



## KENYA FACT SHEET

Feed the Future, the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative, is establishing a lasting foundation for progress against global hunger. With a focus on smallholder farmers, particularly women, Feed the Future supports partner countries in developing their agriculture sectors to spur economic growth that increases incomes and reduces hunger, poverty, and undernutrition. Feed the Future efforts are driven by country-led priorities and rooted in partnership with donor organizations, the private sector, and civil society to enable long-term success. Feed the Future aims to assist millions of vulnerable women, children, and family members to escape hunger and poverty, while also reaching significant numbers of children with highly effective nutrition interventions to prevent stunting and child mortality.

### Feed the Future in Kenya

Agriculture is the backbone of Kenya's economy and central to the Government of Kenya's development strategy. Kenya's agriculture sector employs more than 75 percent of the workforce and accounts both directly and indirectly for approximately 51 percent of Kenya's gross domestic product (GDP).

Kenya's population is growing by approximately one million people per year. Combined with stagnant agricultural productivity and limited arable land, this demographic growth poses critical challenges to food security. Two to four million people receive food aid annually. Only about 20 percent of Kenyan land is arable, yet maximum yields have not been reached in these areas, leaving considerable potential for increases in productivity. Most farmers work without basic agricultural inputs or updated technology and lack adequate financial or extension services.

Persistent crises, such as drought, in Kenya's arid lands exacerbate the vulnerability of basic livelihoods. In response, the U.S. Government has brought together humanitarian and development assistance to build resilience and expand economic opportunities in the arid lands through disaster risk and conflict reduction, natural resource management, and strengthening of livestock and other sectors.

With the largest dairy herd in east and southern Africa, Kenya has the potential to meet local demand for dairy and target regional markets. As one of the largest African exporters of fresh produce to Europe, Kenya's horticulture industry can expand local and regional markets. Markets, in turn, can significantly grow through reforms that address policy constraints, irrigation, roads, agricultural inputs, extension, and market access promotion.



### Feed the Future Focus

**Target Regions:** High-rainfall, arid, and semi-arid areas

**Value Chains:** Horticulture, dairy, maize, and legumes in high-rainfall areas; drought-tolerant crops, horticulture, legumes, and pulses in semi-arid areas; and livestock in arid regions

**Objectives:** Promote value chain growth and diversification to increase GDP, smallholder farmers' incomes, and nutritional status and economic opportunities for women, youth, and other vulnerable populations

## Fostering Innovation

Like a venture-capital fund, one Feed the Future project in Kenya seeks to expand innovative, market-driven solutions that improve food security and nutrition. Investments include agricultural research, extension services, communications technology, farm input distributors, and other value-added enterprises. The project began implementation in May 2012, and has started to identify key innovators to support it.

## Promoting Science and Technology

The Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) researches crop varieties for the semi-arid zone, including improved seeds, pest control, and food safety for maize, sorghum, millet, sweet potato, cowpea, and pigeon pea. Feed the Future works with KARI to increase the quality and availability of drought-tolerant crops and varieties that build resilience to the effects of climate change. Kenya also works with the University of Nairobi to create awareness about the advantages of biotechnology. In addition, Kenya is part of collaborative research efforts to control a highly virulent wheat stem rust disease, improve goat productivity, address livestock diseases, and reduce the occurrence of aflatoxin fungus in maize.

## Expanding Access to Finance

Feed the Future expands access to rural and farm financing through local Kenyan financial institutions. These institutions not only develop and deliver financial products for the rural poor in targeted value chains, but also leverage the largest portfolio of loan guarantees in the world through the Development Credit Authority. Efforts also include working with the United Kingdom to establish the Value Chain Finance Center, which identifies high-impact finance initiatives to improve local profitability. Expanded access to finance requires key policy reforms to improve credit information sharing for targeted groups.

## Engaging in the Policy Dialogue

To enhance food security and reduce poverty, the U.S. Government works with the Government of Kenya and the East African community on national and regional policies including trade policy reforms to reduce high tariffs on grain imports. Feed the Future works with the Government of Kenya to implement its land policy, which supports a land tenure system that provides greater security and equity for individuals and communities. Feed the Future works with the Tegemeo Institute of Egerton University and Michigan State University to study agricultural policy issues and to advocate for key reforms in the sector.

## Nutrition

In Kenya, 35 percent of children under five are stunted and 16 percent are underweight. From 2010 to 2030, undernutrition is estimated to cost Kenya approximately \$38.3 billion in GDP due to losses in workforce productivity. Thus, reducing undernutrition will help address the cycle of poverty in Kenya. With the support of Feed the Future investments, the Government of Kenya has established a Food Security and Nutrition Policy to provide an overarching framework that addresses these challenges.

## Gender Integration

Women are active at every point in the food value chain and manage an estimated 44 percent of Kenya's smallholder households. Their contribution is significant, as their harvests provide essential nutrients for families, especially in home gardens. Gender-focused approaches empower women through access to technologies, capital, and extension services. Training activities are designed to promote their leadership in business and producer organizations, particularly in horticulture crops where women predominate. Similarly, the strategy emphasizes transformational "whole family" household approaches, which aim to increase shared decision-making within families for accelerated growth.

### Did You Know?

- **More than 75%** of Kenya's workforce is employed in agriculture
  - **46%** of the population lives below the poverty line
- **35%** of children under five are stunted and **16%** are underweight