

**STATUS, CHALLENGES AND MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CANNING  
NAVY BEAN IN KENYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Navy bean (white bean) is an export crop with potential to significantly improve incomes of smallholder farmers in Kenya; its production and marketing has, however, stagnated. A study was conducted to determine the status, challenges and marketing opportunities for navy bean. Primary data were obtained by interviewing white bean producers, processors, key resource experts, regulators and consumers using category-specific semi-structured questionnaires. Secondary data were collected from published work and available statistics. The study demonstrated that navy bean production in several parts of Kenya dates back to the 1950s, but it is now confined (though with very low production levels) to Nakuru County districts of Rongai and Nakuru north. Decline in production is partly attributed to the collapse of contractual arrangements between producers and processors. Currently, local processors import most of their navy beans from Ethiopia. There are two Navy bean market channels: local channel initiated by local chain actors and an Ethiopian channel initiated by wholesale traders who supply current processors and other traders. Main challenges include low producer prices, poor agronomic and post harvest practices, low value addition and processing and lack of market information, particularly to farmers. Opportunities identified for participants in the value chain include the presence of the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) for seed inspection and certification, increase in processing capacity, improved breeding and seed production systems and the exploration of new markets coupled with innovative crop promotion strategies. Strategies for improving the competitiveness of navy bean subsector hinges on accelerated navy bean breeding and seed systems (including informal seed systems), processing/canning and sufficient market information to all participants in the value chain. Evidence shows that the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) in collaboration with the University of Nairobi are doing some breeding work on navy beans. Moreover, several materials are under farmer participatory evaluation trials in historically navy bean producing areas in the rift valley, central and upper eastern.

**Key words:** navy bean, canning, production, marketing