



Introduction

Benok Agriculture is an Agribusiness company incorporated in Kenya. We are working with groups of farmers to produce safe, traceable, and quality farm produce in the categories of: fresh fruits, vegetables, flowers, oil crops, cereals & pulses, and herbs & spices for both the export and local markets.

We also provide consultancy services in: Market Access & Linkages, Farm Management, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), and Food Safety Management. We are also a leading Fruits and Vegetable Export and Local Agency.

About contract farming

Contract farming is an agricultural production practice carried out by establishing an agreement between a buyer and farmers. This contract establishes the conditions for the production and marketing of a farm produce or products.

How contract farming benefits the farmer

1. Guaranteed market for produce under contract, hence reducing marketing and transaction costs.
2. The farmer can easily and accurately project their earnings from farming which helps in planning.
3. The farmer receives agronomic support (at a negligible fee) which ensures that his/her production is optimized leading to improved yields.
4. The produce is collected at farm gate and therefore reducing cost of transportation by the farmer.



5. The paperwork and payment records can help the farmer acquire loans from banks to improve the business.
6. The farmer is privileged not to walk this path alone as we also pay keen attention to production so as to meet the market standards
7. Provision of market access and information (through our trusted value chain analysis approach) which is key to farmer`s production activities.
8. Strengthening of farmers` organizations since production in volumes from different farmers is encouraged
9. Exposure visits; after a well-developed rapport between the two parties, the farmer may be invited to the park-house to witness the value addition process and appreciate its cost. Benok may also visit the farmer to understand the cost of production.
10. Makes small scale farming competitive - small scale farmers can access farming technology, credit, better marketing channels and information while lowering transaction costs.
11. It ensures high yields with high quality produce which is competitive in the market as such opens up better and reliable markets to small scale farmers.
12. Value addition training to farmers who wish to process their produce.

Requirements

1. Access to water source throughout the year i.e. river, borehole, dam etc.
2. If the farm is below 1 ha (2.5 acres), we prefer to work with farmers within a radius of 100km from our location (Nairobi).
3. Drip irrigation is preferred.
4. Farmer should be willing and available for training
5. We will only accept large to medium sized onions/garlic
6. One ton (1000KGS) and below delivery will be done by supplier/farmer

Our Preferred Varieties

1. Onions:
 - a. Red Creole
 - b. Jamba F1
 - c. Red Pinoy
 - d. Red Coach
2. Garlic:
 - a. Hard neck
 - b. Soft neck
3. Avocado Varieties acceptable:
 - a. Hass
 - b. Fuerte
4. Mango Varieties acceptable:
 - a. Kent
 - b. Apple Mango
 - c. Ngowe
5. Passion fruits acceptable:
 - a. Yellow Passion
 - b. Purple Passion



Terms

1. This will be a closed contract; terms will not change midstream.
2. Mode of Payment will be as agreed and captured in the contract.
3. Delivery of produce will be done with prior communication to Benok Agriculture and a delivery note shall be required.
4. Produce shall be accepted under market terms.

Why Contracting Farming?

- Reduces the risk of production since the farmer has a dedicated agronomist who ensures optimal production is realized by offering technical guidance.
- It motivates the farmer to work more precisely with the knowledge of a sure market and also honor the contract.
- It facilitates smart investing since the farmer has a clear knowledge of the expected outcome in terms of price.

Getting Started

1. Site visits will be conducted to the farm to assess the physical factors such as proximity to water source, nature of land and soil, distance from the road, and security, so as to assess the risks involved.
2. Soil Sampling will then be done and should arrive to the lab within 24hrs to allow for optimum Moisture Content testing.
3. Proposal paper on the technical and Financial aspects will be drafted
4. Engagement on the actual contract (paper work).
5. Implementation of the project.



6. Closure and follow up i.e. backstopping services.
7. Buying of the produce.

At Benok Agriculture we are keen to produce high quality, safe, and traceable produce, and for that reason, you are at the core of this production cycle as our contract farmer. This high-quality produce guarantees handsome earning for you. Therefore, we are looking forward to a fruitful engagement with you.

Main Activities involved

Site Visit; This will be done by Benok agriculture to establish the physical parameters in the farm such as size, availability of water, proximity to roads, security among other aspects.

The visits` cost will be as agreed by both the parties.

Soil Sampling and Testing; The soil samples shall be taken from the farm by either the farmer and packaged well.

Soil Sampling will cost at least Ksh. 3000

NB:

- The farmer should be careful not to sample soils from swampy areas, recently fertilized areas, Under trees and eroded sections.
- Mix the soil thoroughly and avoid clods.
- Collect both the top and sub layer then label clearly to avoid confusion.
- Always try to maintain the same soil testing laboratory since labs use different reagents and therefore consistency is not guaranteed.



Advisory Services: we offer all agronomic advisory services from planting, weeding Post harvest handling and selling. Our reference are the global standards for good agriculture practices.

Collection of Produce: After harvesting, Benok will be collect the produce from the farmer and payments be made after quality processing.

