Membership Magazine of the Institute of Agribusiness Management Nigeria







STEVIA FARMING Growing Wealth by Cultivating nature's delicious sugar alternative

BOLA TINUBU Agribusiness Expectations from Nigeria's 16th President

MARINA DIBOMA

NURTURING AFRICA'S INCLUSIVE AGRIBUSINESS ECOSYSTEM THROUGH 2SCALE

AGRIBUSINESS EXECUTIVE

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Editor-In-Chief

Dr Ayodele Olorunfemi, FIAM

Associate Editor

Sylvia Obere

Researchers

Pelumi Odekuoye Precious Ezinwa

Graphics

Timilehin Oyelami



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Editorial

Dear Esteemed Members,

Telcome to the latest edition of the Agribusiness Executive Magazine, where we bring you the most compelling insights and stories from the dynamic world of agribusiness. In this edition, we delve into the transformative strategies and pillars that are revolutionizing the global agribusiness sector, featuring an exclusive interview with a remarkable young female director who is reshaping the industry.

Our cover story introduces you to an outstanding young female director who has made waves in the agribusiness world. Through her visionary leadership, she has created a substantial impact, driving positive change across the industry. In our exclusive interview with Marina Diboma, the Program Director at 2SCALE, she shares her strategies and pillars, revealing the key ingredients behind her success. Her story is an inspiration to all, highlighting the immense potential for transformation within agribusiness.

In another fascinating article, we explore the hidden potential of stevia cultivation. Stevia, a natural sweetener derived from the stevia plant, has gained popularity in recent years as a healthier alternative to traditional sweeteners. We uncover the untapped opportunities and vast potential that lie within the cultivation and production of this remarkable crop. Join us as we unlock the secrets and possibilities of stevia, paving the way for a sweeter and healthier future.

Furthermore, we address the expectations of agribusiness enthusiasts from the new Tinubu administration. With a renewed focus on agriculture and rural development, there are high hopes for significant advancements in the agribusiness sector. We delve into the key areas where stakeholders anticipate positive policy changes, investments, and initiatives that will drive growth and sustainability. As the new administration takes the reins, we explore the potential impact it may have on the agribusiness landscape.

As we conclude this edition, we invite you to reflect on the insightful and engaging content we have presented. The stories of the young female director, the untapped potential of stevia, and the expectations from the new administration provide a comprehensive overview of the current state and future prospects of agribusiness. We hope this edition leaves you inspired and motivated to continue exploring innovative solutions and driving positive change within the industry.

Thank you for joining us on this exciting journey. We look forward to welcoming you back in the next edition, where we will bring you more thought-provoking articles, interviews, and the latest trends in the ever-evolving world of agribusiness.

Until next time,

Sylvia Obere

STEVIA FARMING

GROWING WEALTH BY CULTIVATING NATURE'S DELICIOUS SUGAR ALTERNATIVES

By AMB. ADENIYI SOLA BUNMI. Executive Director, Gogreen Impact Africa Initiative

Email: gogreenafricainitiative@gmail.com

Introduction

tevia, is a natural sugar substitute derived from the leaves of the Stevia rebaudiana plant. It has gained significant popularity in recent years as a healthier alternative to traditional sugar. With the growing demand for natural sweeteners and the increasing focus on health-conscious choices, stevia farming presents a lucrative opportunity for agricultural entrepreneurs. In this comprehensive article, we will explore the potential of stevia farming, from understanding the plant and cultivation techniques to marketing and economic considerations. Stevia offers a pathway to growing wealth while cultivating nature's delicious sugar alternative.

Stevia, scientifically known as Stevia rebaudiana, is a small herbaceous perennial plant native to South America. The leaves of the stevia plant contain naturally occurring compounds called steviol glycosides, which provide the sweet taste. These glycosides are extracted and used as a sugar substitute in various food and beverage products.

The global market for stevia has experienced remarkable growth, driven by increasing consumer awareness of the harmful effects of excessive sugar consumption. As more people embrace a healthy lifestyle, the demand for natural, low-calorie sweeteners has surged. Stevia offers an appealing solution, as it is plant-based, has zero calories, and has a high sweetness level. The market potential for stevia is vast, with opportunities to supply to food and beverage manufacturers, health-conscious consumers, and even the pharmaceutical industry.

Stevia thrives in warm, subtropical climates with well-drained soil. It requires sufficient sunlight and moderate rainfall to achieve optimal growth. Countries such as Paraguay, Brazil, China, and Kenya have become major producers of stevia due to their favorable climatic conditions. However, with advancements in greenhouse technology, stevia can also be cultivated in regions with colder climates.



Stevia can be propagated from seeds or cuttings, and it requires careful nurturing during the initial stages. Once established, stevia plants are relatively low-maintenance, requiring regular watering and occasional pruning. The ideal pH range for the soil is between 6.5 and 7.5. Harvesting typically takes place when the plants reach maturity, and the leaves are at their sweetest. The leaves are dried and processed to extract the steviol glycosides. After harvesting, the dried stevia leaves undergo a series of processes to extract the steviol glycosides. This can be done through water extraction, solvent extraction, or by using advanced technologies such as supercritical fluid extraction. The extracted steviol glycosides can then be used to produce a variety of value-added products, including liquid or powdered sweeteners, flavored extracts, or even stevia-infused beverages and snacks.

Agronomic Procedure



ENVIRONMENT & SOIL REQUIREMENT

Stevia is a short-day plant grown under tropical and subtropical conditions. Long day-length is helpful for higher leaf yield. Relative humidity of 65-80% is suitable for proper growth and development.

Stevia grows well in sandy loam soil with pH range of 5.0-7.5, and requires a warm and sunny weather. Soils should be well drained but with reasonable water holding capacity.

Generally, 50-60 days old seedlings with about 15cm height, or rooted cuttings or tissue culture raised hardened plants are transplanted in the field during the months of March-April or June/July avoiding the periods of extreme temperature.

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Mulching with plant residues or plastic sheet has been found useful in controlling germination and growth of the weeds

However, the date of transplanting should be adjusted according the local weather conditions. Transplanting is done in raised beds or flat beds at a spacing of 45x45 cm and 45x30 cm in high and medium fertile soils, respectively Pinching of the apical bud should be done after establishment of plants to enhance bushy growth with lateral branches.

TRANSPLANTING

Generally, 50-60 days old seedlings with about 15 cm height, or rooted cuttings are transplanted in the field during the months of March-April or June-July avoiding the periods of extreme temperatures.

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MANURES & FERTILIZERS

Stevia requires a moderate level of nutrients. Therefore, among agronomic practices, nutrient management is the most important factor for higher leaf yield and quality of stevia. Organic manures and chemical fertilizers are applied for maintaining soil fertility.

Fertilizer dose of 100-120 kg nitrogen, 40-50 kg phosphorus and 50-60 kg potassium per hectare should be applied. For organic farming, well rotten farm yard manure @ 20-30 tonnes/ hectare is required. The requirement of manure and fertilizer doses depend upon cropping mode and soil fertility status.

IRRIGATION

First irrigation is given immediately after transplanting and subsequently after three to five days interval till establishment of the plants. Thereafter, watering up to a depth of 5 cm is done weekly until monsoon rains commence.

Drip irrigation system economizes the irrigation water requirement. Excessive moisture levels can have detrimental effects on the crop because stevia cannot tolerate water logging. Therefore, proper drainage facility should also be established while preparing the land.

WEED CONTROL

Weed growth is the major challenge in stevia cultivation which limits the plant growth and ultimately the crop yield. Stevia grows very slow initially and unable to compete with weeds which come up rapidly due to favorable growth conditions.

Therefore, regular weeding is required to be done at 20 days interval during first two months to avoid crop weed competition. Mulching with plant residues or plastic sheet has been found useful in controlling germination and growth of the weeds. It also improves the stevia plant growth.

HARVESTNG

Time of harvesting depends on growing season and region. Harvesting should be done manually at 10-15 cm height from the ground level. First harvest is taken at 40-100 days after transplanting. Subsequently, second harvest is taken after 60-75 days of the first harvest before the onset of flowering.

In case of late transplanting, single cut is taken after 3-4 months. Since, stevia is a perennial crop, the production may be taken up to 4-5 years from the same plantation.

POST HARVEST

The harvested crop is dried and the leaves are separated from the stems for further processing. The stems have very low concentrations (1-2%) of steviol-glycosides. Thus, the stems are removed to minimize processing cost.

Hence, fresh leaf harvest should be dried in shade or hot air oven at 40°C. If the harvested plant material is not dried up quickly, the quality of leaves can deteriorate.

Economics Of Stevia Cultivation per acre:

- Land Clearing per Acre N30,000
- Land preparation and ridge 50,000
- 20,000 Seedlings @ N500/seedling = N10,000,000
- Planting N10,000 per acre
- Manual weeding N30,000
- Manure N20,000 per acre
- Harvesting N20,000 per acre
- Total cost of growing 1 acre of Stevia =10,160,000
- Total dried leaves produced per acre is 2700 kg and a kilo sells for N15,000 = N40,500,000
- Gross Profit Per Acre = N30,340,000



Marketing and Economic Considerations

establishing quality control measures.

When entering the stevia farming business, it is important to have a comprehensive marketing strategy in place. This includes identifying potential buyers, building relationships with food and beverage manufacturers, and considering options for direct-to-consumer sales. Additionally, understanding the regulatory landscape and ensuring compliance with quality standards is crucial for market acceptance. Conducting market research, assessing the competition, and targeting niche markets such as organic or sustainably grown stevia can also provide opportunities for premium pricing and differentiation. Stevia farming, like any agricultural venture, comes with its own set of challenges. These include understanding the intricacies of stevia cultivation, managing pests and diseases, ensuring proper post-harvest handling, and

Conclusion

Stevia farming presents a unique opportunity to enter the lucrative market of natural sugar alternatives while contributing to a healthier and more sustainable future. With the increasing demand for low-calorie sweeteners, stevia offers farmers the potential for financial growth and a chance to cultivate a crop that aligns with consumer preferences for healthier food choices. By understanding the cultivation techniques, market dynamics, and sustainable practices associated with stevia farming, you can embark on a rewarding journey of growing wealth while cultivating nature's delicious sugar alternative.



