



Working with Small Scale Farmers

THE BIOFRESH EXPERIENCE

By
Sonia Mwadime
Managing Director, Biofresh Ltd

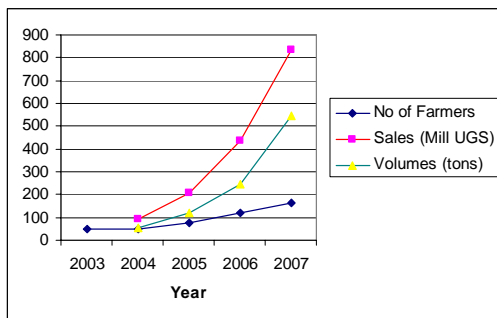


Biofresh: Summary

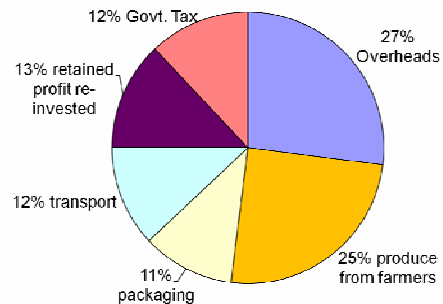
- Biofresh started in 2003
- Organic exports Sept 2004 certified by IMO, Switzerland
- Vision : improving livelihood SS farmers thru Fair trade
- Have been inspected for Fair Trade certification
- Initially we had contracted 50 small scale farmers in 7 districts, thru Epopa support increased to 165 in 10 districts
- Organic fresh / dried Pineapples, Apple bananas, Passion Fruits, Ginger, papaya
- New products guavas, goose berries
- Main market is Germany with new opportunities in Dubai and other EU countries
- Started 2-3 tons/week, currently 9-10 tons/week during the high season (Nov to May)



Sales trend-exports are growing!



Income distribution as % of sales



Farmer Organization in Biofresh

- Farmers in associations led by committees
- Each committee has a woman representing other women
- Easier to work with associations:
 - Coordinate collection
 - Payment
 - Marketing
 - Implement ICS
 - Extension and training



Benefits to the Farmer


- Pay certification costs
- Collect at farm gate
- Pay cash as we collect
- Premium prices paid -50 to 200% higher than local prices
- 25% of our sales turnover goes to farmers:-
- 2006 was US\$ 60,972
- 2007 was US\$ 114,722



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Benefit to farmers


- Mr Lauben Kakulu in Masaka used his income and interest free loan to complete his house. He is now filled with dignity



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Benefit to farmers


- Mr David Kalwanyi in Kiboga took an interest free loan to start a small income generating business



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Benefit to farmers

- Fair trade premium by our buyer
- Borehole in Kamuli and water tanks in Mbarara
- To date 4 boreholes and 20 water tanks supported at a cost of about \$30,000
- Women do not have to walk long distances to fetch water



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Other needs identified

Needs identified by community

- Blackboards and washrooms in local schools.

Others

- Buy manure
- Buy farm implements
- Build social centres



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Challenges

- High cost of certification
- Inconsistency in quality
- Poor infrastructure poor roads lack of field shades
- Conversion period is too long; some give up
- Pest and disease management – no immediate solutions and farmers turn to conventional methods
- Poor record keeping – most are illiterate
- Lack of organic planting materials for the other crops farmers intercrop in the certified organic fields e.g. maize and tomatoes in apple banana or passion fruit fields.

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Challenges

- Seasonality of produce, farmers lack irrigation facilities so there is insufficient supply sometimes
- Aging farmers: difficulty to implement labour intensive activities.
- Need for more markets
- An active research institute that keeps exporters informed of new varieties or market requirements





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