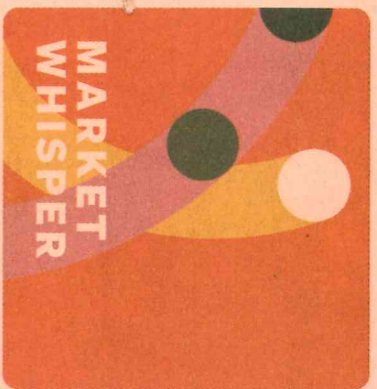


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# Big shift in moving horticulture exports from air to sea freight

AGRICULTURE  
MAATEN BROUWER

Historically, air freight has been the dominant mode of transport for horticultural products



Kenya Airways planes at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. FILE

Kenya's horticulture industry is crucial to the nation's economy, with exports accounting for a significant portion of the sector's revenue and millions of people depend on these exports for their livelihoods. In 2022, the industry contributed about \$1.1 billion to exports. Flowers made up nearly 52 percent of exports by weight and 70 percent by value, while fruits accounted for 29 percent by value. The remaining exports were vegetables.

Historically, air freight has been the dominant mode of transport for horticultural products. However, the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the rising costs of air freight have led to a growing need to look for an alternative and more sustainable mode of transport, which lead to the wish to transition to sea freight for horticultural exports.

Besides internationally agreed steps to mitigate climate change, this shift is fueled by changing opinions by European consumers who want to buy more sustainable produce. A clear economic need for this shift exists. The private sector sees this transition from air to sea freight for horticulture exports at the same time as an opportunity to create a more sustainable, cost-effective, and competitive industry.

Kenya's most important competitor in the flower industry, Columbia, already ships 15 percent of its exports by sea. This interest was evident at the 2022 Kenyan International Flower Trade Exhibition (IFTEX), where the industry announced its ambition to ship 50 percent of all flower exports from Kenya by sea.

Recognizing the long-term benefits of transitioning to sea freight is essential for the private sector. Firstly, ships produce fewer emissions, with studies indicating that the CO2 emitted per tonne-kilometer for sea freight is about 80 percent less than

for air freight. Moreover, innovation in cleaner propulsion of ships is happening at a much faster pace than in the aviation industry.

Large and for Kenya important shipping lines like Maersk have already ordered their first hydrogen propelled ships, while CAM CGM already using low carbon emission container. This will have a massive impact on CO2 emission and hybrid ships are also already in use. This developed will be further promoted through future EU legislation that requires a cut in emissions of 80 percent in the coming decades. Transitioning to sea freight will not only make the industry greener but also boost its reputation among environmentally-conscious consumers and buyers.

Secondly, sea freight is considerably cheaper than airfreight. As fuel prices rise and economic uncertainties loom, cost-effective solutions are

crucial for businesses. By adopting sea freight, horticultural exporters can reduce transportation costs, reinvest in their businesses, and potentially improve product quality, increase production capacity, and expand export markets.

Sea freight also allows Kenyan flowers, fruits and vegetables to reach new markets in Asia, Australia, and the United States, where air transport links are underdeveloped.

Challenges surrounding sea freight transportation include the lack of delineated processes for fresh produce at the Mombasa port or electrical points on the SGR, the absence of direct shipments to Western Europe, and the high costs of reefer containers, but also processes in farms that need to be adapted.

Strengthening collaboration between the government, industry players, and international partners is therefore essential to encourage sea freight usage for exporting horticulture produce. To address these challenges, the private sector is working with the Governments of the Netherlands and Denmark and the European Union to create the proper inclusive approach and actions together with the relevant Kenyan Governmental ministries and agencies to make this ambition of making sea freight a significant proportion of export logistics happen.

Maarten Brouwer is the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Kenya.



LAST WORD.



"So the problem is not so much to see what nobody has yet seen, as to think what nobody has yet thought concerning that which everybody sees."

Arthur Schopenhauer,  
GERMAN PHILOSOPHER



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CROSS WORD

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION  
TIMES CROSSWORD 28,087

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION  
NOT AVAILABLE

- ACROSS**
- 1 Legal officer has trouble breakingstrike (7)
  - 5 Game withdrawing place for quiz buff (3,2)
  - 9 Writer phones — biographer rings back (5)
  - 10 Doctor, initially kept in barracks, works in kitchen? (9)
  - 11 Anchor held by hideous, headless phantom (7)
  - 12 Marked student's first, abridged unseer? No (7)
  - 13 Aid when sewing up chinso in fragments (10)
  - 15 Right to remove mouse's head from trap (4)
  - 18 Husband and child after return fare (4)
  - 20 When unlikely to be welcomed into a hotel
  - 23 Reason given to those being punished (4,3)
  - 24 Tossing carrot to black kid in Golf (7)
  - 25 Developed from birth in US, different from USI (9)
  - 26 Swindlers, at least eight, after dope (5)
  - 27 ... one more coming in to give out pot (5)
  - 28 Article removed from slope off ramp (7)

- DOWN**
- 1 Musician with good news for impatient undergraduate? (7)
  - 2 Aug 1 isn't especially for a saint (8)
  - 3 Irritating incident that can harm you at first (5)
  - 4 Support coming from old Labour
  - 5 Outlaw to plunder gold, lifting unknown amount (3,3)
  - 6 Fish from lake caught by one out on it? (7)
  - 7 Displaying calm — no one was affected (5)
  - 8 What's most impressive about albatross spawning mutant? (8)
  - 14 Random greeting to Romeo by young lady (3,2,4)
  - 16 Army officer and doctor, each ringing when desperate (4-4)
  - 17 Powerful feller appearing in series
  - 12 (8)
  - 19 Pensioners putting up singular fight for platform to be heard? (7)
  - 21 Public service, something with no end, no beginning (7)
  - 22 Workplace no longer being kept ready? (6)
  - 23 Did snake biter? (5)
  - 24 Belief, revolutionary one, obsessed captain (5)

