IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING FALSE CODLING MOTH IN ROSES IN ETHIOPIA

Locations	Ethiopia
Dates	01/06/2025 - 30/06/2026

Summary

The horticultural sector is key to Ethiopia’s economy, contributing to foreign exchange revenue and employment. But the rose-cut flower is of significance due to its increasing demand, market growth, and Ethiopia’s ability to dominate production thanks to its favourable conditions. However, the false codling moth, a major pest, is threatening the quality and marketability of rose-cut flowers, jeopardising the growing horticulture industry and Ethiopia’s export markets. And due to its persistent presence, quarantine restrictions are resulting in high costs and lower profits. To address this problem, CABI is seeking to strengthen the capacity of Ethiopian horticulture authorities, associations and member farms to help improve compliance.

The problem

In recent years, Ethiopia's horticultural sector has become a key source of foreign exchange revenue. During 2023-2024, the industry generated $1.0 bn in revenue from exporting flowers, fruits and vegetables. Of this, $469.85m was generated from exporting cut flowers, in particular, roses. As a result, the horticultural sector is one of the top five contributors to Ethiopia's foreign exchange earnings.

However, the sector faces challenges from insect pests such as aphids, false codling moth (*Thaumatotibia leucotreta* (Meyrick)) (FCM), leaf miners and thrips. These insect pests damage the cut flowers by boring into the buds, often causing the flowers to wilt, not bloom and discolouring. These effects reduce the quality and marketability of cut flowers, leading to reduced yields and losses in international markets due to infested plant materials being intercepted.

The FCM is particularly concerning – with more than 70 host plants, the FCM is especially damaging to roses. A zero tolerance from EU and UK markets means that quarantine restrictions are imposed on exporting countries where FCM is present in production areas, resulting in growers and exporters facing higher operating costs and lower profit margins.

Furthermore, the ever-changing regulatory environment in international markets for rose-cut flowers makes it harder to produce roses profitably for export from Ethiopia due to additional phytosanitary measures such as those prescribed by Systems Approach*.

As a result of increased interceptions and economic losses, the Ethiopian Agricultural Authority (EAA) has identified FCM as an emerging major pest of concern in Ethiopia's rose-cut flower exports.

What we are doing

To address this problem, TradeMark Africa (TMA) has contracted CABI to provide technical support to Ethiopian regulatory authorities and horticultural growers to improve FCM management and enhance compliance with EU market standards for rose-cut flowers.

During the project, CABI is aiming to strengthen the capacity of the Ethiopian Horticulture Producer Exporters Association (EHPEA), the EAA and member farms in identifying and managing FCM. This will enhance Ethiopia's compliance with the EU export market requirements.

Specific objectives of the project are to:

- Establish the status of Systems Approach implementation in rose flower farms exporting to the EU market
- Equip growers and plant quarantine experts with advanced knowledge and skills in FCM identification and management
- Foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among local stakeholders
- Update phytosanitary export inspection and certification standard operation procedures for Bole International Airport inspection facility and pilot it at the facility
- Implement a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress, measure impact and ensure continous improvement

To achieve this, the specific activities are:

- Assess Systems Approach implementation in rose flower farms
- Develop Systems Approach audit procedures
- Train horticultural growers and EAA plant quarantine experts to enhance their skills in identifying and managing FCM
- Engage relevant local stakeholders to foster collaboration and share knowledge

- Update Phytosanitary Export Inspection and Certification Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) for Bole International Airport inspection facility

*__Systems Approach__ is a pest risk management option that integrates different measures, each reinforcing the effectiveness of the system. At least two of the measures act independently, which means if one fails, the system can continue. Measures can include the use of resistant varieties, biological control agents, orchard sanitation, protective packaging, mating disruption and trapping for monitoring. Adjustments can be made until the appropriate level of protection is achieved by the importing country (FAO).

Results so far

The status of Systems Approach implementation in 16 rose flower farms, which are exporting cut flowers to the European Union, has been determined, and audit procedures for Systems Approach have been developed. Rose flower growers have also been sensitized on Systems Approach, EU market requirements and inspection procedures.

SOPs used for inspecting rose-cut flower consignments at Bole International Airport exit point have been reviewed. For the EAA, SOPs for inspection and export certification of rose-cut flowers have also been developed, together with risk profiling SOPs for rose flower exporters.

CABI is now working with the EAA and EHPEA to address gaps identified during the Systems Approach assessment to minimize the risk of FCM in rose-cut flowers being exported to the EU. These interventions by CABI will support the country to adequately prepare for the scheduled DG-SANTE (Directorate-General for Health & Food Safety of the EU) Audit.

The project will also develop and repurpose training material for FCM identification and management, and create awareness on FCM, Systems Approach, EU market requirements and good agricultural practices.

Donors

Agence Française de Développement through TradeMark Africa

Partners

Ethiopian Agricultural Authority, Ethiopian Horticulture Producer Exporters Association (EHPEA)

https://www.cabi.org/what-we-do/cabi-projects/