



KENYA PLANT HEALTH INSPECTORATE SERVICE (KEPHIS) **NEWSLETTER**

MARCH - 2026



KEPHIS Acquires Office
Space in Eldoret
Agricultural
Mechanization Services

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Kenya and the
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Strengthen
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KEPHIS and ADOPT A
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KEPHIS Shines with
Multiple Awards at Embu
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Message from the Managing Director



Dear Stakeholders,


The month of March marks the close of the third quarter of the financial year, reflecting a deliberate and coordinated effort by the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) to advance its mandate through strategic partnerships, regulatory interventions and stakeholder engagement across the agricultural value chain.

A key highlight during the period was the deepening of collaboration with county governments, particularly the engagement with Kitui County, which focused on addressing counterfeit seeds, enhancing phytosanitary compliance and expanding farmer access to quality planting materials.

In parallel, KEPHIS continued to position itself as a central player in facilitating safe trade and safeguarding market access. This was demonstrated through multi-stakeholder coordination in preparation for the upcoming EU audit, as well as bilateral engagements with international partners aimed at strengthening phytosanitary systems and export compliance.

The Service also sustained its focus on building resilient agricultural systems through targeted stakeholder engagements. From farmer training on pest and disease management to forums supporting market access for key value chains such as horticulture and miraa, these interventions





are geared towards enhancing compliance, productivity, and competitiveness.

Notably, KEPHIS enhanced its visibility and outreach through participation in national platforms. Recognition at the ASK Eldoret Show and Embu ASK Show reflects the institution's growing influence in agricultural innovation, regulatory excellence and stakeholder engagement.

As we conclude the quarter, I wish to acknowledge the continued guidance and support of the Board of Directors, as well as commend staff across all regions and functions for their dedication and commitment in delivering on the KEPHIS mandate.

These collective efforts underscore KEPHIS' commitment to supporting farmers, protecting plant health and facilitating safe and sustainable trade.

As a Service, we remain focused on strengthening partnerships, enhancing compliance systems and protecting Kenya's agriculture for increased productivity and global competitiveness.

Prof. Theophilus Mutui, PhD.

Managing Director,
Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service
(KEPHIS)

The Editor's Note



Dear Readers,

Welcome to this edition, highlighting key engagements and milestones that reflect KEPHIS' continued efforts in strengthening regulatory frameworks, enhancing stakeholder engagement and supporting agricultural productivity and safe trade.

This issue brings together activities across counties, stakeholder forums, international engagements, and exhibitions, each demonstrating a coordinated approach to improving compliance, building partnerships and supporting stakeholders across the value chain.

A notable feature in this edition is the Departmental Spotlight, focusing on the KEPHIS JKIA office. The spotlight offers a

glimpse into the scale and complexity of operations at this strategic point and its role in safeguarding plant health and enhancing safe trade.

As always, this newsletter seeks to enhance awareness of KEPHIS' role and impact while strengthening engagement with stakeholders across the sector.

Remember to follow us on our social media platforms for daily updates on activities across the Service.

Happy reading!

Kellen Karuti

Deputy Director, Corporate Communications

Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS)



KEPHIS DEEPENS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH KITUI COUNTY TO ADVANCE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND SAFE TRADE.



A strengthened commitment to enhancing agricultural systems and safeguarding farmer livelihoods is taking shape in Kitui County, following a high-level engagement between national and county leadership.

On 18th March 2026, Prof. Theophilus Mutui, Managing Director of Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service, paid a courtesy call to Kitui County Governor Hon. Dr. Julius Malombe. The visit, accompanied by a section of members of KEPHIS management and staff, provided an opportunity to reaffirm a shared commitment to enhancing agricultural productivity, strengthening regulatory frameworks, and supporting farmers across the county.



*Dr. Julius Makau Malombe.
Governor of Kitui County*



Deliberations focused on deepening collaboration in addressing the challenge of counterfeit and substandard seeds, while promoting adherence to phytosanitary standards and the adoption of good agricultural practices. These efforts are critical to ensuring quality assurance, protecting plant health, and facilitating safe and sustainable agricultural trade.

Governor Malombe welcomed the continued engagement with KEPHIS, acknowledging its important role in advancing agricultural standards and farmer protection. In support of this partnership, the County Government committed 10 acres of land in Kanyonyo for the establishment of demonstration farms, as well as 1.5 acres at the Kenya Water Institute for office and laboratory development. A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is

expected to anchor this collaboration and guide its implementation.

As part of ongoing support to farming communities, KEPHIS distributed over 10,000 sweet potato vines and cassava cuttings, alongside more than 45,000 tree seedlings, including macadamia, avocado, and grevillea varieties. The distribution targeted farmers in Mutonguni, Matinyani, and Nzunguni–Kyangwithya East, contributing to both household resilience and long-term agricultural sustainability.

Through this partnership, KEPHIS and the Kitui County Government continue to advance a shared vision of climate-smart agriculture, improved productivity, and enhanced livelihoods underscoring the value of coordinated efforts in building a resilient agricultural sector.

KEPHIS AT ASK ELDORET SHOW



H.E. Governor Dr. Jonathan Chelilim Bii (R) awards trophies to KEPHIS MD, Prof. Theophilus Mutui, PHD (C), accompanied by Dr. Thomas Kosiom (L).

Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) emerged among the top exhibitors at the Agricultural Society of Kenya Eldoret National Show, held from 4th to 8th March, 2026 at the Eldoret showgrounds. The institution earned notable recognition by winning two prestigious trophies for **Best Regulatory Stand** and **Best Innovation & Invention Stand**.

