



EASEED

Africa's Best East African Seed Co. Ltd. Newsletter

Vol. 2 October - December 2001

A word from the Managing Director

The management and the entire staff of East African Seed Co. Ltd would like to thank all our esteemed loyal customers and readers for your great response and encouragement following the release of EASEED newsletter vol.1.

EASEED has laid a strong foundation and embraced itself to face the challenges caused by development in the seed world in the new century. We strive to lead the way through innovations, which will help raise agricultural productivity in the region.

EASEED realises the importance of having a good start and encourages farmers to purchase the right seed. We have introduced a wide range of hybrid varieties for crops such as tomatoes, cabbages, maize and many more. These hybrids have a higher yield potential and good disease tolerance in addition to other benefits and farmers can greatly increase their income by using EASEED hybrids now available through our dense distribution network. The improved packing will ensure that the seed retains their viability longer and regular checks are being done through our modern seed-testing Laboratory, which has been set up according to international standards.

Stockists are being enlightened on proper seed storage in order to maintain seed quality.

EASEED is also working closely with large scale growers and exporters in the region. We have good quality export varieties for crops such as French beans, babycorn, sweetcorn, eggplant, chillies and herbs. The introduction of Hybrid true potato seed (TPS) will revolutionise potatoes production in the country.

EASEED has also undertaken intensive promotion and extension services campaign with great success. Having participated during the hortifair 2001 held at the Sarit Centre, where we scooped the overall best stand award, EASEED has participated in agricultural shows in Nakuru, Embu, Nairobi and Kitale. We also organised various farmers day throughout the country in an effort to pass important farming tips to the farmers.

Once again it has been a great joy working with you all and remember to make the right start - always insist on EASEED - Africa's best.

Jitu L. Shab

Product Development

EASEED'S CONTINUED EFFORT FOR THE EAST AFRICAN FARMERS

East African Seed Co. Ltd has gone on introducing new products to the growers since its inception in the early 1970's. The requirement of different types of vegetables by growers has increased many folds due to the market demand, which is determined by the consumers taste both locally and Internationally . On the other hand, the

grower is looking towards better varieties/ hybrids to harvest more to make farming a viable venture.

Keeping this trend in mind, the company is striving to satisfy both the growers and the consumers by systematic Product Development through scientific methodology.

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EASEED Agricultural Consultant in discussion with a farmer during the Nairobi International Show

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EASEED IN TRIUMPHANT DEBUT AT NAIROBI SHOW

EASEED Company demonstrated the superior performance of its seeds at their stand, in this years Nairobi International Show held at Jamhuri Park. Our stand was a major crowd puller due to the high quality crops grown in it, especially 'Spinach', Kales, tomatoes, cabbages, and Pannar maize, and was judged the best overall trade stand. This was significant considering that the only other time we participated in the show was years ago.

Throughout the Show, thousands of people streamed to our stand, attracted by EASEEDS' giant and healthy growing '1000-headed' Kales and 'Fordhook Giant' spinach crops. Most people, many of who only know of our unrivalled 'Georgia' collards, had to touch the leaves to believe that the plants were real and not artificial imitations. Others were amazed at the yield, size and quality of our new hybrid tomato 'Equator'.

Our new French bean 'Tokai' demonstrated its adaptability to Kenyan tropical conditions with its green and disease free leaves, long and good quality pods vigorous flowering and high yields. All the three Pannar hybrid maize varieties grown, i.e. Pan 5243, Pan 599 & Pan 67, exhibited their adaptability and multi-cobbing (high yield) qualities, proving that the varieties will be hard to match, when fully released to the Kenyan market.

One of our new cabbage hybrids, 'Globemaster', proved why it is the variety of choice among Karatina farmers, with its high quality and disease free heads, which could only be compared, to our 'Riana' hybrid. Our hybrid Chinese cabbage 'Hero' is fast becoming popular in Nairobi, both as a salad or lightly fried/steamed as a substitute for cabbages or 'sukuma wiki'. Other crops in our stand included Red Cabbage 'Ruby Perfection', Cauliflower ('Snowcrown' & 'Graffiti'), Tomato (Rio Grande, Cal J, Marglobe & Freude F1 cherry tomatoes).