Embrace the Digital Fields, where technology and agriculture intertwine, cultivating a new era of unprecedented farm productivity.



MARINA DIBOMA, 2SCALE PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Nurturing Africa's Inclusive Agribusiness Ecosystem through 2SCALE



 \vec{r} n this edition, we had the privilege of interviewing Marina Diboma, a highly accomplished individual of Dutch nationality with Cameroonian origins. Marina possesses a strong educational background and diverse expertise, holding degrees in Communication Science and Business Studies from the University of Amsterdam. Her professional experience revolves around establishing and enhancing cooperation between countries in the South and North through trade, investment, and development. Marina is also the co-founder of Business Safari TV, showcasing her entrepreneurial spirit. Known for her skills as a bridge-builder, Marina fosters connections between individuals and organizations. She is proficient in four languages: Dutch, French, English, and Spanish. Her areas of specialization include Economic Diplomacy, Development Cooperation, Media and Public Relations, Entrepreneurship, Private Sector Development, and Trade & Investment with Africa. Marina Diboma previously served as the Deputy Managing Director of the Netherlands-African Business Council (NABC). In 2021, she joined 2SCALE as the program director. With an impressive track record, Marina has successfully led over 30 business missions to and from the African continent. During these missions, she has assumed the role of head of the mission and acted as a spokesperson for both public and private authorities. Additionally, Marina actively engages in various initiatives as an Africa and development cooperation expert. She is a member of the INCLUDE platform, which provides advice to the Dutch government and selected African states on inclusive development policy. Marina's involvement in recent economic and political advancements in Africa has established her as a sought-after speaker and facilitator at seminars and conferences. Her insights and expertise significantly contribute to discussions on Africa's development. The duo of Victoria Madedor and Adeniyi Solabumi of Agribusiness Executive Magazine had an enlightening interview session with Marina, where she highlighted various factors that can reshape the agribusiness sector in Nigeria.

Q1: What are the pillars of the 2SCALE program and how do they contribute to its success?

A: I lead the team to implement the program through three pillars. The first pillar is engagement, which involves internal engagement within the program itself and the sharing of knowledge among team members. We have colleagues who have been with us from the start, as well as others who bring in a lot of expertise. It's also worth mentioning that the consortium partners that implement 2SCALE offer a combination of expertise, and we operate in a complementary manner, which is why we have this collaboration. Furthermore, our team is 90% African.

Therefore, knowledge exchange and the process of learning within the program are crucial, with a particular emphasis on engagement. Additionally, it's important to foster interaction among actors outside of the program. We work with different value chains in various countries, so it's vital for actors from specific value chains to also interact. For example, a challenge faced by a sorghum producer or processing company in Nigeria may be equally relevant in Ghana. Our aim is to find solutions that can serve as inspiration for addressing similar challenges in different countries. Such collaboration among sectors is essential.

In the second pillar, I am focusing on the power of

implementation. "Power" is a fitting term because, in addition to our mentorship programs, we also work extensively with young people. Our programs not only talk about empowering youth and women but also actively involve them in leadership roles. I have recognized the need for further collaboration and support to enhance the capabilities of my colleagues, some of whom are entering their first real job experience, while others bring advanced expertise. Thus far, we have successfully closed the first cohort, where mentees were pleased to receive guidance not only from colleagues within the program but also from colleagues across the consortium and outside of it.

Empowerment is a central aspect of our program. As mentioned earlier, we collaborate with smallholder farmers, with a particular focus on youth and women. Concerning the youth, our goal is to cultivate innovation and recognize the need to make agriculture attrative for them. It is no longer about expecting them to work solely on the farm or in the field; there are brilliant minds out there developing innovations and incorporating local knowledge. For example, within our work, it is crucial to create opportunities for these youth-led companies to showcase their technology to farmers who may not have access to it without the facilitation and financial support

that this technology can work and that it is not solely about the cost. When we do this and provide evidence of the quality of the technology being used, we incorporate the cost of using that technology into the farmers' production costs. This information is then utilized across the agribusiness cluster to assess the business, understand

the cost of production, and determine a fair purchasing price for the produced goods. This is just one example of our approach.

In terms of empowering women, we provide training foster cross-learning opportunities. Currently, we are focused on consolidating our efforts by linking women entrepreneurs to existing networks that can provide necessary technical knowledge. We want to ensure that these women not only make money but also build resilience so that they can continue their operations and grow even after our program's support ends. In the first phase, we have already witnessed

approximately 80% of participants experiencing growth, which demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach. The last aspect I focus on is expansion. We believe that our approach can serve as inspiration for other actors in the field. However, we understand that our work represents only a fraction of what is needed at the continental level. The Inclusive Agribusiness Club is an example of an activity that has emerged from our desire to expand our impact. We are a program that recognizes its finite duration and with this in mind, we aim to create meaningful and sustainable impact. For this reason, we do not want to leave our partners hanging. We have a responsibility to make sure that our work does not just stop, that's why we decided to connect our work to existing organizations with existing networks. We bring our network to the existing organization and with their infrastructure and their own platforms collectively, we create a stronger platform with the aim to inspire more and more people to embrace the concept of inclusive agribusiness.

It's my sincere hope that this continues, that inclusive agribusiness becomes the buzz words with the right understanding of what it means not only in Abuja, but in all the states across Nigeria.

Another example of expansion is our collaboration with existing programs that align with the needs of our partners for further growth. We are able to support them in continuing their work even after our program ends. Moreover, we connect with governance entities that are striving to upscale and accelerate the progress achieved,

> or replicate successful models. This closer connection with such organizations helps in further developing business activities.

Yesterday, I met a colleague for the first time. She had heard about me and told me, 'I heard there is a woman leading the 2SCALE program. I was expecting to see someone else.' I asked her, 'What do you mean?' She replied, 'You look different.' I inquired further, 'What do you mean by 'I look different'?' She explained, 'I expected to see a big woman leading such a significant program where the majority of the people you work with are men.' This incident highlights the fact that leadership and competence are not restricted to a specific type of person. Perhaps we should also strive to make the agricultural sector more attractive to women like me.

Q2: How does the 2SCALE program support inclusive agribusiness and ensure the sustainability of its impact? A: The 2SCALE program supports inclusive agribusiness by promoting a win-win spirit and fostering collaboration among different actors. By fostering partnership, building capacity, facilitating market access, promoting innovation, and ensuring environmental sustainability, the program

seeks to find solutions

that can be replicated and inspire others. It focuses on empowering youth, women, and smallholder farmers, making agriculture attractive and providing them with the necessary tools, training, and networks to succeed. The program also ensures the sustainability of its impact by connecting with existing organizations and networks. By partnering with these entities, the program leverages their infrastructure and platforms to create a stronger and more expansive platform for inclusive agribusiness. This allows for continued support and growth even after the program's implementation period ends. The program also collaborates with other initiatives to accelerate and replicate successful business activities, further enhancing the impact of its work.

Q3: As an African woman, culturally, and traditionally, we're expected to not aim high as a career woman, So, what is your experience so far, leading such an organization that is so impactful and set up in different countries. Can you give shed light on how you have been able to surmount the challenges that comes with

A: That's a good question. Yesterday, I met a colleague

for the first time. She had heard about me and told me, 'I heard there is a woman leading the 2SCALE program. was expecting to see someone else.' I asked her, 'What do you mean?' She replied, 'You look different.' I inquired further, 'What do you mean by 'I look different'?' She explained, 'I expected to see a big woman leading such a significant program where the majority of the people you work with are men.' This incident highlights the fact that leadership and competence are not restricted to a specific type of person. Perhaps we should also strive to make the agricultural sector more attractive to women like me.

Apart from that, I consider leading 2SCALE as a form of self-university because there is so much to learn within the program. As the Director, I continue to learn every day. It requires a great deal of humility and patience because things are not always as they appear on the surface. I prioritize conversations and ask a lot of questions with the people I work with, avoiding assumptions. This approach has been immensely helpful.

So far, I have ensured that everyone on my team has a voice and can make themselves heard. I encourage inclusivity and make the program a safe space for all. I advise my team that what we advocate for externally should be practiced internally. The design of the 2SCALE program as an inclusive agribusiness approach stems from the understanding that it should start from within. If our inclusive agribusiness advisor does not fulfill their responsibilities, it will impact our country team leaders, which, in turn, affects our program management team. It's all interconnected.

Additionally, I believe it is crucial to foster the right type of leadership at the country level since I have to be able to delegate and also empower the people I delegate power, and ensure that we have also create moments where we can engage, share our successes, which is worth celebrating.

Q4: In the last three years that you joined the program, what are the new countries you have started with and what are the new things you have added to the to the program in itself as a new young female director?

A: Yeah, well, we piloted in South Sudan, and today we have a country team leader there. During my recent visit to South Sudan, I noticed that many organizations are interested in collaborating and investing in its potential. Before joining as the 2SCALE Program Director, I was frustrated by the perception that a country's culture is only seen through certain misconceptions. While emergency aid is crucial for those in need, I strongly believe in economic development through the private sector.

Regarding our pilot in South Sudan, we attended a

product launch event from one of our partners who through 2SCALE support, has developed maize-based bread and also maize flour. It was rewarding to see how far the entrepreneur has come through collaboration with 2SCALE. This example highlights that each country's private sector has unique challenges that require specific approaches. Therefore, I see this as just the beginning. Another significant milestone in my leadership journey so far is the Global Youth Mentorship Program. I am proud to launch the second cohort and continue progressing through Phase Two. I believe that with time, we can improve the program for our staff.

Additionally, I introduced the celebration of International Women's Day as a program focused on women's economic empowerment and gender equality. I believe that we also have to stand still as a team and discuss the event's topic, linking it to the work we do at the Inclusive Agribusiness Club. We are also working on a mentorship program for our state leaders. I mentioned the collaboration among our business champions as well. The alumni from Phase One can serve as examples for the business champions in Phase Two. Within Phase Two, we can have these business champions mentor our youth entrepreneurs, providing them with advice and creating opportunities for interaction. This way, the leads and insights from our business champions can benefit prospective entrepreneurs. These are just a few examples of our progress so far.

