

NEWS & FEATURES

Apple Farming in Tanzania Takes Root, Creating a New Market and Opportunities for Farmers

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Iringa: Apple farming in Tanzania is experiencing a transformation, setting the stage for growth across East Africa. David Alexander Runge, Commercial Director, Partner, and Entrepreneur of *Tamu Tamu Tanzania* in Iringa, in SAGCOT's Ihemi Cluster, highlights the significant potential for local apple production to reduce the country's reliance on imports.

Tanzania imports a substantial volume of apple-based products, with \$75 million spent annually on apple juice, cider, vinegar, and fresh apples. Through *Tamu Tamu Tanzania's* efforts, local farmers are cultivating high-quality South African apple varieties, aiming to replace imports and establish an export market within East Africa.

Empowering Local Farmers: Since its establishment in 2016, *Tamu Tamu Tanzania* has worked to identify apple varieties suitable for Tanzanian climates. The company initially introduced over 50 apple varieties, and after three years of rigorous research and development, they identified the most promising types. *Tamu Tamu Tanzania* is now collaborating with around 2,000 farmers, with plans to expand to 3,500 within six months. The focus is on training lead farmers who can serve as role models within their communities, encouraging cautious farmers to embrace apple cultivation by showing successful results.

A New Taste Experience for Tanzanians: One of the standout offerings from *Tamu Tamu Tanzania* is its 100% natural apple juice, cold-pressed and unsweetened. For many Tanzanians, this is their first taste of authentic apple juice, with reactions ranging from amazement to delight at the fruity, naturally sweet flavor. The company has expanded its apple-based products to include organic ciders, apple chips, and other apple derivatives, all sourced from local small-scale farmers. *Tamu Tamu Tanzania's* organic and sustainable production practices resonate with consumers looking for high-quality, natural products.

Market Reach and Growing Demand: While currently available in select high-end supermarkets in cities like Masaki, Arusha, and Iringa, *Tamu Tamu Tanzania's* products are gaining popularity among Tanzanian families. Direct sales through social media platforms like Instagram have surged, with families ordering boxes of fresh apples, juice, and cider. The company has capitalized on the demand for fresh, locally sourced products by ensuring quick and direct deliveries and connecting with customers through accessible channels.

A Vision for Local Production and Export: *Tamu Tamu Tanzania's* broader vision is not just to reduce imports but to position Tanzania as an apple supplier within East Africa. With the demand for fresh, high-quality apples growing, the company sees significant export potential to neighbouring countries. Runge explains that apple farming offers a unique advantage for farmers due to the consistently high, year-round pricing of apples, which provides a reliable

income stream for those who venture into this fruit's production.

Through the initiative led by *Tamu Tamu Tanzania*, apple farming is opening new economic opportunities for Tanzanian farmers while offering consumers fresh, high-quality apple products.

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