Many visitors encouraged us to always participate in as many shows and field days as possible, in order to interact with farmers and demonstrate the superior performance of our seeds, which is unrivalled in Africa. EASEED is committed to developing and revolutionizing agriculture, not only in Kenya, but also in the whole of Africa, in order to meet the growing food and raw material needs in the world. EASEED will continually be improving the quality of our seeds, and demonstrating the same to the farmers, in keeping with our motto of being Africa's Best, both in quality and customer service.

Francis Ndungu - Sales Agronomist



EASEED Managing Director at the Company's stand during the Nairobi International Show



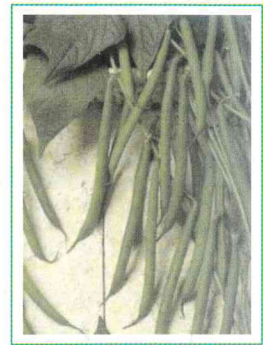
Visitor's at EASEED Stand

Mr. J. L. Dehmlow, consular for Economic Affairs at the U.S Embassy leads his colleague as they are shown around by our sales agronomist at the Nairobi Agricultural Show

New Products For Fresh Produce Export Market

Fine French Bean Tokai

It is a fine bean bred in Africa suitable for pre-pack, the pods are smooth, straight and long enough to be "topped and tailed" if required. It is resistant to rust and Bean common mosaic virus.



Okra F1 Hybrid Everest

It is a medium vigorous, erect and well-branched, bearing in two flushes. The first flush starts 40-45 days after sowing under normal conditions, fruits are medium to long, five ribbed, smooth, dark green and tender. Resistant to yellow vein mosaic virus.

Hybrid Babycorn

It is a high yielding, yellow colored ear of excellent uniformity, and average number of three ears per plant. Suitable for fresh packing. It is having a good disease resistance.

Bittergourd F1 Hybrid (Karella)

An early maturing hybrid, medium long fruits (15-18 cm), slightly oblong and intense green color. Harvesting commences in about 50 days from planting under normal conditions.

In addition, EASEED is trialling various French Beans, Mangetout peas, Asian vegetables like Okra, Eggplant, Ridge gourd, Bittergourd, Bottlegourd suitable for fresh Export market. Also for domestic market, the vegetables like tomato resistant to Bacterial wilt, indeterminate hybrids, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Onions etc. are under various stages of evaluation.

Dr. B.K. Kumaraswamy - Agricultural Consultant

EASEED came to the Nairobi International Agricultural Show and left as **Africa's Best**



International Congresses



Managing Director Mr. Jitu L. Shab (far right) during Asia Pacific Seed Association (APSA) 2001 conference in Tokyo, Japan.

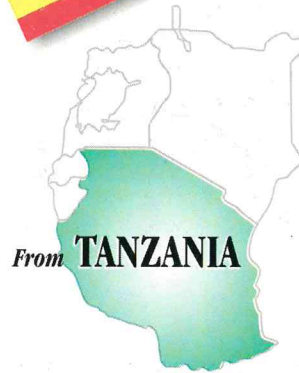


Managing Director Mr. Jitu L. Shab (far left) with members of E.I.S. Executive committee in Shanghai, China.

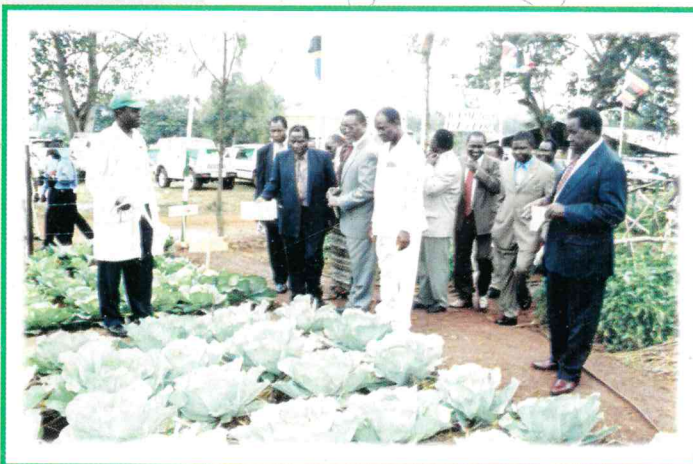
News from sister companies



EASEED (T) Sales Agronomist shows President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania around EASEED stand during the Arusha Agricultural Show