Q5: Given that as a woman you have such an amazing career, what advice would you give to women out there, most especially young women that continue to dream and aspire to have substantial impact within the continent?

A: My message to young women is: never stop dreaming and believe in yourself. I would also encourage you to take care of the little girl within you. As women, there is no need to act like men, as I have observed many women feeling pressured to do so. I believe that our femininity allows us to make a difference in any room. Enjoy interactions with others and never be afraid to take risks. In my own experience, daring to take risks has been instrumental in achieving my goals because I set aside my fears and took action. Remember, you can never truly fail; there are only failed experiences. Each experience provides an opportunity to learn and grow. So, keep trying and never give up!"



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CONTACT

Pilgrim Ranch Ltd (Demonstration Farm) 18 Victor Idowu Street Close to Dunamis Glory Dome Airport Road, Lugbe Ext 1 Abuja, Nigeria

Telephone

+2349023704194

Whatsapp

+2348126254077

Emai

pilgrimranchnigeria @gmail.com

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HOW AGRITECH COMPANIES IN AFRICA ARE ALIGNING TECHNOLOGIES WITH REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE



n recent years, regenerative agriculture has gained momentum as a transformative approach to sustainable farming. Africa, with its rich agricultural heritage, diverse ecosystems, and increasing need for sustainable practices, has seen a rise in agritech companies that are developing technologies aligned with regenerative agriculture. These innovative solutions are helping farmers enhance productivity, conserve natural resources, and build resilient agricultural systems. The agribusiness landscape in Africa is witnessing a remarkable transformation as innovative agritech companies across the continent align their technologies with the principles

of regenerative agriculture.

Regenerative agriculture is not typically classified as an agritech innovation, as agritech generally refers to the use of technology and digital solutions in agriculture to enhance productivity, efficiency, and sustainability. While regenerative agriculture can benefit from certain agritech innovations, such as precision agriculture tools for optimizing inputs or data analytics for monitoring soil health, it is primarily a farming approach centered around ecological principles and practices. It focuses on holistic land management techniques that promote soil health, biodiversity, and ecosystem resilience. It involves of regenerative agriculture.

Regenerative agriculture is not typically classified as an agritech innovation, as agritech generally refers to the use of technology and digital solutions in agriculture to enhance productivity, efficiency, and sustainability. While regenerative agriculture can benefit from certain agritech innovations, such as precision agriculture tools for optimizing inputs or data analytics for monitoring soil health, it is primarily a farming approach centered around ecological principles and practices. It focuses on holistic land management techniques that promote soil health, biodiversity, and ecosystem resilience. It involves implementing practices such as cover cropping, crop rotation, agroforestry, and managed grazing to restore and regenerate the natural resources on farmland. These practices are not strictly technology-driven but are rooted in ecological knowledge and principles.

With that said, there can be intersections between regenerative agriculture and agritech. As some agritech companies are developing tools and technologies that align with regenerative principles, such as soil sensors for monitoring soil moisture and nutrient levels, remote sensing for mapping vegetation, or blockchain for traceability in supply chains.

In summary, while regenerative agriculture may not be classified as a distinct agritech innovation itself, it can certainly benefit from the use of agritech tools and technologies to enhance its implementation and monitoring. The combination of regenerative practices and appropriate agritech solutions has the potential to further optimize and scale the benefits of regenerative agriculture in the agribusiness industry.

In this article, we delve into some notable African agritech companies that have successfully integrated regenerative agriculture policies into their development and highlight specific technologies embraced by farmers. In this article, we will explore some notable examples of how agritech companies in Africa are developing technologies that align with regenerative agriculture.

Principles of Regenerative Agriculture

Precision Irrigation Systems

Water scarcity is a significant challenge in many African regions, making efficient water use crucial for sustainable agriculture. Agritech companies in Africa have developed precision irrigation systems that enable farmers to

optimize water usage based on crop needs and soil moisture levels. These technologies help conserve water, reduce water stress on plants, and promote healthier growth. By ensuring efficient irrigation, these solutions contribute to regenerative practices by supporting the health and vitality of crops while minimizing water waste.

Soil Monitoring and Nutrient Management

Maintaining soil health is a cornerstone of regenerative agriculture. Agritech companies in Africa are creating innovative solutions for soil monitoring and nutrient management. Soil sensors and data analytics platforms enable farmers to monitor soil moisture, temperature, and nutrient levels in real-time. This information helps farmers make data-driven decisions regarding irrigation, fertilization, and soil amendments. By precisely managing soil health, farmers can improve nutrient cycling, reduce nutrient runoff, and enhance the organic matter content of their soil, contributing to the regeneration of soil ecosystems.

Agroforestry and Remote Sensing

Agroforestry, an integral part of regenerative agriculture, involves integrating trees and shrubs with crops and livestock. Agritech companies in Africa are using remote sensing technologies, including satellite imagery and drones, to map and monitor agroforestry systems. These tools provide valuable insights into vegetation cover, biomass distribution, and biodiversity levels. By employing these technologies, farmers can optimize treecrop interactions, enhance carbon sequestration, and promote biodiversity conservation, all while maximizing agricultural productivity.

Digital Platforms for Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing plays a crucial role in driving the adoption of regenerative agriculture. Agritech companies in Africa are developing digital platforms that connect farmers, researchers, and experts to exchange information and best practices. These platforms facilitate peer-topeer learning, provide access to up-to-date agricultural resources, and enable farmers to stay informed about regenerative agriculture techniques. By fostering collaboration and knowledge dissemination, these platforms empower farmers to embrace regenerative practices and create a supportive community.

AGRIBUSINESS EXECUTIVE AGRITECH COLUMN

Some notable African technology companies that have aligned with the principles of Regenerative Agriculture



Twiga Foods (Kenya):



Twiga Foods, a Kenyan agritech company, has gained recognition for its efforts in fostering regenerative agriculture practices. They operate a mobile-based supply platform that connects farmers with markets, revolutionizing the distribution of fresh produce. Twiga Foods also emphasizes regenerative techniques like agroforestry and organic farming. Twiga Foods actively promotes regenerative agriculture practices through initiatives like the Farm to Fork Program. This program encourages farmers to adopt sustainable farming techniques such as agroforestry and organic farming. By providing training, resources, and support, Twiga Foods incentivizes farmers to implement regenerative practices that enhance soil health, biodiversity, and long-term sustainability. Twiga Foods prioritizes sourcing produce from farmers who practice regenerative agriculture. By creating market access for these farmers, the company rewards and incentivizes sustainable practices. This approach not only supports farmers who are committed to environmental stewardship but also contributes to the growth of a sustainable agricultural sector in Kenya.

Through regenerative agriculture practices, such as agroforestry and organic farming, Twiga Foods helps mitigate environmental impacts associated with conventional farming methods. These practices promote soil conservation, water management, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity conservation. By advocating for and sourcing from sustainable farmers, Twiga Foods actively contributes to reducing the ecological footprint of agricultural production.



SunCulture (Kenya):



SunCulture, a Kenyan agritech pioneer, focuses on empowering smallholder farmers through solar-powered irrigation systems. Their solutions enable farmers to practice precision irrigation, reducing water wastage and supporting regenerative agriculture. SunCulture's irrigation systems allow farmers to optimize water usage by delivering precise amounts of water to crops based on their specific needs. By avoiding over-irrigation and minimizing water wastage, these technologies contribute to sustainable water management. This precision irrigation approach reduces water stress on plants, promotes healthier crop growth, and maximizes water efficiency.

SunCulture goes beyond providing irrigation systems by offering training and support to farmers. They educate farmers on regenerative agriculture practices, emphasizing soil health, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable farming techniques. By empowering farmers with knowledge and skills, SunCulture encourages the adoption of regenerative practices that support longterm sustainability and resilience.

SunCulture understands that access to financing can be a barrier for smallholder farmers. To address this, they provide farmers with access to financing options, making it easier for them to adopt solar-powered irrigation systems and embrace regenerative agriculture practices. By removing financial barriers, SunCulture ensures that farmers can make the transition to sustainable farming practices more effectively. It focuses on efficient water management and renewable energy helps reduce the environmental impact of agriculture. By minimizing water wastage and avoiding the use of fossil fuels for irrigation, SunCulture contributes to mitigating climate change and conserving natural resources. Their technologies support the health of soil ecosystems and enhance crop vitality, fostering regenerative practices that benefit both farmers and the environment. By incorporating efficient water management techniques, SunCulture's technologies contribute to soil health, crop vitality, and sustainable resource utilization. The company also provides training and access to financing, ensuring farmers can adopt regenerative practices with ease.



Apollo Agriculture (Kenya):



Apollo Agriculture combines agritech and financial services to support small-scale farmers in Kenya. Their digital platform offers small-scale farmers with tailored agronomic advice. By leveraging data-driven insights, they offer recommendations on optimal planting techniques,

crop selection, and management practices. This guidance helps farmers adopt regenerative practices, such as improved soil fertility management, which contribute to long-term sustainability and productivity. The platform also facilitates access to high-quality inputs, including seeds, fertilizers, and crop protection products. By ensuring farmers have access to reliable and appropriate inputs, Apollo Agriculture supports regenerative agriculture by promoting the use of sustainable and env Apollo Agriculture promotes crop diversification as a regenerative practice. By providing farmers with insights on market demand and profitability, they encourage diversifying crop portfolios. Crop diversification helps reduce pest and disease pressures, enhances soil health through varied nutrient demands, and fosters greater resilience to climate variability.

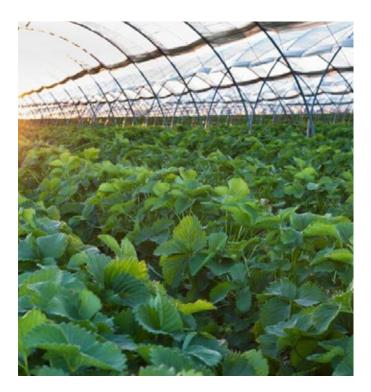
The platform emphasizes sustainable pest control methods, such as integrated pest management (IPM) techniques. By guiding farmers on pest identification, monitoring, and the use of biocontrol agents, Apollo Agriculture reduces the reliance on chemical pesticides. This approach minimizes negative impacts on ecosystems, promotes biodiversity, and supports the overall health of agroecosystems. environmentally friendly products. This helps minimize negative impacts on soil health, biodiversity, and water resources.

