

# Apple Farmers in Kenya Collaborate to Expand the Pie in the Global Export Market



By Wangari Kabiru on Oct 10, 2022

**Wangari Kabiru reports on the inauguration of KAGEA, a collaboration aimed at increasing Kenya's production capacity, export markets, farmer incomes, and job possibilities through high-quality apple cultivation and trade facilitation.**

An apple a day keeps the doctor away, so the saying goes. While many people throughout the world know this wise phrase by heart, they may be unaware of the health benefits associated with this widely sought-after crisp fruit, including its high levels of antioxidants. The apple fruit's secret is dietary and nutritional value, medicinal value, and culinary value. To farmers, apple cultivation provides the opportunity for agricultural diversification as well as additional income.

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"Apple Fruit Day" on October 14th***

Kenya will celebrate its first *"Apple Fruit Day"* on October 14th, a day that hundreds of Kenyan apple farmers from throughout the country are looking forward to. The growers will congregate at Nairobi's Ole Sereni Hotel for the **Kenya Apple Growers and Exporters Association's (KAGEA)** auspicious inauguration event. KAGEA has attracted and become the home to thousands of Kenyan farmers and apple growers since its inception.

The launch of the association may come as a pleasant surprise to many Kenyans who are accustomed to satisfying the growing appetite for the now popular apple and other golden fruits with imports. Apple orchards are thriving over the country, including the locally adapted Wambugu apple. Growth would ensure a regular supply of high-quality, reasonably priced fruit for Kenyan consumers, resulting in more apple pies and cakes, apple juice, and luscious apples on Kenyan breakfast tables in homes, offices, restaurants, and hotels!

Through industry leadership and commercial advancement, the Kenya Apple Growers and Exporters Association (KAGEA) aspires to create a better future for Apple and golden Fruit growers. Members of the association benefit from informational resources, association meetings, and continuing education. The UN Comtrade database which aggregates trade statistics globally reports that in 2021, Kenya exported to the world 218,205 kg of fresh apples with a trade value of US\$ 170,197 and 564 kg of dried apples valued at US\$ 7,132. KAGEA should be able to collect and communicate real-time demand and supply facts throughout the value chain.



An apple tree (mtofaa in Swahili) with apple fruits ready for harvest at an apple orchard. (Credit: kagea.co.ke)

***“AfCTA is a highly ambitious trade agreement to create one  
African market - 1.3 billion people***

KAGEA, as an African champion, has already welcomed member apple farmers from four African countries: Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, and Zambia, demonstrating the founders' leadership. With this trajectory, KAGEA will make a valuable contribution to the African Union Agenda 2063: *The Africa We Want* and one of the African Union's thirteen flagship projects, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a highly ambitious trade agreement to create one African market with a population of about 1.3 billion people and a combined GDP of about US\$ 3.4 trillion. The objective of AfCFTA is to boost intra-African trade, particularly trade in value-added production and trade across all sectors of Africa's economy. The AfCFTA has the potential to raise 30 million people out of extreme poverty, while also providing higher-paying, higher-quality jobs, with women benefiting the most.

***“Apples were the only fruit available in all five forms: fresh, canned, frozen, dried, and juice in the United States***

Let us take a peek at the commercially advanced farmers and marketplaces—China, the United States, India, Italy, Turkey, and France—that produce apples as a commercial export commodity. Homegrown apples are also available in African countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. The apple fruit tops the U.S fruit choice. According to the USDA ERS Food Availability (Per Capita) Data System 2021, people in the United States consumed an average of 12.6 pounds (equivalent to 1.4 gallons) of apple juice, roughly 10 pounds of fresh apples, and a total of 3.3 pounds of canned, dried, and frozen apples in 2019. Among the top seven consumed fruits in 2019, apples were the only fruit available in all five forms: fresh, canned, frozen, dried, and juice.

Towards the launch event, KAGEA has attracted a diverse range of support organisations with an interest in or offering services across the value chain, including government agencies, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), financial institutions, seed producers, logistics firms, and advisory firms, among others. Partnerships focused on academia, research and training; standards and policy development; agri-business, marketing and financing; indigenous knowledge and climate smart agriculture; youth and gender; farm, distribution, and market losses reduction 'farm to fork'; nutrition and wellness; value-addition, innovation and digital footprint; and engagement with county government champions will be critical to improving local capacity and know-how, assuring on profitability, sustainability and impact, and ensuring the initiative's long-term viability.

***“Our vision is to become a global leader in providing  
world-class services to Apple farmers*”**

The collaboration to expand Kenya's share of the pie in the global apple market is timely for apple growers, beneficial to Kenyan exports, and a game changer in Africa. KAGEA must be forward-thinking as it stretches its wings while promoting the interests of its members by investing in capacity building, data, strategic networking, and ESG principles. The national government will be a resourceful strategic partner and crucial ally across the ministries and departments concerned; agriculture, trade, MSMEs, cooperatives, finance, environment, forestry, water, energy, transport, health, tourism, foreign affairs, regional development, national administration, security, ICT, and education. The association's work is cut out by its ambitious objective of providing world-class services to Kenya's apple growers and exporters through market and information facilitation, as well as establishing Kenya on the international map as a high-quality apple-growing region in Africa and the world. As we congratulate the Kenya Apple Growers and Exporters Association (KAGEA) on its inauguration, we add, ***"to whom much is given, much will be required."*** Eat an apple today!



*Wangari Kabiru is an Innovations Specialist in the burgeoning Small Business and Startup Economy. Wangari enjoys Game Design Thinking, promotes collaborative practices, and writes about society. (wkmwriter(@)gmail.com). This post was created for the **Kenya Apple Growers and Exporters Association (KAGEA)**; for*

*further information, go to <https://kagea.co.ke/>.*

*Main picture credit: [kagea.co.ke](https://kagea.co.ke/)*

**Kenya Apple Growers; KAGEA; Agriculture; Farming; Export Trade; Value Addition.**