

# How to start tomato farming business

Tomatoes are one of the most used ingredients in cooking for eventually every house hold in Africa.

Demand for tomatoes is increasingly high, but before you start the tomato business, decide on the scale of production, season to produce and the target market. Land for tomato production should have optimal aeration and a lack of toxicity. This is why the use of organic soil amendments is required. Tomatoes can grow in a wide range of soil textures, but sandy soils are the most ideal and perform best in soils with pH of between 5 to 6.5.

## Equipment and inputs

Machinery and equipment needed depend on the scale of production. You need equipment/ machinery for land preparation, sprayers, irrigation hardware.

Tomato inputs include tomato seed. The tomatoes are classified as either determinate, semi determinate or indeterminate. The factors that affect choice of seed are seed availability, yield capacity, resistance to disease and intended market. Ensure that you buy seed from certified and reputable suppliers.

Fertilizers are required to ensure soil fertility and optimum tomato growth. Tomatoes require nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium and should be provided via fertilizer and manure.

Herbicides are required for weed control.

## Labour and marketing

You need to hire part time workers as and when necessary.

Activities that require labour include seed planting, transplanting, fertilizer application, trellising, ploughing, harvesting and others.

There is a large market for tomatoes as the buyers of tomatoes include individuals, caterers, restaurants, food processors, super markets and national fresh produce markets.