Apollo Agriculture integrates financial services such as credit and insurance into their platform. This integration enables small-scale farmers to access the necessary financial support to implement regenerative practices. For example, farmers can secure loans to invest in sustainable inputs, irrigation systems, or other infrastructure that enhances their ability to adopt regenerative techniques. Through data-driven insights, Apollo Agriculture guides farmers towards regenerative practices, including improved soil fertility management, crop diversification, and sustainable pest control. By integrating financial support with regenerative techniques, Apollo Agriculture enables farmers to enhance productivity and long-term sustainability.



Illuminum Greenhouses (Nigeria):

Illuminum Greenhouses, based in Nigeria, specializes in designing and manufacturing affordable, solar-powered greenhouses. Their structures create a controlled



environment that allows farmers to optimize crop growth. By shielding crops from external factors such as extreme weather conditions, pests, and diseases, these greenhouses provide a stable and favorable environment for plants. This controlled environment supports regenerative practices by facilitating healthier plant growth and minimizing crop stress. Their structures are designed to optimize resource use. Solar-powered systems provide energy for ventilation, irrigation, and other greenhouse operations, reducing reliance on nonrenewable energy sources. By utilizing energy-efficient technologies and maximizing natural light, these greenhouses minimize energy consumption and decrease the environmental impact associated with conventional farming methods.

With the controlled environment provided by Illuminum Greenhouses, farmers can implement regenerative practices such as crop rotation, integrated pest management (IPM), and efficient water utilization. Crop rotation helps replenish soil nutrients, prevent pest and disease buildup, and promote soil health. IPM reduces reliance on chemical pesticides by utilizing biological control methods, thus preserving beneficial insects and promoting biodiversity. Efficient water utilization minimizes water waste, supports soil moisture management, and conserves water resources.

Conclusion

The alignment of agritech innovations with regenerative agriculture in Africa represents a significant step towards sustainable and resilient farming systems. Through precision irrigation systems, soil monitoring technologies, agroforestry mapping, and digital knowledge-sharing platforms, agritech companies are supporting the adoption and implementation of regenerative practices. These technologies enable farmers to optimize resource use, improve soil health, conserve water, and enhance biodiversity. As more agritech companies in Africa continue to develop solutions aligned with regenerative agriculture, the agribusiness industry on the continent is poised for positive transformation, fostering sustainable food production and ecological regeneration.

African agritech companies are at the forefront of driving the adoption of regenerative agriculture practices. Through innovative solutions and inclusive business models, these companies are transforming the agribusiness landscape and empowering farmers to embrace sustainable and regenerative farming methods. Twiga Foods, SunCulture, Apollo Agriculture, and Illuminum Greenhouses are just a few examples of companies that have successfully aligned their technologies with regenerative agriculture policies.

By incorporating precision irrigation, solar-powered solutions, knowledge-sharing platforms, and market access, these agritech companies promote resourceefficient farming, biodiversity conservation, and soil health improvement. These technologies are helping farmers across Africa transition towards sustainable and resilient agricultural systems, ensuring long-term food security while safeguarding the environment.

As African farmers increasingly adopt regenerative practices facilitated by agritech companies, the agribusiness industry on the continent is poised for sustainable growth. By continuing to support and invest in these innovative technologies, Africa can create a thriving agricultural sector that balances economic viability, ecological regeneration, and social well-being.





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INCLUSIVE AGRIBUSINESS A CATALYST FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIA

Amidst Nigeria's fertile landscapes, a transformation takes flight, *Inclusive agribusiness models, shining beacons of light,* Where diversity converges, strategies pave the way, Driving agricultural productivity, heralding a brighter day.

With open arms, we embrace the power of inclusion, *Unleashing the potential of agribusiness, a fruitful fusion,* Models that uplift, empower, and unite, Nurturing a thriving ecosystem, where farmers find respite.

Gone are the days of exclusion and divide, *Inclusive strategies foster progress, as we stride,* Empowering smallholders, women, and youth, *Unlocking their talents, igniting the truth.*

Through targeted interventions, we break barriers apart, Providing access to finance, markets, and modern-day art, Supporting farmers with knowledge and innovation, Building resilient systems, an agricultural foundation.

Value chain collaborations, a symphony so grand, Linking farmers to markets, across the vast land, Efficient logistics, and fair trade prevail, Elevating productivity, ensuring no one does fail.

Technology's embrace, a catalyst for change, Digital solutions, a landscape rearrange, From precision farming to data-driven insights, Enhancing productivity, like shooting stars in the night.

Inclusive agribusiness, a bridge between all, From traditional wisdom to modern methods' call, Preserving heritage, while embracing the new, Agriculture thrives, as innovation imbues.

Women, the backbone, nurturers of the soil, *Inclusive models empower, unlocking their toil,* Harnessing their strength, knowledge, and might, *Driving productivity, with a radiant light.*

Youth, the trailblazers, with fresh perspectives ignite, Bold ideas and passion, taking flight, With mentorship and guidance, they flourish and grow, Transforming agriculture, as their talents bestow.

In this tapestry of progress, we sow the seeds of change, Inclusive agribusiness, our commitment, never to estrange, For Nigeria's agriculture to reach its full scope, *Embracing diversity, cultivating productivity, offering hope.*

So let us forge ahead, hand in hand we shall stride, With inclusive models, the future we'll guide, Driving agricultural productivity to new heights, Embracing diversity, where prosperity ignites.

he educational poem above highlights the strategic importance of embedding inclusivity at the heart of sustainable agribusiness practices in Nigeria, and of course, across the world. Amongst other values, it helps in enhancing productivity, improving market access, achieving social inclusion, driving sustainable resource management etc. To advance the knowledge frontier of inclusive agribusiness practices in Nigeria, the Institute of Agribusiness Management Nigeria with the support of 2SCALE organized the first Inclusive Agribusiness Club event on the 17th of May, 2023 at Fraiser Suites, Central Business District, Abuja. The event witnessed a huge turnout of agribusiness stakeholders in Nigeria with strong passion towards understanding how they can adopt inclusive agribusiness models and drive higher enterprise productivity with it.



MAXWELL OLITSA Country Team Lead 2SCALE Nigeria & Egypt

The lead presentation for the day was delivered by Maxwell Olitsa, the Country Team Lead for 2SCALE in Nigeria and Egypt. The presentation not only drove into the heart of inclusive agribusiness, it left the audience with a clear blueprint of how they can structure their agribusinesses in ways that will capture the core essence of inclusivity. The theme of his presentation was "Inclusive Agribusiness: A Pathway to Sustainable and Equitable Agricultural Development."

Inclusivity in agriculture can mean a lot of things to different people, depending on the prism through which they are viewing. For Karen Washington, a United States based community activist, farmer and Co-Owner of Rise and Root Farm, inclusive agriculture must be one that captures all races, genders and sexualities. In her word, "If you look at the face of agriculture, it's always white male. But if you look globally, you'll see the foundation of agriculture: its mostly women, and mostly women of color. For too long it has been disregarding the work of people who have put a dent in the food system. Let's change that narrative. Who is in the field, doing the work: it's mostly people of farmers of color and immigrant farmers. Agriculture must be inclusive in its diversity"

For Lorie Fleenor, the co-owner of Magna Visa Farm, an agribusiness entity she runs with her husband in Tennessee, USA, inclusive agribusiness should be nothing short of empowering female farmers by closing the gender gap in production and marketing activities. In an interview with National Geographic, she said "Even though I run the farm and make the decisions, the male farmers don't want to talk to me about when to cut hay, or when to sell cattle, or how much rain we've gotten. They want to talk to a man," she explains. "I guess being a woman, you have to go above and beyond to prove yourself. Yet, even with female farmers expending extra effort (worldwide, women work more hours per year than men), they substantially lag behind their male counterparts when it comes to crop yields and earnings. On average, women-run farms produce 20 to 30 percent less than farms run by men. The reasons for this "crop gap," according to the FAO, have nothing to do with an aptitude for farming and everything to do with the gender-specific obstacles".

The above scenarios and several other perspectives were reasons why the audience sought clarity in Maxwell Olitsa's presentation on inclusive agribusiness practices as a driver for sustainable and more importantly, "equitable" agricultural development in Africa and indeed, the presentation did sufficient justice to that.



The core essence behind inclusive agribusiness is hinged on driving equitability and sustainability for all actors in the agricultural sector. In order to achieve this, it is pertinent that the stakeholders in agricultural sector understand and uphold the dynamics of inclusive

AGRIBUSINESS EXECUTIVE **AG STRATEGIES**

The core essence behind inclusive agribusiness is hinged on driving equitability and sustainability for all actors in the agricultural sector. In order to achieve this, it is pertinent that the stakeholders in agricultural sector understand and uphold the dynamics of inclusive agribusiness. In the course of Olitsa's presentation, he highlighted the need for inclusivity in the agribusiness sector, he emphasized that everything about agriculture, even in Nigeria, starts with the grassroots—the farmers. Despite the majority of wealth in agriculture being found in rural areas, these areas often face high levels of malnutrition due to farmers consuming lower quality produce themselves. Food insecurity is also prevalent in rural areas, along with challenges in revenue distribution along the agricultural value chain. These three factors act as barriers that prevent smallholder farmers from transitioning to medium or large-scale

The adage, "every advantage carries within it the seeds of its own challenges, for the path to success is never devoid of obstacles and trials," isn't far-fetched, as Olitsa further provided insights into the consistent pressures and conditions within the agricultural system that hinder the transition of smallholder farmers. He questioned whether we could expect a rapid transition of these farmers anytime soon, and raised the question of what can be done to transform the situations mentioned.

According to him, "there are numerous programs out there, but to ensure the maintenance of the food system, a focus on the grassroots is crucial. Strong and vibrant grassroots actors are needed to cham pion agricultural development if the impact of macroeconomic policies is to be seen in the economy or the agricultural system."

In addition, he underlined how change can be attained in the agribusiness sector in general. "For several years, there has been talk about value chain development and market systems. Now, it is a combination of market systems and food systems. To ensure the success of these policies, a robust grassroots network and wellinformed farmers with a voice are necessary."