The awards were officially presented by the Chief Guest, H.E. Governor Dr. Jonathan Chelilim Bii of Uasin Gishu County and received on behalf of the institution by the Managing Director, Prof. Theophilus Mutui, who was accompanied by Ag. Deputy Director, Kitale, Dr. Thomas Kosiom, emphasizing the strong collaboration between KEPHIS and stakeholders in advancing agricultural development.

The exhibition showcased KEPHIS' critical role in ensuring the quality of agricultural inputs, strengthening pest and disease control systems and supporting stakeholders through scientific and regulatory solutions. During a guided tour to the KEPHIS exhibition stand, the Governor was taken through the organization's core mandate. This includes safeguarding plant health, facilitating safe agricultural trade and promoting innovation in phytosanitary services.

These achievements highlights KEPHIS' commitment to excellence in regulatory services, innovation in agricultural systems and efficiency in service delivery. They further reinforce the institutions central role in safeguarding Kenya's agriculture, enhancing food security and supporting safe agricultural trade.



KEPHIS Managing Director, Prof. Theophilus M. Mutui, PHD, pose for a group photo with members of staff during the show.



H.E Governor, Dr. Jonathan Chelilim Bii is taken through a model of KEPHIS offices by the Director Corporate Services, Madam Nancy Ndumia.

KEPHIS ACQUIRES OFFICE SPACE IN ELDORET AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION SERVICES



KEPHIS Managing Director Prof. Theophilus M. Mutui at the new office in Eldoret

In a significant boost to agricultural transformation, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service has secured a major milestone in Eldoret thanks to the forward-looking leadership of the County Government of Uasin Gishu. What started as a shared vision to strengthen agriculture has now taken shape. The County Government has allocated office space for KEPHIS in Eldoret, bringing essential regulatory and technical services closer to farmers, exporters, and agribusinesses in the region. But that's not all.

In a bold move to support research and innovation, KEPHIS has also been granted land at the Agricultural Mechanization Services (AMS) site, strategically located near the University of Eldoret. This space will host National Performance Trials (NPTs)

a critical process in testing and approving new crop varieties that will shape the future of farming in the region and Kenya.

This development is more than just infrastructure, it's an investment in food security, farmer empowerment, and scientific advancement. With a stronger presence in Eldoret, KEPHIS is set to enhance service delivery, speed up innovation, and ensure that farmers access high-quality, certified seeds and solutions tailored to their needs.

As the partnership between KEPHIS and Uasin Gishu County continues to grow, one thing is clear: the future of agriculture in this region is not just being discussed it is being built.



KEPHIS Managing Director, Prof. Theophilus M. Mutui (L) at the new office accompanied by Ag. Deputy Director Kitale, Dr. Thomas Kosiom (c) and a member of staff.

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KEPHIS TRAINING ON RISK MANAGEMENT



KEPHIS MD Prof. Theophilus Mutui, Ag. Director Laboratory Service Dr. Florence Munguti, KEPHIS Laboratory team and KENAS team pose for a group photo during the Risk Management Training

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Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) held a three-day training on Risk Management based on ISO/IEC 17025 at its headquarters from 2nd to 4th March 2026. The training was facilitated by expert trainers from Kenya Accreditation Service (KENAS) and had participants representing the various KEPHIS laboratories. The training aimed at strengthening laboratory capacity in risk identification, mitigation, and quality management to ensure accuracy, reliability, and international compliance of test results.

The training focus was on deepening understanding and practical application of risk management principles as required under ISO/IEC 17025. With increasing expectations for technical competence and result reliability, laboratories are required to systematically identify, assess, and mitigate risks that may affect the validity of results.



KEPHIS MD Prof. Theophilus Mutui gives his opening remarks during the training.

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In his opening remarks, Managing Director Prof. Theophilus M. Mutui reaffirmed KEPHIS' commitment to maintaining globally recognized standards in support of safe trade, food safety, and plant health. For KEPHIS, whose mandate includes safeguarding Kenya's agriculture and facilitating safe trade, laboratory credibility remains critical to national food security, phytosanitary certification, pest diagnostics, seed testing, and food safety compliance. Effective risk management ensures that KEPHIS laboratories continue to deliver reliable and internationally credible results that safeguard Kenya's agriculture and trade.



STAKEHOLDER VALIDATION OF DIGITAL CROP VARIETY PLATFORM



On 19th March 2026, The Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service - KEPHIS, in partnership with Agri Experience, the Centre of Excellence for Seed Systems in Africa, and AGRA, convened a stakeholder meeting bringing together STAK, seed companies, and breeders to validate national crop variety data and review the Kenya National Digital Crop Variety List prototype.

The session provided a platform to assess data accuracy, gather feedback on the prototype, and refine a system that

will enhance transparency, accessibility, and informed decision making within the agricultural sector.

This process is necessary in ensuring that Kenya's crop variety data remains accurate, reliable, and easily accessible. By strengthening this digital platform, we are enabling farmers to make better seed choices, supporting researchers and regulators with credible data, and helping agribusiness players meet both local and international standards.

KENYA AND U.S. STRENGTHEN AGRICULTURAL TIES



The Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service hosted a delegation from the United States Department of Agriculture, led by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, in a bilateral engagement aimed at strengthening cooperation in plant health, phytosanitary systems, and agricultural trade.

