**RWANDA POTATO STAKEHOLDERS’ PLATFORM (RPSP) RETREAT HELD**

Musanze, La Palme Hotel

21st to 22nd November 2019

Early 2019, the Rwanda Potato Stakeholders’ Platform has been initiated in a joint effort by RAB, EKN and HortInvest based on a request from MINAGRI for assistance in establishment of a potato platform. HortInvest is currently providing support to strengthen operations of this platform with the aim of developing it into a well-established, well-functioning, coordinated and active public-private multi-stakeholder dialogue platform for the potato sector in Rwanda.

In this process with the support from HortInvest, from 21st to 22nd November 2019 the Rwanda Potato Stakeholders’ Platform conducted a 2-day retreat in Musanze district, with an overall objective of formulating its joint action plan. In addition to this, the retreat was organised to strengthen the newly created potato platform which is to help actors overcome together all bottlenecks that they face in the course of doing their businesses. The retreat was attended by 32 key actors in the Potato Value Chain including smallholder farmers, farm inputs suppliers, traders, agro-processors and development partners who intervene on the potato value chain.

The chair of the RPSP Dr Bucagu Charles, Deputy Director of RAB, emphasized the importance of having such a platform and urged everyone who participated to discuss openly about prevailing issues in the potato value chain in order to come up with a detailed roadmap to address them all. “This platform comes at the right moment, it will help all potato stakeholders to work hand in hand and find solutions to the issues surrounding the potato value chains especially quality seeds, fertilisers, value addition, access to finance and capacity building for our farmers” He said.

The retreat concluded with a six-month action plan covering the following areas:

* To avail quality potato basic seeds of new varieties that meet the market demand in terms of quantity and quality
* To strengthen private seed multiplication to increase the quantity of certified seeds
* Support quality control and certification system.
* To mobilize and sensitize private sector actors to register as seed traders, and to increase number of private sector members actively involved in the potato seed system including both multiplication and commercialisation.
* Capacity building of seed multipliers in technical and business skills. Theoretical and practical training will be provided to seed multipliers, including lessons in TIN registration, record keeping, and cost analysis and business plan elaboration.
* Research development of new varieties more resistant to diseases and responding tomarket needs

The retreat ended on positive note and members agreed to work together to implement the agreed actions while working on a medium to long term strategic plan.

 