He went ahead to give an example of how having a well-informed farmer with a voice can have an adverse effect on the agribusiness sector. For instance, he discussed agricultural subsidies in Nigeria before the current administration. The last subsidy, Growth Enhancement Scheme (GES), accounted for almost

50% of the program, which lasted for about three years until the current administration came into power. One major challenge faced was with fertilizers and seeds. The turning point in accessing quality and quantity of fertilizers in the country was the Presidential Fertilizer Initiative. The success of this initiative was due to the grassroots approach, involving agro-dealers already in the business, servicing agribusiness clusters, and collaborating with new actors in the market like AFEX and ThriveAgric, who focused on driving quality into smallholder farmers. This success demonstrates the importance of building a competitive and coordinated grassroots network to make agribusiness inclusive and sustainable.

Building inclusive and sustainable Agribusinesses

requires a more competitive, coordinated and inclusive grassroots networks built around SHFs (focusing on the local



The importance of coordination as a factor driving development in agribusiness was further expatiated upon by Olitsa. He stated, "coordination is another crucial issue for agricultural development. In Nigeria, the development of agriculture is directly connected to economic growth. When agriculture develops, the country's economy also flourishes." This holds true for most Sub-Saharan African countries. Therefore, there is a need for systematic and gradual empowerment of rural and urban communities. Development programs should benefit these communities, and a systematic change along with gradual empowerment of rural communities is necessary for this to happen.

As mentioned earlier, there are several challenges and factors limiting the development of agribusiness in Sub-Saharan Africa. Olits a analyzed some of these factors. Oneof the factors he highlighted was the issue of insecurity, considering the well-known impact of insecurity in Nigeria. Additionally, concerning government policies, we witnessed the price of food commodities changing by more than 50% due to the Naira policy. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact as well. It taught us lessons in terms of insecurity and the influx of imported agricultural systems that are more robust and efficient than those in Nigeria, thus affecting the local agricultural systems. For instance, let's consider the issue of maize importation in Nigeria over the past two years. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) aimed to improve domestic maize production and implemented restrictions on maize imports. However, even with these restrictions in place, countries producing maize from distant locations can still send their commodities to Nigeria and make a profit, despite local production efforts. A similar situation can be observed in the rice value chain. Ten to fifteen years ago, Nigeria heavily relied on rice imports, and although policies were established to promote local production, rice imports continue to occur. Nevertheless, these policies have had a meaningful impact on the agricultural system.

These examples illustrate some of the factors that can positively or negatively impact sustainable agribusiness. To establish a robust and inclusive agribusiness, it is essential to build from the ground up, starting with smallholder farmers and their dependents. This approach involves focusing on smallholder farmers and their apex organizations, connecting them to aggregators, financial service providers, processors, and even consumers. By empowering and supporting smallholder farmers and facilitating connections across the value chain, a strong foundation can be laid for a sustainable and inclusive agribusiness system. Therefore, starting from the grassroots is crucial for achieving these goals.

Agribusiness is the sum total of all operations involved in the manufacture and distribution of farm supplies; production operations on the farm; and the storage, processing, and distribution of farm commodities and items made from them. (Davis and Goldberg, 1956). The primary goal of agribusiness is to maximize profit while satisfying the needs of consumers for products related to natural resources such as biotechnology, farms, food, forestry, fisheries, fuel, and fiber. On the other hand, inclusive agribusiness involves deliberately shaping core business processes and values to address the needs of low-income, disempowered parties such as smallholder farmers, labor service providers, and transporters within a particular value chain, while providing value for all stakeholders, including the company connected to the value chain.



Given these definitions, one might question if the term "inclusive agribusiness" is efficiently and effectively practiced within the agricultural system in Nigeria. Shedding more light on this issue, Olitsa asked, "Is agribusiness always inclusive? Sometimes, when we talk to players in the agribusiness space and inquire how they include smallholder farmers, they often respond by saying that they directly buy from them at their farms. However, several years ago in Nigeria, and I'm not sure if it still exists, there was a practice where buyers would come to the farm and pay for maize even before the farmers harvested the cobs. Is that an inclusive practice?" The audience chorused "no." In addition to this, there are also cases where companies with certain business models offer an "inclusive finance" bundle to smallholder farmers, including fertilizers, seeds, agrochemicals, and even capacity building, all priced at around 100,000 naira. When we talk about inclusive agriculture, we are addressing these aspects.

In a bid to emphasize how these issues can be addressed, he stated the distinct feature between "agribusiness" and "inclusive agribusiness," which is deliberate shaping. It requires planning for low-income and disempowered people in the value chain, going beyond simple purchase and training activities. Inclusive agribusiness encompasses several dimensions, and here are the four he mentioned:

The first one he mentioned was the degree of collaboration among the actors and along the value chain. He gave an instance, "If I am an entrepreneur working with smallholder farmers, do I simply sit in my office at harvest time and inform the farmers that I will buy their maize at 15,000 naira this year, and it's up to them whether they supply or not? Or do I take a more inclusive approach? For example, I could purchase 20,000 to 40,000 hectares of land, clear it, divide it into smaller portions (e.g., one hectare), and invite smallholder farmers to work on that land. I could propose a profit-sharing arrangement where we work together." He then asked, "Is this particular practice inclusive? There could be arguments both for and against it. From an inclusive perspective, the farmer does not own the land. In agriculture, if you don't own the land, whether you're leasing or working on it directly, you are tied to one supply chain. The company, including my own, will return to you at harvest and dictate the buying price. As a farmer, what negotiation power do you have? Smallholder farmers become locked into a supply chain. These are just food for thought and practices that are happening in Nigeria. As stakeholders, we are aware of these issues; some of us have even participated in them, but we need to change this if we want agriculture to be sustainable and inclusive."

The second aspect was: Are there improvements in agricultural market access, especially for lowincome, disempowered parties? We are talking about connectedness and whether there have been improvements in market access. If I don't like the price offered by a buyer, can I sit down with them and negotiate? If they don't offer the right price, can I sell to someone else, or are we just stuck with one option? The third aspect was: Are there shared innovations that improve the value chain and the benefits gained by the actors? When we talk about innovation, many of us think of it as hardware or technology-related, but innovation can also be about practices. For example, let's consider the Psaltry partnership mentioned by our program director earlier. Psaltry had issues with buying cassava because, in the southwest region, cassava is mostly planted in the same season, leading to a glut and fluctuating prices. We are currently experiencing a similar situation with tomatoes in Nigeria this year. To manage this situation, Psaltry and smallholder farmers in their network decided to stagger production. Farmers in one cluster plant in November, while farmers in another cluster plant in December and January. It didn't work perfectly, but we observed the results and the potential for such innovation. Sometimes, innovation can be as simple as staggering production to address market challenges.

In order to drive inclusive agribusiness, the fourth point mentioned was the importance of shared goals. Using a Nestlé-led value chain as an example, they are conscious of aflatoxin and pesticide contamination. They have a network of aggregators whom they engage and ask to connect directly with smallholder farmers to obtain high-quality grains. Nestlé is very strict with quality and pays accordingly. The aggregator wants a larger share of the market from Nestlé and also seeks a premium price because selling elsewhere would result in a loss of value compared to what they get from Nestlé. The farmers, too, want the best price or an incentive. If they are going to spend extra time grading their grains to sell to Nestlé, there should be an incentive for that effort. The price Nestlé offers should not be the same as the price in the open market; there should be some compensation, perhaps 5% or 10%, to acknowledge the additional work of grading. This shared goal ensures that value within the chain is mutually beneficial. The aim is to eliminate aflatoxin and pesticide contamination and, ultimately, to consume nutritious and healthy food. Everything Nestlé processes, from Lagos with the grains they buy from northern Nigeria, comes back to northern Nigeria for consumption. Once, someone asked me if Nestle's complaints implied that half of the grains consumed in northern Nigeria are contaminated. I replied that I had no statistics, but it could be true.

In response to the challenges mentioned above, several initiatives are out there led by donor organizations, NGOs, government programs, and private sector actors that aim to drive inclusive agribusiness. Some of these initiatives include value chain development, publicprivate partnership approaches, company sustainability initiatives, sector roundtables (such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil production, RSPO), knowledge networks like the NABG and IAMN, and even countryspecific standard-setting initiatives. These are different initiatives and approaches. That's why at the beginning of my presentation, I mentioned that at 2SCALE, we are not claiming that our approach is the best, but it is one of the best. We have tested it, it has worked, and it is still working. Over the last ten years, 2SCALE has used the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) approach to drive the incubation and acceleration of inclusive agribusiness. The PPP approach is not an end in itself but rather a means to an end. For us, it serves as an umbrella under which we can implement and drive inclusive agribusiness.

By Sylvia Obere



AGRIBUSINESS DECISIONS & INVESTMENTS REQUIRE STRATEGIC A CLEAR PLAN HINGED ON CONCISE DATA

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HIGHLIGHTS

FROM INCLUSIVE AGRIBUSINESS CLUB EVENT









INCLUSIVE AGRIBUSINESS CLUB

The Inclusive Agribusiness Club is a learning and Networking Platform, anchored by the Institute of Agribusiness Management Nigeria, to drive the adoption of best practices tailored towards helping farmers and agribusiness entities to be inclusive in their business models. Through our quarterly workshops sessions evenly spread across the different geopolitical zones in Nigeria, farmers and agribusiness practitioners in Nigeria will be trained on the various models for driving inclusivity in agricultural value chain operations using resource materials from the 2SCALE program. Ultimately, the goal of the inclusive agribusiness club is to promote diversity in agribusiness operations, share knowledge and develop a community of practice for adopters of inclusive agribusiness models in Nigeria.



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CLUB ACTIVITIES FOR 2023

SOUTH-SOUTH ZONE

Port Harcourt Inclusive Agribusiness Club Training Workshop

Date: Saturday, 15th July, 2023.

Venue: Beverly Hills Hotel, Woji Road, GRA, Port Harcourt.