Representing the KEPHIS Managing Director, Simon Maina welcomed the delegation and reaffirmed the importance of the longstanding partnership between Kenya and the United States in supporting safe and sustainable agricultural trade.

As Kenya's National Plant Protection Organization, KEPHIS role in protecting agriculture from plant pests while facilitating safe trade in plants and plant products is key. Collaboration with USDA-APHIS continues to support strong phytosanitary systems aligned with international frameworks

such as the International Plant Protection Convention.

Beyond the discussions, the delegation visited key horticultural production and processing sites across the country, gaining first-hand insight into Kenya's export systems and compliance processes. The visits included avocado production and processing facilities in Murang'a County, herbs production facilities in Kajiado County, and raspberry and bean production and processing sites in Naivasha.

These visits provided an opportunity to showcase Kenya's export certification, pest risk management, and traceability systems that support access to international markets.

KEPHIS expressed its commitment to continued collaboration with USDA-APHIS in advancing plant health and strengthening agricultural trade between Kenya and the United States.



KEPHIS MEETS STAKEHOLDERS IN PREPARATION FOR DG-SANTE AUDIT



The team pose for a group photo.

On 16th March 2026, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) convened a high-level multi-stakeholder consultative forum at its headquarters in Karen, Nairobi. The meeting aimed to coordinate national preparedness for the upcoming audit by the European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG-SANTE), scheduled for June 2026.

The forum brought together a broad spectrum of key stakeholders within Kenya's horticulture value chain. These included representatives from the Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya, Pest Control Products Board, the Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA) through its Horticultural Crops Directorate, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, as well as industry bodies such as the Fresh Produce Consortium of Kenya, Avocado Society of Kenya,

Agrochemicals Association of Kenya, and the Food Safety Growers Association of Kenya. This diverse representation emphasizes the importance of a coordinated, whole-of-sector approach in addressing compliance requirements for export markets.

Deliberations during the meeting focused on strengthening compliance with international standards, particularly in the area of pesticide residue management. Participants reviewed current systems for monitoring and controlling Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs), identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement in surveillance, enforcement, and stakeholder awareness. Emphasis was placed on enhancing traceability systems, improving data sharing among regulatory bodies, and ensuring that exporters consistently meet stringent market requirements.



The team during discussions.

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In addition, stakeholders worked towards developing a joint action plan that outlines clear roles, responsibilities, and timelines in preparation for the audit. This includes capacity building for farmers and exporters, improved coordination among inspection agencies, and adoption of best practices across the horticulture value chain. The objective is to ensure that Kenya continues to be recognized as a reliable exporter of safe, high-quality fresh produce to international markets, particularly the European Union.

The consultative forum reaffirmed the critical role of collaboration between government institutions and private sector players in safeguarding the integrity of Kenya's horticultural exports. It also highlighted the country's commitment to maintaining compliance with global food safety standards, protecting market access, and enhancing the competitiveness of Kenyan produce on the international market.

KEPHIS SHOWCASES ITS SERVICES IN 3-DAY BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AT EGERTON UNIVERSITY



Group photo of participants and stakeholders during the 16th Biennial International Conference at Egerton University, Njoro, Nakuru County.

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From 17th to 19th March 2026, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) participated in the 16th Biennial International Conference held at Egerton University in Njoro, Nakuru County. Hosted at the University's Njoro Campus, the event was held under the theme: **“Empowering Change: Advancing Sustainable, Inclusive, and Resilient Global Societies through Agriculture, Education, Science, Technology and Innovation.”** The conference brought together stakeholders from academia, government, research institutions, and the private sector to share research findings, innovations, and practical solutions. It attracted participants from seven countries, with 47 institutions represented, including universities, TVETs, industry players, and SACCOs.

A total of 147 papers were presented across parallel sessions, addressing a wide range of current societal and sectoral challenges. In addition, 21 exhibitors showcased innovations and practical outputs, demonstrating how research is translated into real-world solutions.

In attendance was the Principal Secretary in the State Department for Science, Research and Innovation, Prof. Shaukat Abdulrazak, who emphasized on the critical role of science, technology, and innovation in transforming agriculture and strengthening food systems, as well as the need for enhanced collaboration among stakeholders.



Principal Secretary in the State Department for Science, Research and Innovation, Prof. Shaukat Abdulrazak, engages with KEPHIS officers at the exhibition stand during the 16th Biennial International Conference at Egerton University.

Over the course of the three days, KEPHIS participated as an exhibitor, showcasing its mandate and core services in plant health regulation, seed certification, and phytosanitary compliance. Through interactive demonstrations and information sharing, participants gained insights into seed testing processes, product verification using certification stickers, and the importance of quality inputs in supporting agricultural productivity and safe trade.

The exhibition facilitated direct interaction with farmers, students, researchers, and agribusiness stakeholders, allowing KEPHIS to address inquiries, offer technical guidance, and enhance awareness of regulatory requirements.

The conference concluded on a high note, with KEPHIS recording strong stakeholder interest at its exhibition stand, where over 200 visitors registered and made inquiries.

This level of interaction underscored the relevance of KEPHIS services and highlighted the value of continued outreach in promoting plant health and regulatory compliance.

Overall, the conference provided KEPHIS with a valuable opportunity to increase its visibility, strengthen linkages with stakeholders, and contribute to ongoing discussions on sustainable agriculture and innovation.



KEPHIS AND ADOPT A GENERATION EXPLORE AREAS OF COLLABORATION



The team pose for a group photo.