Implementation Plan

Case Study; Onion

Land Preparations;

- The first land preparation done is clearing of the bushes and shrubs.
- This may then be followed by ploughing with either ox drawn plough or a tractor.
- For big clods and also with the presence of hardpans, 1st and 2nd harrowing will be done up to a fine tilth.
- The soil will then be drenched with a broad-spectrum fungicide to kill persistent soil-born fungus like Fusarium and Pythium. Ralstonia (in case of tomatoes can also be sprayed against using copper-based fungicides)
- Onions require well-drained soil that is rich in organic matter and doesn't dry out quickly.
- Onions need six to eight hours of direct sunlight daily and therefore the land is better off exposed to adequate sunlight.
- Prepare the garden bed for planting by incorporating a 1- to 2-inch layer of compost into the top 4 to 6 inches of soil. (Adding Compost reduces the need for later fertilizer application)
- If your garden site drains poorly, an option is to create a 4- to 6-inch tall raised garden bed, which will improve drainage. Using additional compost helps to improve moisture retention in sandy sites that drain too quickly.
- Other fertilizer application should be done Based on the results from Soil testing.

Nursery Preparation

- Prepare the soil so that there are no lumps. Raised beds with deep soils will stop seeds from being washed away by rain and also encourage vigorous roots development.
- 1 week before planting, mix well-rotted manure into the soil.
- It should be raised to a height of about 15cm to encourage drainage, 1m width for easy workability and the length of your own desire depending on the number of seeds to be sowed.
- Plant seeds 8 cm apart in rows 15 cm apart. Cover the seeds with soil.
- Shallow drills are made 2cm deep and 15cm apart after levelling and seeds sowed singly. This is achieved by mixing sand and onion seeds in a ratio of 3:1.
- Mulching should be done with dry grass free from weeds and pests then watering done twice per week depending with the moisture level. In most cases, the seeds sprout after seven days.
- The crop in the nursery should be established for 4-6 weeks and transplanted when pencil size in thickness, 10 to 15cm tall and have 3-5 true leaves.
- Water the seeds. Add dry grass as mulch. This will protect the soil and keep water in.
- Once they germinate remove mulch & spray with fungicides and pesticides to control nursery pests & diseases.

Transplanting

- Onion transplanting should be done at the onset of rains or when there is certainty of irrigation water.
- It's wise to do a soil test before planting to know the status of nutrients in the soil, which will guide you on nutrient application for onions production.
- The farm must have been prepared well to a fine tilth and the manure well decomposed as illustrated in land preparation.

- Depending on the soil test, one can consider using DAP during planting and top-dress using CAN at week four. Frequent scouting for crop nutrition is paramount and mitigation measures should be taken immediately.
- To prevent the transplanting shock, do the exercise early morning, late in evening or when the weather is cloudy.
- It's ideal to trim the shoot and root (3 inches for shoots and 0.5 inch for roots) before seedling placement to minimize moisture loss and seedling shock during and after transplanting.
- The ideal spacing is 8-10cm between the seedlings and 15cm for inter row distance to allow better bulb development. Spacing is also determined by the variety planted and soil fertility.
- Onion production can be done in the greenhouse and open field depending on the location with the latter being more preferred.

Crop management

Once planted, red onions require minimal care other than regular irrigation. Pull weeds regularly so they don't compete with the onions. Water onions once or twice weekly, or when the top surface of soil begins to dry.

Onions need about 1 inch of water per week from irrigation or rainfall. Overwatering can result in fungus problems or bulb rot. So, check the soil moisture before watering, and don't allow it to become soggy or waterlogged.

Pests and disease

- Pests such as thrips, onion flies, red spider mites and diseases such as downy mildew, purple blotch and rust affect onions. Frequent scouting for pest and diseases is important for early detection, prevention and control.
- The land should be free of weeds, which compete for nutrients, light and space and harbour pest and diseases. This is done by mechanical methods or the recommended herbicides.

Harvest and Post-harvest

- Once transplanting is done, one should prepare to harvest after 3-5 months depending on the variety.
- Top leaves will yellow and begin to fall over, an indication they are ready for harvesting, which should coincide with dry and hot weather.
- You may bend down the foliage after it begins to fall over and also reduce watering as it speeds onions' maturity.
- Dig up the onions about two weeks after bending the foliage. Loosen the soil on each side of the onion row, and lift the bulbs from the soil, but don't pull them up by the leaves.
- Curing of the onions is done by uprooting every single stem and leaving it to dry after which leaves and roots are cut off with a sharp knife. A good harvest offers 20-25 tons per acre depending with the variety.

In Summary

- Onions do well in well-drained fertile soils rich in humus with the pH ranging from 5.8-6.5.
- Onions can be grown by direct seeding, which requires intensive management or one can decide to first establish a nursery bed.
- It's always wise to do a soil test before planting to know the status of nutrients in the soil, which will guide you on nutrient application for onions production.
- Onion production can be done in the greenhouse and open field depending on the location with the latter being more preferred because of sunlight.