3 million kilogramme bags, more than the 6.2 million it exported the same time last year. This indicated a 15 per cent increase in exports.

Uganda, the region's second largest exporter, sold 1.1 million kilogramme bags up from 960,000 kilogramme bags exported in May last year. This indicated a 12 per cent growth.

Rwanda which followed respectively sold 480,000 kilogramme bags up from 466,000 kilogramme bags exported the same time last year.

In the region, Tanzania exported 340,000 kilogramme bags, up from 151,000 kilogramme bags it exported the same time last year.

This indicated a 55 per cent increase - the highest at the auction.

Burundi exported a total of 239,000 kilogramme bags up from 186,000 bags sold the same time last year.

However, Mozambique - the only country outside East Africa that exported, experienced a decline of 34 per cent.

A total of 25,772 kilogramme bags up from 8,408 kilogramme bags indicating a 67 per cent increase.

OUT

Indirect exports. On average, Uganda exports about 60,000 tonnes indirectly through Mombasa auction as Kenyan tea through 27 exporting companies.

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