



A cross section of the participants during a panel discussion session at the learning event, Kano State.

## Farmer Field Day: A day of Learning and Celebration

During the previous quarter, HortiNigeria implemented its Farmer Field Day in Kano and Kaduna states and served as a vibrant forum for the exchange of ideas, innovations, and best practices within the various AgriBusiness Clusters (ABC). Smallholder Farmers from across the state gathered to learn and share information of their experiences about the latest technologies, sustainable farming practices, and strategies they were introduced to by the program.

The event was characterized by practical demonstrations, and interactive sessions, ensuring that the knowledge imparted was both accessible and applicable.

Beyond the learnings, the platform enabled farmers to celebrate the success of their collaborative efforts, fostering a sense of ownership and community. It provided a platform for farmers to share their experiences, challenges, and solutions, fostering a supportive network and a sense of solidarity which is especially crucial during challenging times, such as pest infestations or unfavourable weather conditions. ■

## Newsletter Highlights

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A cross section of the participants during a panel discussion session at the learning event, Kano State.

## Learning Event: Unleashing the Power of Knowledge Exchange!

On July 28, HortiNigeria held its first learning event in Kano State, Nigeria. The two-day flagship event, themed “The Journey So Far,” highlighted the learnings from the program since implementation began in 2021. The event served as a valuable platform to obtain feedback from stakeholders on ways to achieve sector transformation. This were done through many engaging sessions, including panel discussions, gallery walks, world café sessions, exhibitions, and field visits.

Nearly two years into the program, the learning event underscored the need for enhanced collaborations among stakeholders to achieve a sustainable and inclusive horticulture sector. The commitment from the stakeholders to collaborate to improve the sector was demonstrated through the knowledge exchange and networking opportunities that took place during the event. According to HortiNigeria Program Director Mohammed Salasi Idris,

the primary objective was not only to share achievements and insights, but also to gather knowledge for driving positive change within the horticulture sector.

With a turnout of over 140 participants, including delegates from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Nigeria. Other participants included the Organic Fertilizer Producer Supplier Association of Nigeria (OFPSAN), National Horticultural Research Institute (NIHORT), National Tomato Growers, Processors and Marketers Association of Nigeria (NATPAN), Nigeria Agribusiness Group (NABG), Netherlands-African Business Council (NABC), various Dutch-funded programs, private sector partners, financial institutions, smallholder farmers, and other key players in the agricultural value chain, both from within and outside the country. ■

For a detailed account of the event's outcome, refer to the event's communique:

**Communique: Call for joint action to create a sustainable and inclusive horticulture sector in Nigeria HortiNigeria**

## CHANGING THE FINANCIAL NARRATIVE OF BUSINESS CHAMPIONS

In August, HortiNigeria held a Financial Linkage Workshop focused on strengthening financial ties between HortiNigeria business champions and financial service providers in Ogun and Oyo states. The workshop was designed to spur discussions, disseminate knowledge, and foster linkages.

During the workshop, attendees participated in group discussions, presentations, and networking opportunities, delving into the potential for stronger financial connections. The highlight of these sessions was the spotlight on success stories, and how to replicate such in the Nigerian Horticulture sector, particularly among HortiNigeria's Business Champions.



Some participants during a presentation session at the financial linkage workshop, Ogun State.

According to Ikechukwu Chiaka, the HortiNigeria Inclusive Finance Lead "the workshop was an initiative to catalyze innovative and inclusive finance. So far, we have Sixteen Business Champions willing to serve as an anchor for some of the 432 Entrepreneurial Farmers within their hubs. If everything goes as planned the financing model is expected to result to provision of credit facilities worth 745 million naira."

Balogun Kamilat Omolola, a participant at the event, enthusiastically shared that the experience opened doors for her to connect with a diverse group of farmers and Financial Service Providers. This networking opportunity allowed her to exchange knowledge. These new connections are poised to significantly streamline her business operations, paving the way for smoother and more efficient processes. ■

**Are you an Aspiring Young Farmer or Agro-Entrepreneurs, we have gathered some links on information on various grants that may help you with your business:**

🔗 D-Prize Initiative

🔗 Roddenberry Foundation Catalyst Fund

🔗 Norrenberger Economic growth Initiative

## STRATEGICALLY ADDRESSING THE LABOR SHORTAGE CRISIS IN SOUTH NIGERIA THROUGH MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION



Cross section of participants at the roundtable forum, Ogun state.

The persistent labor shortage, further intensified by various fiscal transformations such as the Naira's redesign and the removal of fuel subsidies earlier in the year, has significantly impacted entrepreneurial farmers in the states of Ogun and Oyo. To tackle the challenge, it became imperative to initiate a roundtable forum

for comprehensive discussion and strategic planning.

