



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://feedthefuture.gov/article/flower-power-how-your-valentine%E2%80%99s-day-bouquet-helping-fight-poverty>

Flower Power: How Your Valentine's Day Bouquet is Helping Fight Poverty



Fintrac Inc.

The flower bouquet you bought (or are planning to buy) for your significant other today is doing more than you think. Besides showing your special Valentine that you care, flowers are also an important commodity that is changing the lives of Kenyan farmers and improving their food security.

As the head of a Feed the Future project in Kenya, I work with local partners to improve incomes, food security and nutrition for 200,000 smallholder farmers. These smallholders, many of whom are women, usually farm small plots to feed their families and generate small amounts of income. We work together to enhance productivity, improve processing, and connect these farmers directly to buyers to increase their incomes.

While most of our Feed the Future activities focus on nutritious crops, like orange-flesh sweet potato, we also promote high-value crops such as smallholder-grown cut flowers, like the ones many Americans give one another on Valentine's Day. These high-value crops provide a valuable source of income for farmers to buy important foods, beyond what they grow on their farms, and to pay for household priorities like school fees and medicine.

More than two years ago [we formed a partnership with Wilmar Flowers Ltd](#), Kenya's flower exporter sourcing entirely from smallholder farmers. The company wanted to expand operations to meet growing demand in Europe and around the world. To do so, it needed to invest in more smallholder farmers.

We worked with Wilmar Flowers to find and train new farmers, link to more buyers, and attract private investment to further expand operations. As a result, Wilmar quadrupled its smallholder growers from 1,700 to more than 6,800 today. It also launched seven new products, including new flower varieties and bouquets. The added business enabled Wilmar to invest in collection centers, research and development trials of new flower varieties, and new technologies such as shade nets, charcoal coolers, water harvesting dams, and grading sheds. The company also added technical personnel to provide more extension services directly to farmers.

By expanding its own business, Wilmar is now providing services and livelihoods for thousands of smallholder farmers in Kenya. And the best part? Wilmar doesn't need us anymore—after our initial help concluded, it continues to build a sustainable flower export business in Kenya that benefits smallholder farmers.

Valentine's Day is a big day for the flower industry. Do you know where your flowers came from? Perhaps in buying some for your loved one, you helped make the difference in the life of a Kenyan farmer. Feed the Future is helping making that connection possible. What might seem like a small gesture of love today is actually making a big difference in the lives of farmers thousands of miles away.

For more:

- [View our album on Flickr](#) for photos from this Feed the Future project
- [Read more](#) about Feed the Future's work with Wilmar on the project's website
- [Watch a short BBC Video](#) for more on Kenya's smallholder flower industry



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These bouquets were made from Kenyan smallholder flowers that are now sold in ASDA Grocery stores in the United Kingdom.