Visit by Prime Minister of Tanzania Hon. E. Sumaya



EASEED (U) Agronomist explaining good practices of vegetable production to the Uganda Minister of Agriculture Dr. Kisamba Mugerwa and to the Minister of Finance Hon. Gerald Sendaula during the Jinja Agricultural Show .

GMO

- What is it ?

A GMO is any organism, which contains genes that are not normally found in that organism. Genes are transferred from a plant, animal or micro-organisms into another species to create a transgenic organism through biotechnology. There is a growing debate in Kenya and the world over on the application of biotechnology and biotechnology products.

Many people including policy makers still do not understand the technology or are misinformed. There is need to provide accurate and objective information on biotechnology to consumer, media and policy makers to ensure that biotechnology is accurately represented at all level of the society. A case of GMO is the so-called BT maize. Biotechnologist makes use of bacterium called *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT), which produces protein that attacks certain insects. These genes are inserted into crop plants, which then in turn produce the same protein, in effect giving rise to plants which contain their own insecticides targeting stem borers in maize. The farmers use less chemicals and the yields are far much higher.

Despite the benefit derived from the use of GMOs, many people are still opposed to their introduction arguing that introducing new gene combination into the environment can have unexpected effects and that the technology is far too new for there to have been adequate testing. There are concerns that products derived from GMOs can lead to toxicity or allergenicity of common foods. Critics are also concerned that plants containing natural insecticides such as Bt will also poison non-target pests. Scientists supporting GMO work maintains that genetic modification takes place anyway through genetic evolution and GM work only hasten the process producing GM cotton, Soya beans

and yellow maize.

The proponents and opponents of GMO technology need to realise that consumers have very real concerns but very little understanding of this new technology and hence the need to generate and provide more information.

Many African countries lack a clear legal framework within which biotech products can be marketed. Biotech supporters see genetically engineered crops as a growth point for the continents ailing agriculture and key to food abundance in a continent where more than half of the population face constant food shortage. The negative publicity seeping into the continent, particularly from Europe has contributed in the laxity among African politicians to allow the sale of GM crops in their countries.

In Kenya, the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Services (KEPHIS) has the mandate to implement the National policy on the introduction and use of genetically modified species of plants, insects and microorganisms.

KEPHIS working closely with the National Biosafety Regulations Committee to ensure that the introduction of GMOs does not endanger the national agricultural productivity. A testing framework has already been established with the initial test being done under greenhouses before being tried under controlled field plot to determine the safety, effects on the environment and non-targets. Elsewhere in the continent, South Africa has a fully developed policy on Biotechnology with farmers

Gerald Gacheru - Production Manager

COMPUTERS IN SEED INDUSTRIES INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

Introduction

It is said that the army marches on its stomach. In the same vein, we can also say that an organization runs on its inventory.

There cannot be two opinions about the importance of controlling and managing Inventory in a business organization. However, the requirement of managing the inventory will differ from one organization to another. There are large manufacturing companies using different types of raw materials, machines and man power to produce different items. There are some organizations which are engaged in buying various components and assembling them into product. There are yet some other organizations which buy finished goods, stock them and resell them. In the seed industry, Hybrids and Open Pollinated seeds of various crops are developed and others are processed to suit all agro-climatic conditions.

What is inventory in a Seeds company?

The term inventory is a very broad concept

which includes Research seeds for breeders maintained as Germplasm Inventory, Basic Parental Seed which is raw material maintained as Stock Seed Inventory, Hybrids and Open Pollinated seeds which are the finished goods, chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers. Etc maintained as Consumables stores inventory. These principles apply to other areas of inventory.