Recently hosted in Ogun State, the forum convened stakeholders from diverse sectors, including government, industry, academia, and labor organizations. The gathering focused on examining the extensive effects of labor shortages, an issue notably pronounced among women farmers in the southern region.

The forum's agenda covered topics of labor market dynamics, causes and impacts of labor scarcity, and the exploration of strategies to alleviate these issues. Additionally, discussions delved into labor market regulations, potential collaborative efforts, and the formulation

of feasible solutions. The dialogues fostered a cooperative environment, promoting the exchange of best practices and the generation of practical recommendations and strategies.

**Key recommendations, set to be implemented with the support of HortiNigeria, include:**

1. Facilitate capacity building for farmers and relevant stakeholders in areas such as business development, record-keeping, and understanding the significance of insurance.
2. Establish partnerships with pertinent private agencies to aid farmers and other stakeholders in labor recruitment, ensuring comprehensive documentation, and promoting registration under insurance schemes. Encouraging participation in cooperatives and fostering a supportive community for open dialogue.
3. Promote integration, cooperation, and association through engagement with various hubs to enhance productivity levels.
4. Identify and collaborate with companies specializing in simple machinery and advocating for the adoption of innovative farming technologies that simplify tasks for farm laborers.

These measures aim to mitigate the current labor shortages and lay the groundwork for a more resilient and efficient agricultural sector in the region. ■

## Empowering Stakeholders On Agro-Input Information Through Digital Technology

With various crises impacting the world, food security is now more than ever at center stage. Farmers in Africa, and Nigeria in particular, face an urgent need to adopt advanced agricultural technologies to improve their yield while protecting the environment. To do this, extension agents and agro-dealers must be able to provide the correct recommendations. In response to this need, HortiNigeria and the Feed the Future Enhancing Growth through Regional Agricultural Input Systems (EnGRAIS) Project for West Africa conducted a workshop on the development of agricultural input packages (AIPs) for vegetable crops to be included in the digital dashboard of the Fertilizer and Seed Recommendations Map for West Africa (FeSeRWAM). FeSeRWAM is an interactive online tool that provides near real-time market information on the appropriate inputs and best practices for various crops in West Africa. The objective of the workshop was to compile information on the recommendations for fertilizer, improved seed, and good agricultural practices for the most strategic vegetable crops in Nigeria, particularly the HortiNigeria-targeted crops of tomato, onion, pepper, and okra.

Participants in the workshop included key stakeholders in the horticulture value chain, such as National Horticultural Research Institute (NIHORT), National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NEARLS), West African Fertilizer Association (WAFA), Nigeria's Institute for Agricultural Research (IAR), Dangote Fertilizer, OCP Africa, Indorama, Zaria Fertilizer, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (FMAFS), and Notore Fertilizer. This collaboration is poised to enhance agricultural practices, increase crop yields, and empower Nigerian vegetable farmers.



Participants at the FeSeRWAM workshop, Lagos State.

"The synergy between EnGRAIS and HortiNigeria exemplifies a forward-thinking strategy aimed at broadening the scope and influence of agricultural initiatives. Through the development and dissemination of the agricultural innovation packages specifically crafted for vegetable crops, and leveraging the FeSeRWAM platform, we are significantly advancing the empowerment of farmers. This initiative will equip them with both the knowledge and resources necessary to enhance their farming practices and, consequently, their crop yields," Professor Chris Dawod, NEARLS noted.

HortiNigeria and EnGRAIS are implemented by the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC). HortiNigeria is funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Nigeria. EnGRAIS is one of the many assistance programs supported by the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). ■

To visit the FeSeRWAM dashboard, click the link: <http://www.feserwam.org>

## SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION: MY SEED TO SUCCESS

Opeyemi Wasiu's journey from a passionate young man in northern Ibadan to the CEO of Agriwax Farm and Agrobis Consultancy is a heartwarming tale of determination and growth. At 29 years old, Wasiu is not just working the land; he's also enriching his knowledge with a master's degree in horticulture at the Federal University of Agriculture in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

Wasiu's venture into farming began a decade ago, driven by a desire to contribute to solving Nigeria's food security and safety challenges. Today, he's not just tending to crops; he's leading a business and guiding a team, while continuing his educational journey.

The turning point in Wasiu's agricultural adventure came in 2022 when he participated in the HortiNigeria Youth Challenge. His efforts and skills were recognized, making him one of the winners from Oyo State. The reward? Climate-smart inputs that not only boosted his farm's productivity but also made the daily grind smoother for both him and his dedicated workers.

But Wasiu didn't stop there. Intrigued by the technological insights and innovations shared by HortiNigeria, he eagerly attended trainings, seizing the opportunity to elevate his business acumen. "The program was a game changer for me, particularly in unlocking access to finance. I've mastered the art of record-keeping and the critical dos and don'ts of running a business, positioning me perfectly to apply for loans confidently," Wasiu reflects with gratitude.