On 18th March 2026, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) hosted a delegation from Adopt A Generation Africa (AGA) at its headquarters for a consultative engagement aimed at exploring strategic partnership opportunities. The discussions centered on advancing sustainable agriculture, strengthening climate resilience, and leveraging innovative, data-driven solutions to better support stakeholders across the agricultural sector.

KEPHIS, on its part, outlined its mandate in safeguarding plant health, facilitating safe trade, and ensuring the quality of agricultural inputs and produce. The institution emphasized the importance of integrating technology and data systems in pest surveillance, seed certification, and

phytosanitary services to enhance efficiency and responsiveness in addressing emerging agricultural challenges.

Both parties expressed a shared commitment to strengthening collaboration in areas such as knowledge sharing, research, and capacity building. The proposed partnership is expected to contribute significantly to improving productivity, enhancing food safety standards, and supporting sustainable agricultural development in Kenya.

This engagement emphasizes KEPHIS' continued commitment to building strong partnerships that drive innovation, enhance food security, promote safe trade and create lasting impact across the agricultural value chain.

NAKURU ROSE CUT-FLOWER GROWERS TRAINED ON SYSTEMS APPROACH AND COMPLIANCE TO EXPORT MARKET REQUIREMENTS



Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) conducted a consultative training for Rose Cut-Flower Growers on 24th February 2026 at ATC Soilo, Nakuru. The training focused on the False Codling Moth Systems Approach (FCMSA) and Compliance to EU regulation 2019/2072.

The objective of the training was to enhance growers' capacity to effectively manage Phytosanitary risks, particularly False Codling Moth (FCM), and to promote compliance with EU export market requirements.

During the training, participants were taken through the role of KEPHIS in phytosanitary risk management and trade facilitation, highlighting the KEPHIS mandate in safeguarding plant health while facilitating safe trade.

The training further covered the False Codling Moth (FCM) systems approach

and its behavior patterns, including detection, identification, and effective management strategies. Emphasis was placed on preventive and integrated pest management measures across the production and export chain, with particular focus on risk profiling and the management of non-compliance.

The training session concluded with experience sharing and a plenary discussion, providing participants an opportunity to exchange farm level experiences, challenges and share success stories. The engagement reinforced the importance of joint efforts and mutual support in strengthening FCM management, enhancing compliance and safeguarding export markets. The participants appreciated the training and agreed to implement the FCMSA protocol for meeting market requirements for sustained flower exports and foreign exchange.

STRENGTHENING COMPLIANCE: PREPARING FARMERS FOR A NEW ERA OF MARKET ACCESS FOR MIRAA TRADE



Over 120 miraa traders benefited from a three-day sensitization forum that brought together a multi-agency team from Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS), Agriculture and Food Authority(AFA) and Kenya Revenue Authority(KRA). The forum held from 24th to 26th March 2026 across Igembe Central and Igembe North in Meru County, as well as Embu County aimed to prepare traders for renewed miraa market access to Somalia through road transport via the Mandera, Liboi, and Kiunga border points.

As part of the engagement, the multi-agency team paid a courtesy call to the Meru Governor, Mutuma M'Ethingia, and the County Commissioner, Mr. Jacob Ouma, underscoring the importance of coordinated efforts between national and county governments in revitalizing the miraa value chain. This engagement came at a critical time as Kenya prepares to reopen

key border points with Somalia after nearly 15 years of restricted trade. The prolonged closures had significantly disrupted miraa exports, forcing traders to rely on costly air transport and limiting farmers' access to their largest market.

The reopening of border points in Mandera, Liboi, and Kiunga is expected to restore more efficient trade routes through road transport, creating new opportunities for growth within the sector. Through this forum, KEPHIS equipped traders and farmers with critical knowledge on export requirements, Phytosanitary standards, and compliance procedures needed to access the Somali market. As the national plant protection organization, KEPHIS plays a major role in facilitating safe trade through inspection and certification of agricultural exports safeguarding market access while promoting the quality and safety of Kenya's agricultural produce.



For miraa farmers, this marks a significant turning point. With improved access to the Somali market, farmers stand to benefit from reduced transport costs, more stable market access, and improved incomes. Through its regulatory and facilitation role, KEPHIS is not only ensuring compliance but also enabling farmers and traders to compete effectively in regional markets, reduce post-harvest losses, and build confidence in export systems.

KEPHIS remains committed to promoting safe trade by ensuring compliance with international market standards, while supporting farmers and traders to fully benefit from emerging export opportunities.



STAKEHOLDERS MEETING



A comprehensive and impactful Seed Stakeholders Meeting which was convened on 17th March 2026 at the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service headquarters, brought together key players in the seed sector, including seed companies, CEOs and technical staff.. The meeting provided a platform for engagement, consultation and alignment on matters critical to the growth and sustainability of the industry.

Participants were taken through an in-depth briefing on the current status of seed certification in the country, highlighting progress made, existing challenges and opportunities for improvement. In addition, stakeholders reviewed the authorization guidelines to ensure they remain relevant, effective and supportive of a robust seed system.





The discussions also addressed ongoing legal developments affecting the seed sector, providing clarity and direction on compliance and implementation moving forward.

Through open dialogue and constructive deliberations, stakeholders addressed key issues affecting the sector and demonstrated

a strong commitment to collaboration and continuous improvement. The meeting culminated in a shared determination on the way forward, with a focus on strengthening regulatory frameworks, enhancing efficiency in seed certification processes and fostering innovation within the industry.

