

Kakuzi welcomes avocado harvest and export season-opening, offers free avocado maturity testing for smallholder farmers

17/02...Listed agribusiness and superfoods producer Kakuzi PLC has welcomed the Avocado Export season opening notification announced by the sector regulator with an offer to provide free maturity testing services to smallholder farmers.

Following the notification issued early this week by the Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA) through its Horticultural Crops Directorate (HCD), harvesting avocados for export will now be opened on March 1, 2024. It will be subject to strict compliance with the prescribed maturity and related market access standards.

With the strict regulatory requirements outlined by AFA-HCD, Kakuzi PLC Managing Director Chris Flowers has confirmed that Kakuzi's free avocado maturity testing services will be available starting Wednesday next week.

The free maturity testing services offer, targeting smallholder avocado farmers around Mt Kenya region and beyond, he said will be available at the FSSC 22000 Food Safety Management Systems certified Kakuzi Avocado Processing and Packhouse facility located near Makuyu town, along the Nairobi-Nyeri highway.

"Kakuzi welcomes the directive provided by AFA-HCD and confirms that for shared prosperity, we shall be providing free Avocado maturity testing services for all smallholder farmers to ensure compliance with the regulatory, national and international market requirements," Flowers said.

He added, "Kenya currently enjoys a favourable international market position for quality avocado production, and this status needs to be jealously guarded by ensuring phytosanitary, environmental, social, and governance standards are strictly maintained across the board."

He disclosed that Kakuzi has already undertaken internal maturity testing at its Quality Control Room within its GlobalGAP-certified Makuyu Packhouse, with a forecast to commence its HASS avocado harvests in compliance with the regulations.

In its directive, AFA-HCD has reiterated that all avocado export produce will be subject to inspection by AFA-HCD inspectors. Exporters will also be required to apply for inspection at least three days prior to shipment.

To ensure product traceability, all exporters must also submit a list of their Horticultural Produce Marketing Agents (HPMA) or suppliers before Monday, February 26, 2024.

The directives to ensure quality and market standards also stressed that exporters or their agents found transporting avocados without crates or on open pick-up trucks (or Probox vehicles) contrary to the Horticulture Regulations shall be penalized.

Ends

About Kakuzi PLC

Kakuzi PLC is a listed Kenyan superfoods producer on the Nairobi and London Stock Exchange, engaging in cultivating, processing and marketing avocados, blueberries, macadamia, tea, livestock and commercial forestry. At Kakuzi, we continuously strive to build a sustainable agricultural portfolio that can mitigate weather risks to which the sector has historically been subjected. Our development plans are in full swing, with significant additional areas of avocado and macadamia planted and initial trials for blueberry development running well. We operate in two separate locations in Kenya; our main operation and Head Offices are based in Makuyu, Murang'a County. The Kakuzi (Kaboswa) Tea Estate is situated in Nandi Hills, Nandi County. www.kakuzi.co.ke