Beyond the financial acumen, the program also opened doors to market linkages, connecting Wasiu's farm with companies eager to source the crops he produces. "I am now armed with a wealth of knowledge in innovation and farming technologies, thanks to the program. I am set to take Agriwax Farm and Agrobis Consultancy to new heights, scaling up operations and impact," he shares, his voice brimming with enthusiasm and appreciation. "I am indebted to the program; it's truly top-notch in every aspect," he adds, his journey with HortiNigeria not just transforming his farm, but also enriching his life and the lives of those in his community. ■

Opeyemi Wasiu, CEO  
Agriwax Farm and  
Agrobis.



## Innovation Brief: Charcoal ZECC

Throughout the years, vegetable farmers have found it challenging to store freshly harvested vegetables in areas where the power supply is inadequate or when they do not have access to a temperature-controlled storage system. This has led individuals to come up with innovative ideas to keep vegetables fresh and retain their color and nutrients.

One of the innovations the HortiNigeria program promotes is the charcoal zero energy cooling chamber (ZECC). Initially promoted in the southern states, the charcoal ZECC

is now being adapted for use in the northern states as well due to its ease and affordability.

These chambers are constructed using simple, locally sourced materials, such as charcoal and mud, making them accessible to communities with limited resources. The science behind the charcoal ZECC is straightforward yet effective. Charcoal, when exposed to air, acts as a natural absorbent of moisture and heat. Some farmers also add a built-in water pump that releases water at intervals to keep the charcoal cold. As air from the outside enters the chamber, the charcoal ab-

sorbs the moisture and cools it. This natural evaporative cooling effect keeps the temperature inside the chamber lower than outside.

**Some benefits of the charcoal ZECC are:**

- 1. Low Cost:** The materials required for building a charcoal ZECC are readily available and affordable, making them accessible to local communities, especially in locations like Kano and Kaduna.
- 2. Energy Efficient:** Unlike traditional refrigeration, charcoal

ZECCs do not rely on electricity, making them an energy-efficient option.

**3. Preservation of Perishables:** These chambers effectively prolong the shelf life of vegetables and other perishable goods, reducing food waste and ensuring a more reliable food supply.

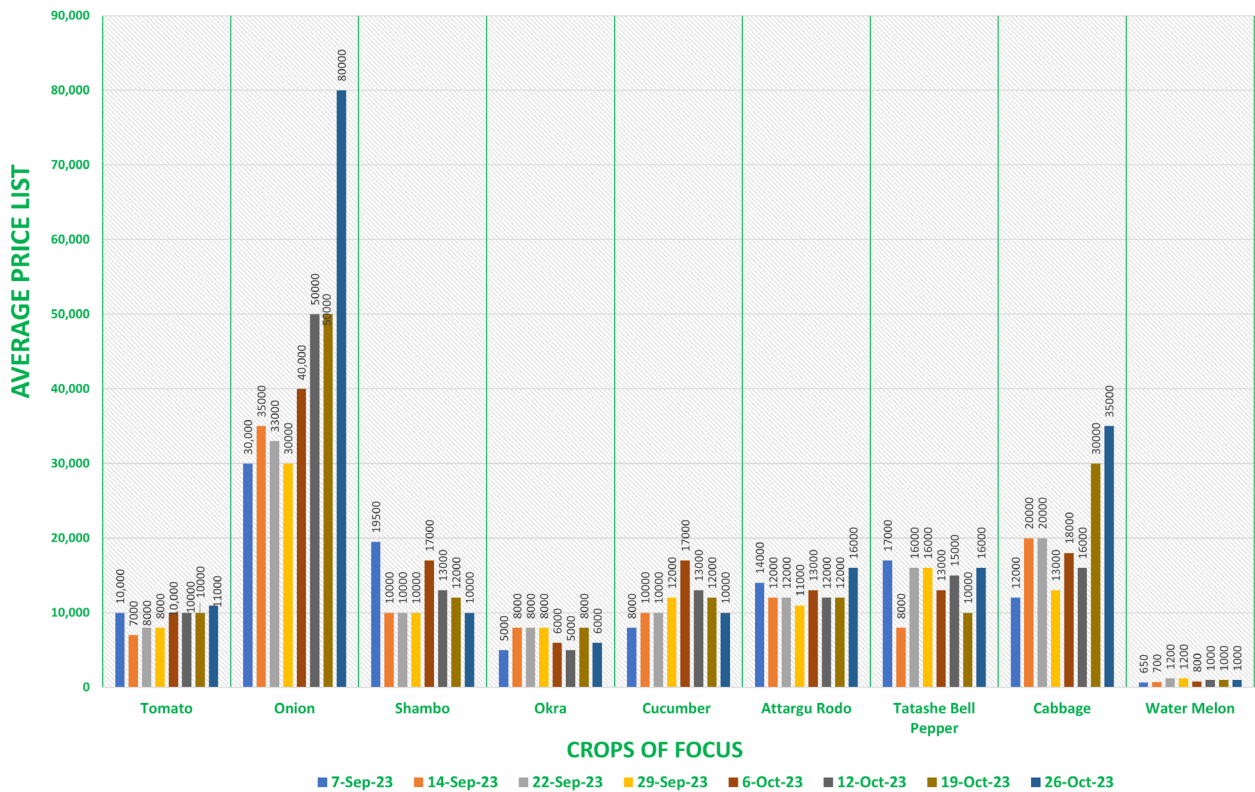
**4. Local Economic Empowerment:** The construction and maintenance of charcoal ZECCs can create economic opportunities within the community.

