



HortiNigeria Program Director **Mohammed Salasi Idris, Yusuf Dramani** IFDC Nigeria Country Director discussing with **Abbas Umar Masanawa**, Managing Director and CEO of NIRSAL

Driving Collaboration and Innovation: HortiNigeria's Courtesy Visit with NIRSAL Plc

On the 25th of January, HortiNigeria organized a courtesy visit with the Managing Director/CEO of NIRSAL Plc, Abbas Umar Masanawa. This meeting marked a significant moment in driving collaboration and innovation within Nigeria's horticulture sector, with a clear focus on achieving key objectives on financial inclusion.

Insights into NIRSAL Plc's current operational status within the HortiNigeria target states were sought to ensure alignment and synergy between the two entities. This understanding was crucial to maximize impact and efficiency in program implementation, ensuring that efforts are strategically coordinated for optimal outcomes.

Discussions at the meeting revolved around the potential development of a tailored credit instrument designed to empower smallholder farmers and micro, small and medium enterprises operating within the horticulture value chain.

The dialogue yielded significant outcomes, highlighting the potential for impactful collaboration including:

1. The exploration of financial solutions, particularly the co-creation of tailored financial instruments. to address the unique needs of horticulture stakeholders.,
2. Leverage NIRSAL's existing models such as geo-cooperatives and agricultural land estates. These models offer innovative approaches to agricultural development and present valuable opportunities for partnership and synergy within actors in the subsector.

Discussions also involved NIRSAL's ongoing efforts in policy development, particularly in the realm of taxation. HortiNigeria expressed a keen interest in contributing to these dialogues, recognizing the role of policy advocacy in shaping a conducive environment for agricultural development.

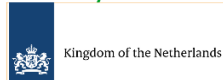
In conclusion, this collaboration catalyzes a new era of growth and development for Nigeria's horticultural landscape, underpinned by principles of sustainability... ■

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Tuta Absoluta IPM Campaign Training Session in Bunkure, Kano State

HortiNigeria's Ongoing Campaign Against Tuta Absoluta

Building upon previous efforts to address the devastating impact of Tuta absoluta on tomato fields, HortiNigeria launched a comprehensive three-month campaign in March 2024. Collaborating with partners such as the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), National Institute for Horticultural Research (NIHORT), Koppert and Afri Agri. The campaign aims to raise awareness among stakeholders about the menace of Tuta absoluta, educate them on effective solutions, and facilitate connections between agro-solution providers and farmers.

The campaign utilizes a multifaceted approach,



employing both social media platforms and face-to-face interactions to engage stakeholders. Through a series of targeted outreach efforts, HortiNigeria has successfully reached over 3,000 participants (Physical: 250 & Online: 2900), representing a diverse array of stakeholders, including farmers and agro-dealers.

By leveraging various communication channels and engaging with stakeholders at the grassroots level, HortiNigeria is effectively disseminating vital information and fostering collaboration to fight the threat of Tuta absoluta.

To know more about the campaign follow us on our various social media platforms:

- <https://www.facebook.com/HortiNigeria/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/hortinigeria-program/>
- <https://twitter.com/HortiNigeria>
- www.instagram.com/hortinigeria_program ■



A cross section of participants during the Agro-dealer training in Kano State

Empowering Agro-Dealers: Strengthening Kano and Kaduna state's Horticulture Sector

In its ongoing mission to bolster productivity and income of smallholder farmer, HortiNigeria conducted a comprehensive training program for 67 agro-dealers in Kaduna and Kano states. This initiative shows the commitment of the program to foster robust Agribusiness Clusters (ABCs) in the state.

Participants, ranging from retailers of seeds to fertilizers, delved into a curriculum covering essential business management themes, such as sales, marketing, and business skills. Amid the ongoing Tuta absoluta IPM campaign, agro-input dealers are poised to play an important role. Armed with knowledge from the training, they will provide farmers with critical advisory services on pest management solutions while supplying necessary inputs to combat the pest effectively.

Beyond pest control, agro-dealers serve as primary sources for improved seeds, quality fertilizers, and agrochemicals, vital for producing high-quality vegetables. Their expertise and guidance are indispensable, making training initiatives like this essential for enhancing their effectiveness in the field.

Danjuma Makama, the Agribusiness Coordinator for HortiNigeria, underscored the significance of this initiative, stating, "Our goal with this training is to empower agro-dealers, creating a ripple effect that benefits agribusiness clusters across Kaduna and Kano states. By equipping these key players with the necessary tools and knowledge, we are laying the groundwork for a more productive, sustainable, and inclusive horticulture subsector." ■

HortiNigeria and Greenport Forge Strategic Alliance to Transform Nigerian Horticulture Sector

In a move aimed at transforming Nigeria's horticulture subsector, HortiNigeria and Greenport, a leading organization in Nigeria's agricultural sector, officially signed a strategic partnership in February 2024 in Lagos State.