Why Should Inventory be managed?

The most important reason for inventory management is that it represents a large proportion of the capital invested by an organization. The capital held in the form of inventory must therefore be justified.

Apart from the cost of inventory, it is important to ensure that the seed production line is properly fed with stock seed, so that the production continues without any hitch. On the other hand excessive Seed Inventory may lead to other

deterioration such as reduced germination thus leading to dead stock.

In addition, unnecessary seed stock incurs hidden cost eg.

- Storage space*
- Staff (requires more staff for handling this).*

Thus in an ideal situation, we should have only so much inventory such that each and every seed is provided at the right time and at the right cost.

A well planned and effectively controlled inventory can contribute substantially to a firm's profits.

A properly designed computer inventory management system can contribute to increased profits and quality service of a firm.

Bosco Sombe - Systems Administrator



QUALITY CONTROL

THE HEART OF SEED INDUSTRY

INTRODUCTION

Seed Quality Control Unit has been in-corporated into the Company's organizational structure to monitor, improve and maintain seed quality.

The seed quality control services which comprise of seed testing, pre and post control plots, and field inspections are geared to provide the right seed to the customers.

SEED TESTING LABORATORY ESTABLISHMENT

The Laboratory has started seed sampling, testing for moisture, purity and germination in accordance with the International Seed Testing Association (I.S.T.A) procedures. Viability and seed health testing will also be conducted, in accordance with I.S.T.A procedures.

The Laboratory is the vital organ of Seed Quality Control which is the "heart" of the seed industry.

PRE AND POST CONTROL PLOTS

The Seed Quality Control unit is anticipating to conduct pre and post control trials on imported and locally produced seeds to verify cultivar / varietal purities.

Testing for Distinctiveness, Uniformity, and Stability (DUS) will be part and parcel of Seed Quality Control. This system of control will enable the company to obtain reliable varieties for the benefit of the growers of East African Countries.

FIELD INSPECTIONS

The Seed Quality Control unit will monitor cultivar, varietal and genetic purities on recurrent crop generation to ensure that off types and diseased plants are rogued. This exercise will be carried out before KEPHIS field inspections, to ensure purity is maintained.

This field inspections will be done in accordance with known International Procedures to ensure that approvals and rejections are justifiable as they are scientifically detrimental to the seed industry.

CONCLUSION

With diligence, integrity, loyalty, and commitment the above three roles of the Seed Quality Control Unit will ensure production of high quality seed, thus increasing yields and profitability to the East African Farmers and ensuring that "EASEED does not cost - it pays".

J. K. Matemu - Seed Quality Controller.



Quality control laboratory



Constant temperature room



Customers Meet 2001 and Cocktail Party



EASEED organized a distributors / stockists meeting on 14th December 2001 at the Norfolk Hotel, Nairobi. EASEED rewarded the top 30 distributors / stockists for the year 2001 with various prizes which included return Air ticket to India, Computers, Deep - freezers, Refrigerators, Colour TV sets and Electronic calculators.

The occasion was attended by Dr. Kedera - M.D. KEPHIS, Dr. Ragwa - Deputy Director KARI, Dr. Muigai Director N.H.C.R.-Thika, our Distributors / Stockists from all over Kenya, the Management and the Company Staff.

After the meeting the company hosted a cocktail party at the hotel's pool-side.

A.L. Shah - Sales Director



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1. Welcome desk.
2. Customers in attendance at the Customers meet.
3. Production Director Mr. S. L. Shah (far right) and the International Sales Co-ordinator Mr. J. Gachui (third from right) take tea with customers.
4. Sales Director Mr. A. L. Shah (Left) presenting a token of appreciation to Mr. Gitwai of Tekelezi Stores, Embu.
5. Welcome address by Dr. B.K. Kumaraswamy, seated (L to R) are Dr. Kedera - M. D. KEPHIS, Mr. J. L. Shah - M. D. and Mr. L. V. Shah - Chairman.



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