

Wilmar Agro Ltd, a perfect example of clustering and successful export coaching

# Learning to feed 3.000 families on flowers

**On the basis of expected market opportunities, the CBI launched a new Export Coaching Programme for cut flowers in selected East and Southern African countries in 2000. Wilfred Muiruri Kamami was one of the first participants. The 7-year programme focussed on marketing management and post-harvest management for operational marketing and export managers. In 2001 Kamami and three colleagues attended a 5-day training in Holland on marketing and export. CBI expert Jeroen van der Hulst followed Kamami during the last year of the programme.**

In October 1995 Kamami exported the first flowers from his own nursery to Europe. For a small Kenyan grower like Kamami, export was a big adventure that took a lot of courage. A year later the company was reorganised and began to take steps towards adopting an 'out-grower system': twenty

other growers agreed to bring their flowers to Wilmar Agro Ltd, where they were controlled, graded, bunched and exported to the flower auctions in the Netherlands. This cooperative concept was new in Kenya, but since then Wilmar Agro has become a huge success. Currently no less than 3.000

growers are participating in the scheme with flowers like *Asclepia Moby Dick*, *Ornithogalum saundersiae*, *Ornithogalum thyrsoides*, *Papyrus*, *Crocoshmia*, *Statice*, *Eryngium* and *Molucella*. Each individual grower sells his flowers to Wilmar Agro and receives payment within seven days. Apart from exporting, Wilmar Agro supports the growers with knowledge and supplies good basic material, such as seeds or bulbs.

## **Socio-economic impact**

The growers are organised in product groups. Each group of 15 to 30 farmers grows one specific product. These growers get to know each other, which strengthens the organisational structure. Once or twice a week the flowers are collected at the col-



'Changing the life of many families', is what inspires Wilfred Muiruri Kamami (right) whilst growing export-ready flowers. Left: external expert Jeroen van der Hulst (photo Peter van Es).