This collaboration is set to redefine Nigeria's horticulture subsector through technical cooperation. The partnership will offer farmers comprehensive training, facilitate market

linkages, provide access to finance, introduce sustainable renewable energy solutions, and offer policy advocacy support where necessary. Under this alliance, Greenport will play a crucial role in facilitating capacity building efforts and upscaling innovative practices among established hubs of entrepreneurial farmers. The anticipated outcomes include a marked increase in crop yields, a reduction in environmental footprint, and a boost in agricultural practice efficiency and market reach ■

Inaugural HortiFair Connects Nigerian and Dutch Agribusinesses

Greenport Nigeria in Ogun State buzzed with agricultural innovation and collaboration, as it hosted the inaugural HortiFair on March 25, 2024. The event, spearheaded by the HortiNigeria program, gathered over 70 participants, including representatives from the Netherlands Consulate, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Nigeria, the Dutch-funded Collaborative Seed Program, leading Dutch agricultural companies, and officials from the Nigeria Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA) and the Nigerian Export Promotion Council.

Designed as a platform for facilitating business-to-business linkages, the HortiFair aimed to connect Nigerian micro, small, and medium enterprises, with innovative Dutch agribusinesses. Participants from HortiNigeria's intervention areas and Lagos engaged with Dutch companies to explore partnership opportunities. Inge Tenniglo, Agricultural Counsellor for Ghana and Nigeria, emphasized the importance of collaboration in her opening remarks, setting a collaborative tone for the event. Mohammed Salasi Idris, HortiNigeria program director, highlighted the fair's role in nurturing partnerships vital for driving transformation within the horticulture subsector.



Rejoice Usim, the chief executive officer Simkay foods and a HortiNigeria business champion receiving an award during the HortiFair, in Ogun State.

Sequel to the event a two-day bootcamp equipped Nigerian partners with essential pitching skills, ensuring effective communication with Dutch counterparts. Participants like Rejoice Usim, CEO of Simkay, expressed gratitude for the insightful feedback, which refined their business strategies and sparked fresh perspectives.

The fair featured a diverse array of products, from East-West Seed Knowledge Transfer's vegetable seedlings to Smiley's tomato paste and Ecotutu's cooling solutions. Participants also toured the Greenport Nigeria Impact Cluster Facility and engaged in networking sessions, culminating in an awards ceremony recognizing HortiNigeria's business champions and partners for their contributions to horticultural development.

Participants hailed the event's success in fostering growth, innovation, and partnership. Hadiza Yaro, Country Manager for East-West Seed, emphasized the value of interactive discussions, while Seun Bamidele, CEO of Welcome to Africa, pledged ongoing support for budding collaborations. Ivo Demmers, Executive Director of Netherlands Food Partnership, praised the event for its transformative impact, setting a benchmark for future Dutch-Nigerian collaboration in agribusiness.

During the event, HortiNigeria Business Champions were honored with awards for their contributions to transforming the subsector.

Following the HortiFair, HortiNigeria participated in the 2024 Agrofood Fair in Lagos State, where the program connected with other Dutch and Nigerian businesses and players in the agricultural sector. ■



Top 5
Business Grants
in Nigeria for
Entrepreneurs



Are you an aspiring farmer or agro-entrepreneur? We have gathered some links on information on various grants that may help you with your business!

Story of Change: Beta Agric Ventures redefining the narrative of post-harvest losses in Nigeria

Adaora Akojuru's story is an illustration of the transformative power of innovation. As the founder of Beta Agric Ventures, Adaora has become an inspiration in her community. Driven by a vision to make an impact and contribute to Nigeria's economic prosperity, she identified a gap in the market for locally produced tomato paste. Launching Beta Agric Ventures, she introduced 'Bera Tomato'—a brand that promised to deliver high-quality tomato paste produced by Nigerians, for Nigerians. Producing 250 kilograms of tomato paste every two days using tomatoes sourced from local farmers, Adaora's enterprise is committed to improving food and nutrition security. Her ambition is not only to create a product but also to change the narrative in the Nigerian tomato paste industry by addressing the critical issue of post-harvest losses—a key component of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12, which focuses on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns.

