

NAEB markets Rwandan tea under national tea brand

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Rwandan tea will now be marketed under the Rwanda National Tea brand name as one of the ways to strengthen consumer confidence, as well as promote and ensure its competitiveness on the local and global markets, the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB) has said.



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Issa Nkurunziza, the tea division manager at the NAEB, said the move seeks to communicate the values behind Rwandan teas, their uniqueness and their distinction.

"The new tea brand name seeks to reflect the values and vision of the stakeholders at every level of the tea value chain. It also seeks to increase sales and consumption at the local and international levels, but also help raise brand awareness among consumers," he said.

He added that this can only be achieved through the development of a competitive brand strategy built on the product's distinctive propositions, as well as its intangible values.

According to the NAEB, the brand will empower and inspire stakeholders involved in the tea value chain to conserve and

value the country's heritage.

"The plan is to position Rwanda tea as a premium product in its own right by introducing and re-enforcing its brand identity," Nkurunziza said.

The agro-exports body believes that by creating a unique brand identity that reflects the quality of the country's tea and its brand values will help boost the industry's competitiveness globally.

Rwanda's tea is sold through the Mombasa auction.

NAEB targets \$94.9 million from tea exports per annum by 2018, from \$65.7 million in 2013.

Changing the dynamics of tea trade

According to Nkurunziza, only registered tea stakeholders will use it, in conformity with the set standards and regulations. Establishing the brand in the market and growing the brand culture, loyalty and vision in the most cohesive, consistent way remains the key objective.

Sector experts say the new brand image could help promote and protect the reputation of Rwanda tea, setting it apart from other teas.

"This will eventually build confidence among buyers and inspire farmers to increase production but also embrace value addition," said Pascal Nsabimana, the chairperson of Kobacyamu Tea Cooperative.

The brand values will reflect a link between the tea, the stakeholders and the country.

"The farmers are the backbone for the key brand message that will ensure that the brand proposition is in alignment with the stakeholders' needs and beliefs.

"In business, we strongly believe that every success is strengthened by a brand. Once this is realised, there is no denying of the significance of the role that brand plays in marketing," he said.

It's only business that give clients positive experiences that succeed, according to Pie Ntwari, the NAEB communications manager.

Ntwari said having a national tea brand image will support efforts geared at improving quality as well as widening the market for the country's tea.

The agro-exports body also plans to distribute 43 million tea seedlings by the end of the year.

So far, more than 13,650,000 tea seedlings have been distributed and planted.