Charcoal ZECCs are a testament to human creativity and resourcefulness. By harnessing the natural properties of charcoal, these cham-

bers provide a lifeline for communities in need, ensuring access to fresh and nutritious food. As we continue to explore innovative solutions for food security and sustainability within the program, the charcoal ZECC is an inspiring example of what local farmers can achieve with local materials. ■

# HortiPrice Index

**HortiPrice Index Analysis for Kaduna and Kano States from September - October 2023**



As the world continues to evolve, data has become the heart and soul of many industries, especially agriculture. With the ever-changing climate, and local market demands, understanding price trends becomes critical for every stakeholder in the horticulture sector. The "HortiPrice Index was launched in September on all HortiNigeria social media platform. The tool provides crucial pricing data, offering stakeholders a clear picture of market dynamics. According to the Program Director, Mohammed Salasi Idris "The tool isn't merely about numbers; it's about

enabling informed financial decisions, understanding consumer behavior, and anticipating market shifts."

As we wrap up 2023 and plan ahead for 2024, HortiNigeria intends to continue to share the HortiPrice Index to all stakeholders in the horticultural sector, from farmers to distributors, from retailers to consumers. ■

**To get weekly pricing data follow us on our various social media platforms and let us know if you find useful:**

# Embarking On A Green Adventure: Croplife International's Visit To HortiNigeria

HortiNigeria had the privilege of hosting CropLife International, an organization that represents enterprises and associations committed to advancing sustainable agricultural practices. CropLife International champions the utilization of crop protection products, biotechnology, and innovative technologies to boost agricultural productivity while simultaneously mitigating the environmental footprint of farming practices.

The visit from CropLife International facilitated a fruitful exchange of knowledge, enhancing the understanding of the potential for strategic collaborations in agriculture. Among the notable topics explored were the transformative role of technology in contemporary agriculture, the implications for food safety, and environmental conservation. The discussions underscored the necessity for

concerted efforts and synergies among key stakeholders, particularly government entities, to drive the agenda for sustainable agricultural development.

This engagement with CropLife International propelled HortiNigeria's ambition towards building strategic partnerships to foster resilient and sustainable agricultural practices contributing to the broader goals of food security and environmental stewardship. In 2024, HortiNigeria intends to join forces with CropLife International in a concerted effort to empower 600 young individuals, irrespective of gender, transforming them into proficient spray service providers. This initiative ensures that these newly trained youths are well-equipped to extend essential crop protection services to the farming community within their sphere of influence, while also dispensing valuable agricultural advice. ■



Delegates from CropLife with some HortiNigeria team members in IFDC, Abuja.

**9TH NOV 2023**

OGUN STATE

ONION FIELD DAY

**13TH - 15TH NOV 2023**

KADUNA STATE

TRAINING OF AGRODEALERS  
IN FINANCIAL LITERACY AND  
AGRODEALERSHIP

**13TH - 19TH NOV 2023**

KANO & KADUNA STATES

D&D WORKSHOP

**14TH NOV 2023**

EKITI STATE

SAFE SUMMIT  
(ORGANISED BY RAFI)

**25TH NOV 2023**

KADUNA STATE

SIMKAY LAUNCHING  
(ORGANISED BY HORTINIGERIA  
BUSINESS CHAMPION)

**25TH NOV 2023**

KANO STATE

HER HORTIVANTAGE

**27TH DEC 2023**

KANO STATE

TRAINING OF AGRODEALERS  
IN FINANCIAL LITERACY AND  
AGRODEALERSHIP

**6TH -7TH DEC 2023**

OYO AND OGUN STATES

PARTNERSHIP REFLECTION  
WORKSHOP, 2023

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANY OF THESE EVENTS, CONTACT THE  
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<https://ifdc.org/projects/hortinigeria>



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