KEPHIS SHINES WITH MULTIPLE AWARDS AT EMBU ASK SHOW 2026



Excellence, innovation, and impact took center stage at the official opening of the Embu Njukiiri Agricultural Society of Kenya (ASK) Show, where the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) emerged as one of the standout exhibitors, earning top honors across several competitive categories.

The three-day event, held from 12th to 14th March 2026, was presided over by H.E. Cecily Mbarire, Governor of Embu County, and brought together key players in the agricultural sector to showcase advancements, share knowledge, and celebrate excellence.

KEPHIS demonstrated outstanding leadership in agricultural innovation by securing two prestigious trophies: **Best Stand in Research and Development** and **Best Innovation and Invention Stand**. These accolades underscore the institution's commitment to advancing agricultural science and delivering cutting-edge solutions to farmers.





In addition, KEPHIS achieved second position in three highly competitive categories:

- Best Local Stand in Strategies of International Trade and Exports
- Best Stand Interpreting the Current Show Theme
- Best Agricultural-Based Statutory Board Stand

Further highlighting its forward-thinking approach, KEPHIS also earned **third position**

for the **Best Stand Embracing Information Technology and Communication Systems**, reflecting its dedication to integrating modern technologies into agriculture.

These achievements reaffirm KEPHIS' vital role in supporting farmers, enhancing agricultural productivity, and driving innovation within the sector. The institution's strong performance at the Embu ASK Show serves as a testament to its ongoing efforts to transform agriculture and contribute to national food security.

KEPHIS COLLABORATES WITH KENYA FOREST SERVICE TO MARK INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FORESTS WITH TREE GROWING INITIATIVE IN KISUMU



On the 21st of March 2026, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) Kisumu Office, in collaboration with the Kenya Forest Service, marked the International Day of Forests at Lela Primary School.

The occasion brought together students, educators, and members of the local community in a meaningful demonstration of collective commitment to environmental conservation. As part of the activities, 500 tree seedlings were donated, comprising 200 assorted indigenous species, 100 pine, 100 grevillea, and 100 fruit trees. This selection reflects a balanced approach to ecological restoration, livelihood support, and long-term sustainability.

The initiative contributes to the Government of Kenya's 15 billion tree growing programme, a national effort aimed at enhancing forest cover, restoring degraded landscapes, and strengthening climate resilience. By engaging learners at an early stage and fostering community participation, the activity highlights the importance of inclusive, multi-stakeholder approaches in advancing environmental priorities.

KEPHIS remains committed to supporting such collaborative efforts, recognizing their value in promoting sustainable natural resource management and advancing a greener and healthier future.

KEPHIS EMPOWERS CITRUS FARMERS IN MACHAKOS WITH PEST AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT TRAINING



Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) conducted a targeted training for citrus farmers in Masii, Machakos County on 10th March 2026, aimed at strengthening farmers' capacity to manage pests and diseases affecting citrus production.

The training focused on key threats to citrus farming, including Citrus Canker (*Xanthomonas citri*), Gummosis disease, and major pests such as the False Codling Moth, scales, and citrus leaf miners. These challenges continue to significantly impact yield, fruit quality, and market access for farmers.

Participants were equipped with practical knowledge and hands-on skills

in early detection of pests and diseases, maintenance of proper orchard hygiene, and the application of integrated pest and disease management strategies. The session also emphasized effective control measures to protect citrus orchards and sustain productivity.

Through this initiative, KEPHIS reaffirmed its commitment to supporting farmers with the knowledge and tools needed to safeguard their crops, improve fruit quality, and enhance competitiveness in local and export markets.



KEPHIS EMPOWERS YOUTH ON AVOCADO AGRIBUSINESS AND PEST MANAGEMENT AT ELDORET FORUM



On 13th March 2026, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) collaborated with officials from the County Government of Uasin Gishu and other government agencies to participate in an awareness forum held at Sirikwa Hotel in Eldoret. The forum aimed to promote awareness and encourage practical engagement among youth on viable agribusiness opportunities, with particular emphasis on the avocado value chain and emerging pest management challenges affecting production and market access.

The forum, organized by One Acre Fund (Tupande) in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, brought together 160 youth and women participants.

During the session, KEPHIS highlighted its regulatory mandate in safeguarding plant health and facilitating agricultural trade. Participants were also trained on major pests affecting avocado production, with special focus on *Persea* mites, including their identification, impact on crop productivity, and appropriate management practices. In addition, the training addressed market access requirements, emphasizing the importance of compliance with phytosanitary standards to meet both domestic and international market demands. The forum concluded with an engaging and insightful question and answer session, reflecting strong participant interest and demonstrating the practical value and impact of the training.

KEPHIS TAKES ACTION TO SAFEGUARD KENYA'S AGRICULTURE ALONG LAKE VICTORIA



In a decisive move to protect Kenya's agricultural sector, the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) Kisumu and Mbita offices conducted an intensive stakeholder engagement and monitoring exercise from 11th to 13th March 2026 along key Lake Victoria beaches, including Usenge, Kamariga, Sirongo, Misori, Oele, and Uhanya. The initiative aimed to strengthen phytosanitary import regulation and ensure that plants, plant products, and other regulated articles meet national and international standards.

The exercise brought KEPHIS teams together with Beach Management officials

and local traders to raise awareness on compliance, early detection of pests, and proper import procedures. At Usenge Beach, KEPHIS held strategic discussions with Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) officers to bolster enforcement of phytosanitary regulations and prevent the introduction of harmful pests and diseases.