Meeting with Deans of Faculties of Agriculture and Management Science on the need to include courses on Inclusive Agribusiness in the academic curriculum of undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Agriculture and Business Management

- Faculty of Agriculture, University of Port Harcourt: Monday 17th July, 2023
- Faculty of Agriculture, Rivers State University of Science and Technology: Monday 17th July, 2023
- Faculty of Agriculture, Ignatius Ajuru, University of Education: Tuesday 18th July, 2023
- Faculty of Agriculture, Elechi Amadi Polytechnic: Tuesday 18th July, 2023

SOUTH WEST ZONE

Ibadan Inclusive Agribusiness Club Training Workshop

Date: Saturday, 19th August, 2023.

Venue: Conference Room, Nigerian College of Agribusiness, Ibadan Campus.

Meeting with Deans of Faculties of Agriculture and Management Science on the need to include courses on inclusive agribusiness in the academic curriculum of undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Agriculture and Business Management



- Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ibadan: Monday 21st August, 2023
- University of Ibadan Business School: Monday 21st August, 2023
- Faculty of Management and Accounting, Lead City University Ibadan: Monday 21st August, 2023
- Federal of Agriculture, Moor Plantation, Ibadan: Tuesday 22nd August, 2023
- ♦ Federal College of Animal Health and Production, Moor Plantation, Ibadan: Tuesday 22nd August, 2023

NORTH WEST ZONE

Kano Inclusive Agribusiness Club Training Workshop

Date: Saturday 21st October, 2023

Venue: To be Confirmed

Meeting with Deans of Faculties of Agriculture and Management Science on the need to include courses on inclusive agribusiness in the academic curriculum of undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Agriculture and Business Management

- Federal College of Agricultural Produce Technology Kano: Monday 23rd October, 2023
- Faculty of Agriculture, Bayero University, Kano: Monday 23rd October, 2023

INTERESTED IN JOINING OR FOLLOWING THE ACTIVITIES OF INCLUSIVE AGRIBUSINESS CLUB Join our mailing list by sending a request email to: inclusiveclub@agribusinessnigeria.org



Bola Tinubu

Agribusiness Expectations from Nigeria's 16th President



he inauguration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu as the 16th President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria marks the beginning of a new era, with the agribusiness sector poised at a critical juncture. Nigeria, endowed with vast arable land and abundant natural resources, possesses the potential to emerge as a global agribusiness powerhouse. To unlock this potential, the agribusiness community eagerly anticipates the policies, investments, and initiatives that the new administration will introduce, aiming to drive productivity and foster sustainable growth within the sector.

Our editorial team went to town, to sample the opinions of a cross-section of agribusiness professionals in Nigeria to capture their expectations of the new administration in areas of policy initiatives and development Agenda.

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AGRIBUSINESS EXECUTIVE **POLICY INSIGHT**

BAMIDELE OLORUNFEMI

Country Representative, Nigeria USDA West Africa PRO-Cashew Project

The federal government should demonstrate a strong political willingness towards policy implementation and where necessary initiate policy reforms to address enabling environment challenges. Prioritizing value addition through appropriate policies is essential, and one way to achieve this is by increasing taxes on exports. By doing so, more local processing and agribusiness investments can be stimulated within the country.

Access to finance for both start-up and existing businesses is imperative. The federal government needs to pro-actively protect local businesses through favorable monetary policies. It's noteworthy that despite challenging economic conditions, foreign owned companies are often backed by their governments with favorable policies, allowing them to withstand the test of time. Conversely, Nigerian businesses face a lack of support from the government, with only high-cost loans available. In addition, poorly implemented incentives like the EGG (Export Expansion Grant), and other initiatives designed to promote local processing hinders investment. Therefore, the new government should establish a robust incentive, or subsidy system to increase and sustain value addition as well as attract investments.

Government ministries and agencies should be encouraged to collaborate, and find holistic solutions to agricultural problems. For example, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, Ministry of Water Resources, and Ministry of Agriculture can work together to support irrigation initiatives.

Such synergy will enhance the effectiveness of policies for agriculture and agribusiness and address the low levels of irrigation in Nigeria.

The government must also remain cognizant countries policies as they can have positive or negative implications on economic activities, In Nigeria. For instance, Benin Republic recently placed a ban on the export of cashew starting from 2024. There is a need for the government of Nigeria to pro-actively look into the likely consequences of such policy.

And finally, the inefficiencies in the Nigeria Port Authority should be tackled outrightly. The delays faced in exporting goods and services pose significant setback for local businesses and hinder investments attraction. Resolving this challenge is essential for aligning with past efforts to improve the ease of doing business in Nigeria.

DR. HENRIETTA BOLANLE OJURI.

CEO Echbee Foods.

Agricultural policies should be in the front burner in the new dispensation. There should be a drive to promote food security through innovative approaches. An Agricultural Transformation Agenda should be instituted in all states of the country. All states in the country have crops of comparative advantages and competitive advantages that can be harnessed to create an agricultural hub that ensures production, processing and development of value chains.

The policy to have an agricultural transformation agenda in all states will develop more improved crops, create innovative products, create more jobs, exclusive markets and empower small holder farmers.

There should be an improved policy on cassava transformation, uses and export. The transformation agenda should be top priority as Nigeria is the largest producer in the world. Cassava is produced in 24 states out of the 36 states. There is a potential to generate revenues of over \$427.3 million from domestic value addition and derive income of \$2.98billion in agricultural exports of cassava. This is the time to champion the inclusion of cassava flour into bread making and other confectionaries to reduce the cost of wheat importation. Cassava should be considered a national crop and given top priority in terms of supporting the smallholder farmers, creating processing hubs as well as encouraging investments into the value chain.

A policy establishing an agricultural value chain development agency /plan/ project should be introduced. The Agricultural value chain development in Nigeria is not developed or organized to ensure food security and curb food loss and food waste along the food chain. A policy in this direction will create necessary interventions in terms of investments in Agriculture.

A workable and adoptable livestock transformation policy should be initiated to tap into the billions in the unorganized sector. The livestock transformation policy will create an avenue for investors as well as grow the livestock population in the country resulting in food

A policy on the initiation and implementation of circular economy in various industries will be a game changer. The circular economy policy will create necessary synergy between producers and industries resulting in cutting overhead cost, reducing wastes and creating new job opportunities. This policy will ensure sustainable growth of industries as well as mitigate effects of climate change due to waste accumulation and disposal. The investment drive should be towards digitalizing the agribusiness sector.

There should be incentives for investors that want to champion smart farming with creations of portals to monitor farmers from production to processing and marketing. Globally there is an increase in remote jobs; this model can be adopted to produce vibrant agribusiness sector participation for growth and export markets.

TOKUNBO ADEWALE TORIOLA

Principal consultant and CEO of Folawale Integrated Services Limited.

In terms of policies direction and investment initiatives for the Agribusiness sector for this new government: It is my expectation that government should dwell more on boosting the food production to make the country be food secured and likewise revamp our cash crop sector of the crop production e.g., cashew, cocoa, soyabean and ground nut etc.

These can be done by ensuring there is wholistic approach in data gathering: who and who are farmers on which crop, aggregating them to cooperative groups, make input available for them through the synergy with state ministries of agricultural and natural resources on One state one product initiatives currently going on and ensure each state produced to their maximum capacity. It should also be mandatory for each local government to cultivate minimum of 300 hectares. Young graduates of agriculture should be engaged through farm estate project initiatives to practicalize all they learnt in schools so as to boost production.

Secondly, within the next one year each zone and state of the federation based on their advantage should have at least one industry on one local government one industry initiatives where PPP shall be involved. More jobs will be created this way and more market for what we produced. Thirdly there should be more investment on dry season farming and post-harvest losses control by building more storage facilities and also revamp all moribund irrigation facilities

Fourthly, reintroduction of commodities exchange will stabilize market and thereby making farmers have value for their efforts with enforcement of insurance cover for our farmers on their investments.

Lastly, making credit available for investors in the sectors

of agribusiness mentioned above will go a long way to boost agribusiness e.g., insurance, irrigation, technology, storage facilities, data management, farm input suppliers and producers/manufacturers etc., processors.

ABDULALIM ABDULLAHI OLUSEGUN

Chief Operating Officer, Elim Tripartite Agro Enterprise. (E.T.A-Enterprise)

As an Agribusiness expert, I would strongly recommend the following in term of policies direction and investment attraction initiatives for the agribusiness sector by the new Federal government:

- 1. Data & Statistics: The new federal government should as a matter of urgency work on the Data collection of Agriculture and Agribusiness practitioners, as one cannot make informed decisions without even knowing the number or figure of people and areas one is planning on.
- 2. Local Governments Participation: Secondly, they should ensure that all the 774 Local governments are activated and ensure their active participation in providing an enabling environment for Agricultural practices, as they are the closest to the people. Hitherto, the Local governments have always been showing the "we are less concerned" attitude towards the plight of Agric practitioners.
- 3. Agricultural Commodities Exchange Board: Furthermore, the Federal government should establish the Agricultural Commodity Exchange Board to regulate the pricing of agricultural produce, as this would give investors a heads up on their choice of investment and the expected return on their investments.
- 4. Free Trade Zone Areas For Agro-Processors: Also, making available Free trade zone areas for Agroprocessors, to attract investment into the local production and local processing of Agricultural produce. This would enhance Food Security, create more jobs, and likewise boosts the economy.
- 5. Agricultural Insurance Policies: The formulation of Agricultural insurance policies and the promotion of Agricultural Insurance companies' establishment, just like the government-sponsored Health insurance policies in some states, should be done and further promoted amongst Agriculture and Agribusiness practitioners. This would give investors the boldness and confidence to invest



into the sector, as they are assured their investments are insured against shocking loss instances.

6. Commercial Production Alternative Financing: Lastly, the practice has always been financing through interest-based loans for the farmers and Agribusiness practitioners. However, the interest rates are killing the businesses as a result of unexpected loss from the business and thereby having a huge chunk of repayment to make. For this reason, other options like Business partnerships between financial institutions and Agribusiness practitioners on the commercial production of produce, processing and so on should be adopted, in order to lessen the burden on the agribusiness actors. Likewise, Forward-sales contract on production and supply can be encouraged, among others.

