

WASTE | Most fruits sold locally goes bad before it is sold

Study launched on post-harvest losses

Several global bodies are conducting research into losses associated with crops to help improve agri-processing

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Kenya loses billions of shillings every year when large quantities of fruits, vegetables, milk and fish go bad in the market.

This is now the subject of a new study by international organisations.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation and the United Nations are carrying out the study to quantify losses, particularly those on bananas, maize, fish and milk.

The food processing and packaging industry is holding its breath in anticipation of the opportunities that exist.

Some have arranged a symposium in November to expose local producers to modern food processing and packaging.

"The Food and Agricultural Organisation, the United Nations, the partner of Messe Dusseldorf in the Save Food initiative and Unep (the United Nations Environmental Programme), will present the results of the ongoing



Children in Tana River County stand next to a pile of freshly picked mangoes.

FILE | NATION

study on losses of maize, fish, banana and dairy products in Kenya," said Starling Expo chief executive officer Urs Albert Ingold.

An estimated 64 per cent of the annual mango harvest goes to waste due to poor processing, handling and packaging. Ninety three per cent of mangoes harvested in Kenya are sold as fresh fruit in markets and this is where most are damaged.

This can be remedied through im-

proved processing and packaging.

Industrialisation and Enterprise Development Principal Secretary Wilson Songa says food supply is compromised, reduces farmers' income and the country's exports.

"We need to improve on processing and packaging of agro products by adopting modern technology," he said

Agro-processing is a driver of industrialisation and attainment of medium

economic status by 2030.

Asia Pacific leads in food processing and packaging at 22 per cent and is expected to have the fastest growth in global sales of packaged food between 2013 and 2017, followed by Middle-East and Africa, at 16.4 per cent.

Interpack, the world's largest packaging exhibition on processing and packaging, says this is multi-billion dollar industry that can reduce losses of many products.

TRADE DEFICIT

Recurring losses leave farmers in debt

■ Recurring losses suffered in bananas, maize, milk and fish and due to poor preservation, processing, handling and storage affect farmers and fishermen. Poor packaging also compromises product appeal when these products arrive in the market, resulting in financial loss.

■ The country's total exports declined by at least 3 per cent last year, according to the 2014 Economic Survey, further worsening the country's balance of trade deficit.

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We need to improve on packaging and processing by adopting modern technology to attain Vision 2030”

Industrialisation Principal Secretary Wilson Songa