By combining hands-on stakeholder engagement with strengthened surveillance, KEPHIS reaffirmed its commitment to protecting Kenya's agriculture, safeguarding trade, and promoting safe, compliant import practices along critical Lake Victoria trade hubs.

KEPHIS ENGAGES AVOCADO AND APIARY FARMERS AT NYANZA FARMERS' DAY IN SIAYA



On 21st March 2026, Sigrut Orchard and Hive Ltd hosted the Nyanza Avocado and Apiary Farmers' Day in Siaya County. Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service through the Kisumu Office participated actively, providing a platform to engage with farmers and highlight its mandate in ensuring the safety and quality of agricultural produce. During the event, KEPHIS officers shared insights on phytosanitary certification, emphasizing its critical role in enabling local farmers to access international markets and meet

export standards for high-value crops such as avocados.

Farmers had the opportunity to interact directly with KEPHIS technical staff, gaining guidance on pest and disease management, best practices for post-harvest handling, and the importance of adhering to quality standards. The engagement also provided a forum for knowledge exchange, enabling farmers to learn from one another while exploring sustainable methods to increase productivity and profitability.

KEPHIS SHOWCASES PLANT HEALTH AND TRADE FACILITATION ROLE AT KALRO OPEN DAY 2026 IN TIGONI



The Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) exhibited at the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization stakeholders research Open Day 2026 which was held today, 27th March 2026 at the centre in Tigoni, where it showcased its role in safeguarding plant health, assuring the quality of agricultural inputs, and facilitating safe agricultural trade.

Hosted by the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) under the theme **“From Research to Market: Scaling Agricultural Technologies for Inclusive Growth,”** the Open Day brought

together key players in the agricultural sector to share knowledge, innovations, and technologies aimed at enhancing productivity and sustainability.

During the exhibition, KEPHIS engaged farmers, traders, and other stakeholders on various mandates including seed certification, plant health and pest management, phytosanitary certification, and regulatory requirements for the import and export of plants and plant products. These interactions enhanced stakeholders’ understanding of KEPHIS services and its role in boosting agricultural productivity and expanding market access.



The Open Day provided a valuable platform for strengthening collaboration between research institutions, regulatory agencies, and farmers, fostering a more coordinated approach to addressing agricultural challenges.

Through its participation, KEPHIS demonstrated its impact by equipping

stakeholders with practical knowledge and information that help them improve crop quality, minimizes pest and disease risks, and enables access to both local and international markets, hence contributing to sustainable agriculture and strengthened food security.

DEPARTMENTAL SPOTLIGHT - KEPHIS JKIA



An Interview with Josiah Syanda

Deputy Director, KEPHIS JKIA

1. Briefly introduce the KEPHIS JKIA office and its role within the overall mandate?

Jomo Kenyatta International Airport regional office was initially a Fresh Produce Inspection Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture, Horticulture Division up to 1997 and was involved in export certification. Import inspection division was handled under KARI presently KARLO. In 1998 Plant Inspection Unit was established by merging Imports and exports inspections under KEPHIS and named JKIA Juma Lugogo Plant Inspection Unit. The KEPHIS JKIA Regional Office, strategically located at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), serves as a critical gateway for Kenya's agricultural trade. Established to support the growing volume of horticultural exports and imports through air transport, the office has evolved into one of the busiest and most vital operational stations within KEPHIS.

The office undertakes seed field inspection, post certification survey, nursery certification inspection, grading and certification of plants, plant products, and regulated articles for both import and export. It ensures that all consignments comply with national, regional, and international phytosanitary requirements, preventing the introduction and spread of pests and diseases.

Beyond the inspection services at the airport, the regional office's jurisdiction covers Nairobi, Kiambu, parts of Murang'a, Machakos, Makeni, Kajiado and Kitui counties, supporting a wide network of producers, exporters, and importers within these key agricultural zones.

2. How does the office ensure efficiency in inspection and clearance processes?

JKIA office inspects and certifies over 1500 consignments translating to more than 600 tons of fresh produce for export daily and the half the same for imports. Therefore, efficiency and precision are key factors for continued support of safe trade facilitation and safeguarding Kenya against harmful plant pests. JKIA works through streamlined workflows, risk-based inspection approaches, and coordinated operations with stakeholders and other KEPHIS offices located at major production zones. Pre-export and pre arrival documentation review and dedicated inspection zones help reduce delays. Additionally, continuous staff capacity building ensures adherence to best practices and rapid decision-making.

3. How is technology being used to enhance inspection, tracking, and clearance processes at JKIA?

Technology plays a central role in enhancing service delivery at JKIA. The use of KEPHIS' Integrated Export and Import Certification System (IEICS) has significantly improved efficiency in application processing, certification, and data management.

Electronic phytosanitary certification (ePhyto) facilitates secure and real-time exchange of certificates with trading partners, reducing paperwork and fraud risks. Digital tracking systems and data analytics also support risk profiling, enabling targeted inspections and faster clearance of compliant consignments.

4. How do you collaborate with other agencies at JKIA?

The JKIA office works closely with key government agencies including Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), Kenya Airports Authority (KAA), Port Health Services, and security agencies to ensure seamless cargo clearance.

JKIA office is a member of the Border Management Committee whose membership comprises all the government agencies with intervening mandate at the airport. Additionally, KEPHIS JKIA participates in the Multi Agency Team operations such as joint inspections, information sharing, and participation in multi-agency forums. The office contributes to a coordinated border management

system that enhances efficiency while maintaining regulatory compliance.

