

Peanuts may boost Zimbabwe's poor farmers

 By [Paddy Hartdegen](#)

19 Sep 2011

Groundnuts are an increasingly important cash crop for African farmers and about 427 000 hectares of land in that country is growing peanuts that are used by oil extractors and the confectionary industries according to Rob Kelly chairman of AgriSeeds.

He says that exports of peanuts remain low but with the lifting of an international ban on products from Zimbabwe he believes that the market will start to grow exponentially in the next few years providing significant opportunities for local farmers.

Kelly points out that yields from groundnuts are generally low, producing about 500 kilograms per hectare but they are a vital part of the diet of rural communities in Zimbabwe - and other parts of Africa - particularly for the oil that groundnuts contain.

Zimbabwe's small rural farmers are responsible for producing about 75% of the groundnuts and they use mainly Spanish cultivars that are grown in light soils.

Kelly says if the country wants to increase its exports it will have to consistent supply quality products and export them to countries in the European Union where the demand for quality groundnuts is high.

He says that Zimbabwe needs to adopt a more integrated approach to producing and selling groundnuts and this includes standardising seed varieties, creating a uniform marketing strategy and providing better fumigation services for farmers to increase yields and improve crop quality.

Groundnuts compete with soya and legumes.

[Read more on AgriSeeds.](#)

ABOUT PADDY HARTDEGEN

Paddy Hartdegen has been working as a journalist and writer for the past 40 years since his first article was published in the *Sunday Tribune* when he was just 16-years-old. He has written 13 books, edited a plethora of business-to-business publications and written for most of the major newspapers in South Africa.

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