

Ethiopian Union of Cooperatives ready for export to Europe

February 2017



The Union of Cooperatives Meki Batu from Ethiopia is to exhibit for the first time at Berlin's "Fruit Logistica" in February 2017. For two years, the Import Promotion Desk has been working intensely with the union – which comprises over 8,000 Ethiopian farmers – to prepare them for the exhibition debut. For Meki Batu Union, participating in the exhibition is a decisive step in their strategic plan to enter the German and European markets and establish long-term trade relations.

AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE FARMING

Meki Batu Union is an association of farmer cooperatives committed to sustainable farming. The cooperatives provide farming families with the equipment for seed production and cultivation of fruit and vegetables. After harvest, the farmers can sell their produce to the cooperative, which then markets the whole harvest of the different producers in the region in a bundle – and can therefore achieve higher prices. The union also promotes vocational and professional training, and provides business and technical support to increase harvest volume and improve the quality of produce through sustainable farming methods and more modern production processes. With the support of various international development organisations, the Meki Batu Union has systematically advanced the modernisation process of the agricultural cooperatives.

SOURCING MISSION TO ETHIOPIA

The Import Promotion Desk (IPD) was able to build on this foundation and in 2015 included the Meki Batu Union in its programme for sustainable export promotion. Whilst on a sourcing mission to Ethiopia, IPD experts visited the cooperative union and were able to see at first hand the high quality and variety of its product range. The Meki Batu Union represents farmer cooperatives in the regions of Ademi Tulu, Dugda, Bora, Ziway Dugda and Adama. The conditions

in these areas are very favourable – the climate is moderate and the water resources for production are abundant. Products range from beans, onions, chilli and paprika to sugar snap peas and papayas – products for which there is substantial demand on the European market. Through its export promotion programme, the IPD has opened the door to the European market for Ethiopian farmers. →



»The cooperation with our Ethiopian partner Meki Batu Union shows that our export promotion programme is

making an important contribution to international development cooperation. Over 8,000 small-scale farmers will ultimately benefit from the support of the IPD.«

Frank Maul, (acting) Head of the IPD



IMPORT PROMOTION DESK



»The IPD has shown us how we can increase our competitiveness and the standards we must abide by. Most valuable was the support we received in obtaining GLOBALG.A.P. certification. We are now well prepared for the European market.«

Tewolde Kiflemeriam, Head of Agriculture Department, Meki Batu Union

**GLOBALG.A.P. –
THE TICKET TO
THE EU-MARKET**

One important precondition for the export of fresh fruit and vegetables to Europe is certification according to the international standards of GLOBALG.A.P. – an independent certification system for good agricultural practices. Preparing the Meki Batu Union for this certification has been the main focus of the IPD's support. The Meki Batu Union first participated in a GLOBALG.A.P. workshop in Ethiopia in July 2015, initiated by the IPD and the Ethiopian Horticulture Producer Exporters Association (EHPEA). The Ethiopian export companies learned about the requirements for certification and implementation. In a second step, the IPD provided comprehensive advice and prepared a detailed timetable for the certification process in cooperation with the union.

Finally, in spring 2017 Meki Batu Union received GLOBALG.A.P. certification and thus its ticket to the European market.

**STUDY TOUR
TO GERMANY**

Parallel to the certification process, the IPD also prepared Meki Batu Union for the European market by complementary measures, including a Study Tour to Germany. During a visit to Fruit Logistica 2016, the world's leading trade fair for the fresh produce business, the IPD initiated first contacts with European importers, followed by visits to German trading companies, an organic farm and Berlin's wholesale market where the Ethiopians gained detailed information on product trends, modern and sustainable production methods and quality standards, which they were able to use in their subsequent export planning.

THE "LAST MILE"

In the next step, the IPD organised the union's first participation as exhibitor in Fruit Logistica 2017, and workshops to train union members in subjects including sales techniques and intercultural communication. Through a customised matchmaking process, the IPD identified suitable importers for the Meki Batu Union in advance of the exhibition and arranged meetings with the potential trade partners.

The IPD has also smoothed the way for future business relations with Germany and, together with the Dutch non-governmental organisation *SNV Netherlands Development Organisation*, supported Meki Batu Union in recruiting an export marketing manager to continue the structured development of the export business.

As a result, the Meki Batu Union is now fully prepared for the "last mile." Its participation in Fruit Logistica 2017 promises many new business contacts to importers from Germany and the EU.



Further information about the IPD and its services at www.importpromotiondesk.com

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