MAHMOOD OMEIZA ADEIZA

Lecturer, Department of Accounting, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto

Policy Direction

- Promoting sustainable agriculture practices for resource-efficient and environmentally friendly farming practices. These practices should include; organic farming, pasturalization of nomadic grazing, soil management, and the conservation of water and biodiversity.
- Enhancing access to AgriFinance and AgriCredit for the development of greater numbers of stable smallholder farming businesses. Such as specialized Micro AgriFinance or AgriCredit Banks within rural localities to incentivize AgriVentures.
- Providing stronger linkages that support more inclusive agribusiness value chains. Such as fostering partnerships between farmers, transporters and processors through better market transparency.

Alternative Agribusiness Investment Initiatives

- Encouraging productivity through innovative technology adoption from farming to processing.
- Capacity building through skills liberalization. Skills acquisition schemes have not helped much because it is up to a trainee to be able to pick up useful tips to improve but, skills liberalization ensures that a tutor deliberately passes on supreme ideas for best practices to the trainees.
- Developing farming locality infrastructures such as irrigation systems and dams, storage facilities, market infrastructures, and ICT that help manage weather forecasts, cropping practices, etc.

ENGR, KABIRU LAWAN KIBIYA

Director, IFS MICROFARMS

Government should consider establishment of a $harmonized\,sub-national\,and\,national\,program\,to\,address$ the specific technical constraints of the smallholder farmers in Nigeria. These constrains currently stand as an obstacle to produce export development and put citizens at increased risk of health problems through consumption of farm products infected with diseases. With such a program in place, a system of product quality certification may be developed over time, in collaboration with national and international analytical laboratories. There should be deliberate effort aimed at helping farmers to increase output and income, strengthen extension service delivery, promote simple farm technologies, utilize land, water and other resources for food production.

AGRIBUSINESS EXECUTIVE **POLICY INSIGHT**

MRS STELLA ORAKA NONYEM

MD/CEO Agribusiness Innovation International Ltd. (AGRICON)& NAQS National Consultant.

Agribusiness is a perfect alternative to the dwindling fortunes in the global oil market, resulting to good source of revenue.

Key investment area, Rehabilitation of our lost glory crops

Oil Palm and its value chain Nigeria Groundnut pyramid, Cocoa, Rice production value chain Cassava and its value chain and export potentials, etc.

Livestock production and very important is the revival of the Agricultural Extension Services that is almost moribund in this nation.

New Policies on Agricultural Security

- **Investing in Food Security**
- Discouraging high reliance on Food Import
- Policies on Renewable Energy: boosting electricity making it accessible to Agro-entrepreneurs
- Creating enabling environment for good Health care infrastructure, will give stabilizing effect to Agribusiness.
- Foreign Investment R&D
- Removing the disparity between official/black market exchange rate. This is just mention a few.

BABALOLA SAMSON WALE

CEO, Exim Express Logistics

- The new FG should consider setting up an agribusiness hub: The new FG should establish a centralized agribusiness hub to support various agricultural activities, including production, processing, distribution, and marketing.
- Set up factories for value addition for raw material products e.g., raw cashew nut, cocoa beans, soybeans, etc. Factories should be set up to add value to raw agricultural products, such as raw cashew nuts, cocoa beans, and soybeans, to increase profitability and reduce post-harvest losses.
- Encourage the export of agriproducts: Encouraging the export of agricultural products through streamlined procedures, export incentives, market research, and support for exporters can expand

- market opportunities and generate foreign exchange earnings.
- Roll out agricultural finance and lot more: Rolling out agricultural finance initiatives, such as agricultural loan programs, low-interest loans, and specialized agricultural banks or funds, will provide financial support to farmers and agribusinesses, stimulating investment and productivity in the sector.

ABIODUN OLAORE

Founder - Yworry Foods

Reinvigorate the old agric product marketing board, to ensure the price uniformity and regulation of product prices: The new FG should consider revitalizing the old agricultural product marketing board. This board would be responsible for ensuring price uniformity and regulating product prices in the agricultural sector. By implementing effective price regulations, the board can prevent unfair price fluctuations and provide stability for both farmers and consumers.

Re-enactment of agric policies which foster FDI in Agric sector, especially the agric products value additions: The new FG should focus on reintroducing agricultural policies that encourage Foreign Direct Investment in the agricultural sector, with a specific emphasis on value addition. These policies would create an enabling environment to attract foreign investors who are interested in establishing processing facilities and value addition factories.

In conclusion, as the new administration under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu assumes office, expectations run high within the agribusiness community in Nigeria. Agribusiness experts aspire to witness a transformative agenda that prioritizes policy changes, investment, and initiatives aimed at driving productivity, fostering innovation, and ensuring sustainable growth in the sector. By focusing on these critical areas, Nigeria has the potential to unleash its agricultural prowess, enhance food security, create employment opportunities, and contribute to the nation's overall economic development. The future of Nigeria's agribusiness sector rests on the vision and actions of the new administration, as it works towards harnessing the country's agricultural potential and charting a prosperous path for the years to come



2 100 Afikpo-Enohia-Itim Road Afikpo, Afikpo North L.G.A. Ebonyi State Nigeria
0810 557 6382 mnescofoods@gmail.com

SUPPLYING THE AMERICAN MARKET WITH NIGERIAN **SUPERFOODS**



Shalom Bako Dangombe Managing Director of Afrivana

Afrivana imports Nigerian commodities like hibiscus flowers and shea butter into the US, from where it markets and distributes to different buyers. Jeanette Clark speaks to founder and managing director Shalom Bako Dangombe about the persistence it took to get the first client, overcoming trade hurdles and diversification for future growth.

n 2002, when Shalom Bako Dangombe was 14 years old, his father relocated their family of five from Bauchi state in northern Nigeria to Orange County, California. There, Bako finished high school and attended college, and at one point it looked like he would commit to a future as a professional soccer player. He played first at his college, where he earned a communications degree, and later the Los Angeles Galaxy.

However, today, at the age of 35, he spends his days talking to smallholder farmers back in northern Nigeria, convincing them to cultivate and grow hibiscus flowers for Afrivana, the company he founded in 2019.

Afrivana markets and distributes African superfood products, with dried hibiscus flowers as its high-volume offering. The company also engages in light manufacturing to transform raw materials into value-added products suitable for easy export, such as turning ginger into oil and dried hibiscus



AGRIBUSINESS EXECUTIVE **BUSINESS INSIGHT COLUMN**

powder. Afrivana's products are sold in bulk or as privateand white-labelled items to clients in the US, UK, and select Latin American countries like Nicaragua.

The change in career path came when the young Bako saw an opportunity for trade between the US and Nigeria. He felt that he could capitalize on it due to his unique advantage - hailing from one country, and living in the other.

In 2011, armed with contacts he had made during internships in college and freelance work as a digital marketer, he secured a few distribution contracts for fashion apparel manufacturers in the US and returned home to Nigeria to market and distribute the clothing there.

"Bringing those products into Africa was a whole other journey. It did not succeed as I had hoped," he says. "In fact, I fell on my face and failed at it."

Bako did not give up. "I started researching the possibility of turning the plan around, exporting from Nigeria and then distributing in the US," he says.

Finding the ideal commodity to trade

Bako returned to California between 2015 and 2018, working in marketing while searching for the ideal commodity to trade. When he noticed hibiscus tea on American shelves, it brought back childhood memories of selling the beverage to classmates after school. Known as zobo in northern Nigeria, the drink is popular among Mexican and Caribbean communities in the US. Bako recognized a ready market for the flower, which was used to fence crops in his home village.

Seeking a buyer, Bako began his search on Google: investigating tea importers and cold calling them to present Nigeria, and himself, as their next preferred import partner. For years, he recalls, people simply hung up on him. "I felt I reached a fork in the road. Either I was going to dedicate myself to this, or I needed to figure something else out," he says.

The turning point came when Bako reached out to a contact at the US office of a Mexican company he discovered through Google. "He told me that he would take me seriously if I travelled to Mexico. Once there, he would make a few introductions.

In 2018, Bako packed his bags and purchased a oneway ticket to Mexico, where he spent several months. He continued his online search, requested the promised introductions, and took to the streets - quite literally "showing up" at the doors of various importers, including those he discovered through online searches

One company, unconnected to the contact who initially inspired his trip, recognized his persistence and agreed to accept one container as a trial. "I had broken into the market and had my first client!" recalls Bako.

Unfortunately, there was a temporary ban on the trade of hibiscus from Nigeria into Mexico at the time, due to pest control concerns. The client agreed to have Bako deliver the shipment directly to its US customer, sidestepping a bilateral trade hurdle that was only solved in 2022 when the ban was lifted.

Bako travelled to Nigeria and secured the supply by partnering with smallholder farmers grouped into cooperatives and using existing aggregators selling in the large commodity markets of Kano to make up for the shortfall. Towards the end of 2019, the container was delivered. The satisfied client immediately wanted to scale to bigger volumes.

Changing tactics

With the trade ban in place, Bako realized he would need to shift his focus to buyers in the US, hoping it would be easier now that he had a successful shipment under his belt. He resumed calling and visiting buyers of hibiscus tea. The initial reaction was mostly one of hesitance; for many companies, it seemed the risk of dealing with a Nigerian company was too much.

"We overcame those hurdles by importing larger volumes and storing them in the US. Then we distributed from these warehouses," explains Bako. This tactic proved successful as clients were more comfortable with the product being readily available in their vicinity and promptly delivered. To fund the working capital needed, the company secured financing from a private investor. Then, in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Importing anything was suddenly even more complicated than it had been before. "A lot of people held back in those first couple of months; we didn't," says Bako. He feels that Afrivana managed to grow during this period because it found ways to overcome the challenges thrown its way. The same year, Bako connected with an Atlanta-based company seeking a partnership to establish a central distribution center. The hub enabled consolidation of stock from multiple warehouses into a single leased

facility, allowing clients to see the product and its quality first-hand. With enough stock available to supply short notice orders, the hub also helped build trust among potential buyers.

Over time, some clients have requested additional commodities beyond those listed on Afrivana's website. In response, the company has imported fonio, tamarind and turmeric to meet demand. Afrivana has set a goal to move over 100 containers, or more than a thousand tons, of products in 2023.