5. What measures are in place to ensure compliance with international Phytosanitary standards?

The office enforces strict adherence to international standards under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) by the traders and staff members. Inspection protocols are aligned with established phytosanitary measures, including pest risk analysis, sampling procedures, and treatment requirements. Regular training of inspectors, internal audits, and updates on importing country requirements ensure that exports meet destination country standards, safeguarding Kenya's market access.

6. How does the office respond to interceptions of high-risk pests or emergency Phytosanitary threats?

JKIA office works closely with the Plant Quarantine and Biosecurity Station (PQBS) and the other KEPHIS diagnostic laboratories. In cases of high-risk pest interceptions or suspected phytosanitary threats, the office activates established emergency response protocols. This includes immediate quarantine measures, laboratory analysis, and notification of relevant authorities.

Corrective actions such as treatment, re-export, or destruction of consignments are undertaken as necessary. The office also strengthens surveillance and stakeholder advisories to prevent recurrence.

7. What initiatives have been implemented to improve customer service?

The JKIA office has implemented several customer-focused initiatives, including digital service platforms, clear service charters, and dedicated customer support desks. Inspections and issuance of certificates are done at the designated warehouses to reduce customer movement, crowding at the central office and to maintain cool chain. Inspectors are organized into groups with team leaders to ensure quick response and interventions whenever a need arises. Stakeholder engagement forums and feedback mechanisms allow continuous improvement of services.

8. What efforts are in place to educate importers, exporters, and the public on Phytosanitary requirements?

The office regularly conducts training and capacity building programs targeting exporters, importers, and the general public. These include training workshops, stakeholder meetings, and dissemination of guidelines on phytosanitary requirements.

Collaboration with county governments and industry associations ensures that stakeholders within the region are well-informed and compliant with regulations. Phytosanitary requirements are also updated regularly to inform the public on emerging and new developments with the destination markets.

9. What are the main challenges faced at the JKIA station, and what strategies or interventions have been implemented to address them?


Key challenges at JKIA include the evolving destination market requirements which calls for quick implementation of compliance mechanism by the growers, evolving pests risks, high cargo volumes, the need for rapid clearance of perishable goods and inadequate awareness on pests risks by passengers and other actors operating across the borders. Infrastructure constraints and varying levels of stakeholder compliance also pose challenges.

To address these challenges, the office understands that information and knowledge sharing remains the most significant approach towards risk mitigation. The office has therefore done stakeholder mapping and strengthened stakeholder sensitization and consultation, adopted risk-based inspections, and leveraged technology to improve efficiency. Continuous engagement with partners also helps address operational bottlenecks.

10. How does the office align with KEPHIS' broader strategic goals?

The JKIA Regional Office plays a central role in advancing KEPHIS' strategic objectives of facilitating safe trade, protecting plant health, and enhancing market access.

JKIA office is the last line of defense for exports, therefore export consignments are thoroughly inspected in accordance with the established protocols and procedures to ensure only compliant material proceeds for exports. Conversely, the office is the first line of defense for incoming materials. Only authorized materials whose risk has been determined and appropriate



measures are in place is allowed entry into the country. By ensuring compliance with phytosanitary standards and supporting exporters, the office contributes to national goals of increasing agricultural exports and strengthening food security.

11. What partnerships or collaborations have strengthened operations at JKIA?

Internal collaboration within KEPHIS departments and units including supplies, finance, transport, legal, audit, projects, and regional offices have greatly contributed to strengthening operations at JKIA. External collaborations and partnerships includes county governments, government agencies, business member organizations (BMOS) such as Kenya Flower Council, (KFC) Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya (FPEAK) , Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC), Avocado Society of Kenya (ASOK), exporters, importers and freight agencies among others

Collaboration with airlines, freight handlers, and exporters ensures efficient logistics, while engagement with international bodies supports capacity building and adoption of global best practices.

12. Any memorable experiences or success stories from the field?

I have been in KEPHIS since its inception and in particular at JKIA where inspections were done between 1400 hours and by 1600 hours' inspections and issuance of certificates was over. Additionally, all processes were manually


done and inspectors did not have clear understanding of the SPS measures they were implementing. The growth from a two (2) hour manual operation into a 24-hour automated service coupled with a pool of experts knowledgeable on phytosanitary measures handling over 600 tons of fresh produce is a success story.

I also recall the time inspectors were instructed to start manning passenger terminal. There was no office and no formal introduction which meant working at a very hostile environment. The baggage hall and the passengers belonged to others and therefore presence of KEPHIS was not welcome at all. However, through sheer grit and resilience the inspectors held their ground, they made inroads and friends. Today KEPHIS presence at the passenger terminal and the entire airport is recognized and respected.

Most recently, FCM has been a real threat to Kenya's export market especially for rose flowers to EU. Detection of one live stage of FCM (egg or larvae) leads to interception. The office in collaboration with the other regional office successfully defended the FCM System Approach (FCMSA) in the mitigation of FCM in fresh cut roses during EU audit. The Kenya model of the FCMSA has become a global benchmark on how a country can implement the systems approach for market access.

13. Any key messages you would like to share with stakeholders and the public?

Plant health is the foundation of safe trade, economic growth, food security, and



sustainable livelihoods. For stakeholders involved in the export and import of plants and plant products, strict adherence to phytosanitary requirements is not just a regulatory obligation, it is a critical enabler of market access and a safeguard against the introduction and spread of harmful pests and diseases. Non-compliance can lead to costly interceptions, rejected consignments, and loss of international markets. We therefore urge all exporters, importers, and the general public to work closely with KEPHIS, embrace digital certification

systems, and ensure that all consignments meet the required standards. Protecting plant health is a shared responsibility, by doing so, we protect our agriculture, our economy, and our future.

