



In West Africa, COLEACP is backing sustainable farming and trade

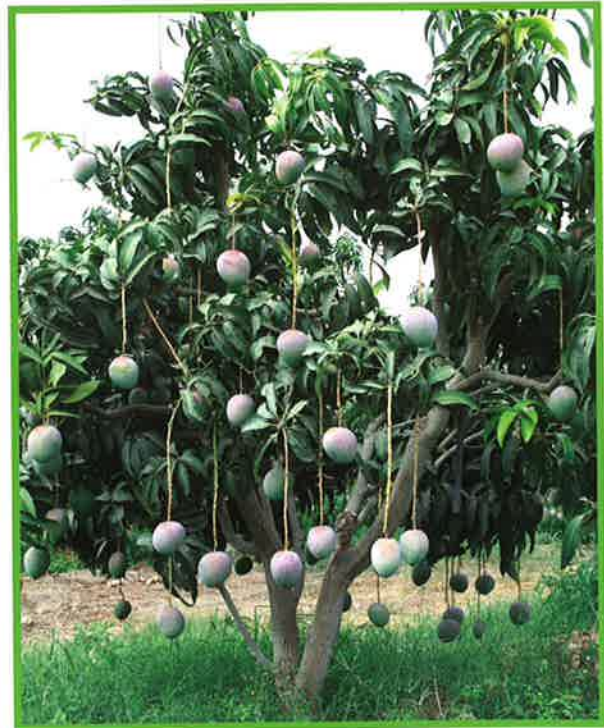
With the help of the COLEACP-PIP aid programme, over the years the mango exporter Fruiteq has managed to create a sustainable partnership with one of its clients, the Dutch importer Nature's Pride

Fruiteq was set up in 2005 to support mango growing in West Africa and now exports 1200 to 1600 tonnes a year of fresh mangos to the Netherlands. Its main clients are Nature's Pride (Fair for Life and Fair Trade mangos), Eosta (organic mangos) and AgroFair (organic and Fair Trade mangos). "Our aim is to gain access to the markets for small-scale mango growers", explained the Fruiteq manager, Adama Zongo. From its base in Burkina Faso, Fruiteq exports the crops of six farmers' organisations: two in Burkina Faso, two in Mali and two in the Ivory Coast, with a total membership of 2000 farmers. It has two packhouses, one each in Burkina Faso and Mali, and has GlobalGAP, organic farming and FairTrade certification. As well as the 2000 mango growers and 400 packhouse employees, Fruiteq provides work for 1200 pickers in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Ivory Coast. "In spite of everything, these countries are still among the poorest in the world", Adama Zongo pointed out. "They are also desert countries that need to be protected by conserving their environment and resources and

encouraging sustainable development in the community. In addition, it is complicated for these countries to export fresh products, so we need partners we can trust in order to build a solid value chain with them and with the growers".

Fair for Life

Nature's Pride is based in the Netherlands and imports, ripens, packs and markets over 300 species of exotic fruits, especially mangos, avocados, asparagus and mangetout. It sources supplies from over 60 tropical countries and sells to 25 European countries, particularly the Netherlands, Germany and Norway. "Consumers are more and more sensitive to good social and environmental practices associated with the products they buy", confirmed Els Lindeboom of Nature's Pride. "We reckon that good social conditions will become a standard in the same way that GlobalGAP has. Also, we want to ensure sustainable supplies of quality products that comply with European health regulations,



particularly MRLs, and guarantee good social conditions". Nature's Pride has been working on this since 2006: it bans child or forced labour, insists on hygiene and has funded the sinking of two wells. Three years ago the company joined Fruiteq in committing to Fair for Life certification. Set up and certified by the Swiss organization IMO, Fair for Life is a corporate social responsibility and fair trade accreditation programme. "It is a market-oriented quality standard and is less expensive than others", highlighted Els Lindeboom. Since then, for each mango bought, Nature's Pride has been paying € 0.01 for village community development in the regions where the mangos are harvested and for Fair for Life related audits. For instance, the fair trade initiative has enabled Fruiteq to drill two wells in nearby villages, a boon to the community which is comparable to previous projects funded by the fair trade premium paid by another of the company's partners, the Dutch company AgroFair, which made it possible to set up a pharmacy, buy an ambulance and build and equip schools. "In this way the entire community benefits from the mango exports, strengthening the sectors sustainability", Adama Zongo pointed out.

To reinforce its food safety management system and ability to respond to market demands, Fruiteq also benefits from the technical assistance provided by COLEACP's PIP programme. The development of ready-to-eat mangos has given Fruiteq a boost and the company is currently undertaking expansion. From now on, 500,000 people in the growing areas will benefit from the company's mango exports and a third packhouse, in the Ivory Coast, is scheduled to be built in 2013. ■



The Fruiteq manager, Adama Zongo and Els Lindeboom of Nature's Pride.



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