Raw materials from the source

Afrivana currently has seven employees in Nigeria and five in the US. The team in Nigeria is working at strengthening relationships to ensure secure supply, putting agreements in place with smallholder farmer cooperatives or large aggregators.

The company has also started a community development programme to establish new hibiscus farmers, supporting them with seedlings and other agricultural inputs and then putting offtake agreements in place.

Diversification

Expanding into other services is one avenue of future growth that Bako has identified; Afrivana now brokers trade agreements, linking exporters from Nigeria with willing buyers in the US.

In addition to its current operations, the company is also keen to build on its distribution expertise. It is actively seeking partnerships with African brands and companies that incorporate superfood ingredients sourced from Africa. One such example is Calyx Zobo, a flower-based beverage made using a traditional Nigerian recipe, which Afrivana imports from a UK-based manufacturer.

Looking to the future, Bako envisions a move into more comprehensive agro-processing. "Manufacturing is very capital-intensive. We have started the conversation with some US companies that are interested in manufacturing in Africa. If we get the right partners and expertise, I see a future for it."

Source: How we made it in Africa



LATEST AGRIBUSINESS **NEWS** ACROSS THE GLOBE.



MEXICO - The Federal Consumer Attorney's Office (PROFECO) in Mexico is set to withdraw some soft drink brands from the market, due to non-compliance, mainly in terms of labeling.



he announcement was made by the head of the institution, Ricardo Sheffield, who in an interview with the newspaper El Universal highlighted some of the conclusions of the study carried out by PROFECO on 46 soft drinks.

Of the 46 soft drinks analyzed by PROFECO laboratory, 15 were without calories, one was low in calories, as well as 8 with added sugars, and 22 that have sugars with noncaloric sweeteners.

The analysis gave the agency a clear mind to withdraw the brands that do not comply with the provisions of the Mexican standard.

In addition, the agency said the reasons for the withdrawal of soft drinks and sugary drinks, the false declaration that they contain juice, or that they present false legends or misleading slogans stand out.

The soft drinks that will be withdrawn are Sidral Aga, Jarritos, Kas Naranja, Free life, Lacroix, Sisi, among others.

Other soft drinks that do not comply with the norm and that were voluntarily withdrawn from the market are Jumex Naranjada Frutzzo, Ameyal, and Zing Naranja, which declare a higher content than what they really have, above the tolerance limits of the norm.

In the case of Sidral Aga, the technicians from the Attorney General's Office detected that it only contains 1% apple juice, when its label declares 20%.

For Jarritos, the study showed that it is the soft drink with the highest sweetener and not precisely sugar but high fructose corn syrup, which suppresses the feeling of satiety. In addition, the historic slogan that has accompanied them for decades (How good they are!) is not susceptible to verification, so it cannot be used.

Meanwhile, Kas Narania declares that it has an "intense citrus flavor", which could not be verified either; in the case of Free life, it contains the legends "with natural extract" and "100% natural", which could not be proven either.

Lacroix soft drink presents its information is written in English, which contravenes Mexican labeling regulations while Sisi does not state the content of the acesulfame k sweetener exactly.

In addition, PROFECO warns that soft drinks that should not be consumed daily include Barrilitos in their twoliter presentation, as they contain high fructose syrup. Chaparritas in its 250 ml presentation is also on the list because of the invert sugar syrup present in it, and Señorial sangria, which also contains high fructose syrup.

Tanzania reports 43% annual meat exports increment as of April 2023



ANZANIA – Tanzanian Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries has reported a 41.3% increment in the country's annual meat exports to US\$51.895 million, as of April 2023. The increase in volumes shifted from 8,877.8 tons worth

US\$36.26 million to 12,243.79 tons of meat worth US\$51.895 million. According to the Livestock and Fisheries Minister Abdallah Ulega, the export includes 457.59 tons of beef, 8,689.80 tons of goat meat, 2,969.20 tons of sheep, 2.10 tons of chicken meat, 2.40 tons of pork and 122.70 tons of other meat.

"When compared to 8,877.8 tons worth US\$36.265 million, an increment equals 43.1 percent as of April 2023," he said.

Ulega attributed the increase to the massive efforts made by the government in improving the business environment and attracting investment in addition to other factors; positive farmers' response to livestock mobilization.

"These efforts have enabled the country to get meat markets in Hong Kong, Vietnam, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Jordan, Bahrain, Kenya, and Comoro," the minister noted. Ulega however added that the presence of six modern abattoirs in the country has also contributed to the rise in meat exports.

Last month, Tanzania Meat Board (TMB) also reported that meat export in the country had significantly increased by 65.6% from 2,765 tons in the same period last year to 4,577.5 tons in the first quarter of 2023.

Statistics from the TMB also indicated that revenue generation increased by 110% from US\$11.6 million last year to US\$24.3 million in the first quarter of 2023.

TMB marketing manager John Chasama, attributed the trend to the country's achievement in maintaining already secured

"We are scaling up efforts to secure the new meat markets and mobilize the youth in commercial livestock keeping and assure meat factories availability of quality raw materials," he said.

The country has also managed to maintain and improve the value of meat export since last November 2022 when it broke the ice after exporting 1,423.012 tons up by 125 percent compared to 631,76 tons exported in the preceding month.

This follows the announcement made by TMB on measures aimed at increasing meat exports to 16,000 tons annually by 2026.

According to Daniel Mushi, the TMB registrar the measures put in place would see a collaboration of the board with meat factories and livestock farmers to improve on the quality of the meat produced.

He added that the TMB in collaboration with the government is inviting and promoting investments in meat processing plants and the construction of modern abattoirs.

The director of production and marketing in the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Mr Steven Michael added that youths were taken for modern livestock-keeping training to ensure that Tanzania's meat is globally recognized for its distinguished quality.

Kenya proposes 10% excise duty increase on fish imports to raise revenue

KENYA – The Kenyan Government has proposed a 10% excise duty on fish imports as part of the revenue-raising measures to finance the 2023/2024 budget; which could cause price hiking of the commodities due to scarcity.

The government ignored calls from Members of Parliament (MPs) who insisted that the excise duty imposed on fish imports should be at 20%.

"I would like to introduce a Bill to amend the First Schedule of the Excise Duty Act, 2015 to introduce excise duty on imported fish at the rate of 20% of the customs value," MP Samuel Atandi noted.

He added that despite fish imports from China and other European countries estimated to be US\$36.6 million, Kenya is not getting any revenue from the transactions. According to statistics from the fisheries department, the value of fish imported from China grew by 25% in 2021 to hit a historic high of Kes2 billion last year from Kes1.5 billion the previous period.

China increased its fish market share in Kenya after the latter's fish imports increased from 13,514 tons in 2020 to 14,847 tons representing a 10% year-on-year increase, rising disquiet from local suppliers who have been edged out of the market by the cheaper supplies.

In total Kenya imported fish worth Sh2.47 billion last year from the 19 sampled countries to bridge the growing deficit due to dwindling stocks from major domestic sources such as Lake Victoria according to the data.

Mr Paul Oyimba, a Kenyan Fish Trader chairman reported that last year, the volumes caught from Lake Victoria dropped from 90,000 to 86,000 metric tons, according to the fisheries office.

"We are no longer competing with Chinese fish at the moment because of the absence of Chinese fish here. All of the stocks that we are selling now are sourced from Lake Victoria and Lake Naivasha," he said.

The industry data also shows that the only time the value of fish imports from China dropped was in 2020 and it was by 31% due to the Covid-19 pandemic disruptions, triggering a rise in prices that cushioned local traders from the cheap consignment.

Despite the decline, China still accounted for the largest share of fish that were imported from the world, raking in 70 percent of the total value of shipment in 2020.

In 2018, the matter of Chinese fish flooding local markets sparked diplomatic unease between Nairobi and Beijing when Kenyan government officials were urged to find ways of curtailing the imports, analysts reported.

Isidore Agritech unveils Jinja app to improve farmers' market access



Isidore Agritech Limited has launched the Jinja marketplace and agent apps to boost farmers' market access and accelerate growth in the sector.

The Jinja app leverages advanced technology and provides seamless platforms that connect buyers and sellers of agro commodities, extension services, and financing. Also, it offers convenient and efficient solutions for the agriculture industry in Nigeria.

With the Jinja agent app, farmers and aggregators can effortlessly connect with the market by dialing *347*465# to sell their commodities, access extension services, purchase input seeds, and obtain insurance coverage. Pamela Adie, the vice-president of business development at Isidore noted that Jinja is enabling access to a grid value chain more conveniently.

"Jinja is more than just a digital marketplace. One of our goals is to reduce wastage by making sure that farmers and aggregators have access to a wider pool of buyers in an instant, and that agro businesses can see, compare prices, and buy high-quality commodities in bulk without having to go to the farms or markets," she said in a statement.

"Beyond that, we want to improve the quality of life of our farmers and aggregators, so they can buy insurance, get access to financing, and earn a share of our profits on every single transaction! Jinja empowers farmers, aggregators, and businesses with the tools and support they require to grow their businesses faster," she added. Additionally, the Jinja Marketplace app provides agrobusinesses with a user-friendly platform to compare and purchase high-quality agro commodities from multiple sellers in Nigeria. This app saves time and money for buyers by providing competitive prices, secure payment options, real-time notifications, and buyer/seller ratings to ensure a safe and seamless experience.

Also, Valentine Eke, product manager at Isidore, elaborated that Jinja features a user-friendly interface that allows farmers, aggregators, and businesses to navigate and meet their agric needs.

Happy Birthday

TO OUR

JUNE CELEBRANTS



Mrs Taoheed-Rabiu Mujidat Folake

MIAM

06 JUNE 2023



Mr Ogunnaike Olasesan Rasaki

MIAM

06 JUNE 2023



Mrs Elizabeth Ugbonma Essiene

MIAM

06 JUNE 2023



Mr Adeleke Akeem Adelabu

MIAM

11 JUNE 2023



Mr Adamu Aminu Dinawa

MIAM

15 JUNE 2023



Dr Itodo Angela

MIAM

19 JUNE 2023



Dr Ayodele Olorunfemi

FIAM

20 JUNE 2023



Mr Yusuf Ali Maikanwa

MIAM

24 JUNE 2023



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