The JKIA Regional Office remains committed to facilitating safe and efficient agricultural trade while safeguarding Kenya's plant resources. Together, we can sustain Kenya's position as a leading exporter of high-quality agricultural products.

UPCOMING EVENT(S)



Kenya Plant Health
Inspectorate Service



Center of Phytosanitary Excellence
COPE Protecting Agriculture, Supporting Trade

KEPHIS and Stakeholders to Host the International Phytosanitary and Seed Conference in September 2026.



Kenya Plant Health
Inspectorate Service



INTERNATIONAL PHYTOSANITARY & SEED QUALITY Conference 2026

14TH - 17TH SEPTEMBER

**THEME : "REVITALIZING PHYTOSANITARY AND SEED SYSTEMS FOR
CLIMATE RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE"**



KEPHIS HEADQUARTERS,
OLOOLUA RIDGE-KAREN,
NAIROBI, KENYA

For More Information:

+254 709 891 000



director@kephis.org
psqconference2026@kephis.org



www.kephis.go.ke

KEPHIS and stakeholders will host the International Phytosanitary and Seed Conference this year. The event, which will be held from 14th - 17th September 2026 will attract about 350 participants from around the world.

Under the theme **Revitalizing Phytosanitary and Seed Systems for Climate Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture**, the event will be held in Nairobi, Kenya.

Previously, the conferences have been autonomous but this year, the conference

has been merged to have both seed and phytosanitary issues discussed under one meeting.

Phytosanitary standards and seed quality are foundational to agricultural development. As trade in plant products continues to grow across borders, challenges such as emerging pests, regulatory gaps and inconsistencies in testing methodologies pose risks to biosecurity and seed system efficiency. This calls for dialogue among key stakeholders to revitalize resilience. KEPHIS as a strategic

partner and a regional phytosanitary leader hence will host this meeting that will serve as a platform for advancing global and regional cooperation on seed and plant health matters, in line with the mandates of international organizations such as the International Seed Trade Association (ISTA), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties (UPOV) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).



This event will bring together stakeholders in the seed, plant health and trade to foster dialogue and knowledge exchange, among others. The conference will also align with global goals to improve agricultural productivity, ensure plant health and facilitate safe trade.

The conference will bring together private and public, national, regional and international delegates in Phytosanitary and seed quality to discuss current affairs and share experiences in matters affecting the industry.

An exhibition with 20 booths will be available for displaying products or services relevant to the conference.



Kenya Plant Health
Inspectorate Service



INTERNATIONAL PHYTOSANITARY & SEED QUALITY

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Conference
2026

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Seed quality, phytosanitary and food safety standards are foundational to agricultural development and global food security, especially in the wake of climate change. As cross-border trade in plants and plant products grows, challenges such as emerging pests, regulatory gaps, and inconsistencies in testing methodologies threaten biosecurity and seed system efficiency. The event organizing committee invites researchers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders to submit abstracts for oral or poster presentations.

THEME:

“REVITALIZING PHYTOSANITARY AND SEED SYSTEMS FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE”

SUB- THEMES

- ✓ Plant health and food safety systems: Managing risks and protecting plant resources
- ✓ Technological innovations in plant health, food safety and seed quality for sustainable agriculture
- ✓ Safe trade and market access for plants, plant products and regulated articles
- ✓ Seed quality, variety development, registration and associated systems
- ✓ Policy and regulatory frameworks for food safety, plant health and seed quality assurance
- ✓ Cross cutting issues in plant health, food safety and seed quality assurance

AUTHOR GUIDELINES

Abstracts to be formatted in Tahoma 12-point font size, single-spaced and presented as follows: The title; Surname and initials of authors in capital letters; Author's affiliation listed chronologically. The email address and telephone number of corresponding author identified by an asterisk. It should be in one paragraph, contain an introduction, rationale of the study, objectives, materials and methods, results, conclusion and recommendations. A maximum of six key words to be provided below. It should be saved under first author's name and in MS Word 2010 or later versions. It should be based on reviews, research, experience or case studies in Phytosanitary and seed quality issues. It should have a maximum of 300 words.

IMPORTANT DATES

30TH JUNE 2026

Abstract submission
deadline

14TH JULY 2026

Conference full paper
submission deadline

14TH TO 17TH SEPTEMBER 2026

Dates of the
conference

SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS

We wish to request for the submission of abstracts for the above sub-themes for consideration for either oral or poster presentation. Electronic copies to be submitted to :

psqconference2026@kephis.org

PICTORIAL

Highlights from the KEPHIS Strategic Partnership with Kitui Government





Highlights from KEPHIS at the Eldoret Show 2026



KEPHIS awards at the show



Highlights from the Embu Show 2026





Highlights from the Meru Training





Kenya and U.S Strengthen Agricultural ties





Highlights from along Lake Victoria



KENYA PLANT HEALTH INSPECTORATE SERVICE (KEPHIS)
NEWSLETTER MARCH 2026

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| KEPHIS Headquarters

- P.O Box 49592 - 00100, Nairobi
- 0 709 891 000 | 0 206 618 000
- director@kephis.org / kephisinfo@kephis.org
- www.kephis.go.ke