

Progress and Updates



Commercial Vegetable Sector Development in Ghana

Healthy and Quality Vegetables from Ghana through New Ways of Doing Business

Joekopan Enterprise

Surviving market challenges through
practical action and a change of strategy



Kingdom of the Netherlands





Alternative export crops such as beans help farmers adapt to EU vegetables ban.

Company surmounts unexpected challenge by improving qualifications, capacity and opportunities

Joekopan Levels Up

In collaboration with the University of Ghana's College of Agriculture, Joekopan Enterprise has designed an outgrower training program for farmer-based organisations (FBO) to share good production practices and enhance their ability to produce and handle vegetables.

Joekopan also earned GlobalGAP Option 1 certification as of the last quarter of 2015., and construction of a new pack-house facility is nearly complete. With GhanaVeg's help, Joekopan brought in drip irrigation technology and improved seed. These factors, coupled with the training program, have increased outgrowers productivity and brought on-farm pests and disease under control.

The Case of the Ban

Due to phytosanitary issues leading to interceptions, a temporary ban was

imposed on specific vegetables exported from Ghana to the EU market. The ban covered all forms of chilies, turia, bitter melon and aubergines, among others.

Unfortunately, the ban affected 90% of Joekopan's revenue, and the weakened demand for export crops restricted outgrowers' production. This market vulnerability showed a clear need for the company to diversify both in terms of products and markets.

Strategic Turn-around

Joekopan quickly adopted a product/market development strategy to survive the ban. The company first explored new, non-EU markets – local and international – for its existing products. As a result, for the first time ever, Joekopan supplied fresh products like chilies to the local Ghanaian market.

However, to maintain the strong demand and volumes necessary to keep the Torgorme project viable, a new key product – an "alternative export" – was required, in effect to sidestep the ban: solution? – okra, *not* on the ban list.



Farmers attend an outgrower training session offered by Joekopan.

Okra is a key product already in demand by current long-term customers, who require about 30 tonnes a week of the Indiana and Clemson varieties.

With the help of Joekopan outgrowers, over the last year the company successfully produced about 30 tonnes of okra for both export and local markets. Customers were highly impressed by the quality and there wasn't a single interception of Joekopan's okra exports.

Beneficial Alternatives

Joekopan has identified additional alternative exports such as beans and peas, popular in countries like France and Spain. These are now on Joekopan's product list for the next GlobalGAP audit. Joekopan also brought on board an experienced agronomist from Kenya who is leading the production effort. The bonus? Beans and peas are excellent rotation crops for okra production.

Outgrower Perspectives

Timothy Abiwu, a member of the Labene FBO currently working in partnership with

Joekopan, explained, "We also receive other inputs such as fertilizers, seeds and pesticides, since Joekopan is keen on quality of produce for clients."

"Joekopan buys our crops at about 90% of market price whenever we harvest. Before the ban we were sure of our market, now the situation is changing," he continued. "Joekopan has added to our market channel and we are glad we have a company that buys our produce as well as assisting us in the production process."

Contact



**Joekopan
Enterprise**

Mr. Bernard Opuni
+233 (0) 50 673 5914
julianaopuni41@gmail.com



Timothy Abiwu, one of Joekopan's outgrowers, checks over a vegetable plot.

Way Forward

The last year has been intensely challenging for Joekopan, and the impact of the ban on exporters in general cannot be overstated. However, Joekopan is meanwhile actively participating in GhanaVeg field trials for export crops, aimed at developing protocols to

reduce the incidence of pests/harmful organisms. The company is hopeful the ban will soon be lifted, and by then, they expect to have more new products for export – which ultimately means an expansion of their product range and a much more resilient economic outlook for both Joekopan and its outgrowers. ■



Contact **GhanaVeg**

Email: info@ghanaveg.org

Web: ghanaveg.org

Facebook.com/ghanaveg

Twitter.com/ghanaveg

Instagram: [@ghanaveg1](https://www.instagram.com/ghanaveg1)

Tel. +233 (0) 26 379 4715

+233 (0) 26 685 2587