A change in Adaora's entrepreneurial journey began when she engaged with HortiNigeria as a Business Champion. This strategic move exposed her to a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and support essential for scaling her business. Participating in the HortiNigeria Design and Diagnostic Workshop, Adaora found herself in a dynamic learning environment that challenged her mindset and equipped her with invaluable insights into the agricultural landscape. Reflecting on her experience at the workshop, Adaora shared, "It was engaging and mind-shifting. We mapped out trends and identified the changes needed to ensure our goals and objectives as business owners are met. The workshop was instrumental in shaping my strategic approach to business." With the backing of programs like HortiNigeria, Adaora has been able to establish linkages with producer organizations and other value chain actors, ensuring a steady supply of necessary products for

processing.

This integration into the agricultural value chain has significantly reduced the time between harvest and processing, effectively minimizing post-harvest losses. By transforming fresh tomatoes into a value-added product like paste, Adaora's business model promotes more efficient use of resources, contributing to SDG 12's target of halving

global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reducing food losses along production and supply chains.

Recently recognized as one of the top women startups in the Nigerian AgriTech space, Adaora's work exemplifies how targeted innovation, and strategic partnerships can lead to sustainable industry changes. Her approach not only boosts local agriculture but also serves as a scalable model for others in the agribusiness sector to follow, paving the way for more sustainable production practices and helping Nigeria progress towards achieving global sustainability goals.



Innovation Brief: Soluble Fertilizers and Their Impact on Vegetable Production

Protected cultivation offers a controlled environment that shields crops from adverse weather conditions such as excessive rain, wind, and extreme temperatures. This allows for year-round cultivation and improved crop yields. Technologies and techniques like greenhouse and soilless cultivation enable precise control over the environment, effectively tailoring the use of inputs such as crop protection products and synthetic fertilizers. This leads to higher crop quality and uniformity, improving marketability and profitability for farmers, and reducing the impacts of seasonality in horticulture production.

In Nigeria, greenhouse farmers face challenges due to the reliance on imported specialized inputs like seeds and fertilizers, the availability and cost of which can fluctuate due to governmental policies. Most of these inputs, especially soluble fertilizers, are not locally produced, making them expensive and less accessible for local farmers. This limits the ability of farmers to optimize production, affecting the performance and competitiveness of protected cultivation on a commercial scale.

To address this issue, HortiNigeria facilitated a partnership between Candel Company Ltd, a Nigerian agro-chemical and fertilizer manufacturer, and Kartlos Farms Ltd, a commercial farm based in Ibadan, Oyo State. This collaboration-initiated trials of a newly formulated soluble fertilizer, Candel's Foliar Plus Complete 12-6-6+TE. This innovative formulation includes seven (7) essential EDTA chelated micronutrients and an organic biostimulant from seaweed. The trial also compared the performance of this new product with Candel's regular Foliar Urea and the farm's regular fertilizer. The innovation lies in the new fertilizer formulation and in its adaptation to the specific growth stages of crops and the necessary adjustments to targeted Electrical Conductivity (EC) levels, crucial for verifying the main nutrients applied in a fertigation system. The use of soluble fertilizers enables the tailoring of nutrient applications to specific crop needs and growth stages, optimizing plant nutrition and minimizing waste.

In contrast, soil cultivation often leads to significant nutrient losses, impacting both the environment and farmers' profitability. Efficient use of soluble fertilizers through fertigation involves custom adjustments based on various growing parameters.

HortiNigeria has outlined general recommendations for effective fertigation during the piloting process:

1. Understand the nutrient requirements of the plants and formulate a balanced nutrient solution, considering different needs at various growth stages. The strategy is developed step by step, translating crop requirements into nutrient uptake, leading to a standard solution that is mostly adjusted based on water quality, pH, and EC.
2. Monitor and adjust the pH and EC levels of the nutrient solution regularly to ensure optimal nutrient uptake. pH affects nutrient availability, while EC measures the concentration of dissolved salts.
3. Ensure the quality of water used for fertigation is free from contaminants and pathogens that could harm plants or interfere with nutrient uptake.
4. Properly calibrate fertigation equipment like injectors, pumps, and controllers to consistently deliver the correct amount of nutrients.

The introduction of Candel's Foliar Plus Complete 12-6-6+TE in fertigation systems led to a notable increase in yields (about 52%) compared to traditional methods, such as applying NPK 20-20-20 at similar nutrient levels. However, further field demonstrations across a broader range of crops are necessary to confirm these benefits fully. Additionally, understanding the costs associated with the application rate of the soluble fertilizer is crucial to assessing the agro-economic viability of this fertilization method.

Through this initiative, HortiNigeria has successfully promoted the development of locally produced soluble fertilizers, contributing to the growth and sustainability of the agricultural sector in Nigeria.

Watch the video below to gain more insights into the collaboration and the achievements of partners: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1XJhdDdXcPiVKck9NoDki661eHsySFtFw>

Food and Nutrition: The Power of Embracing a Veggie Foodie Lifestyle Part 2

In the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle, the incorporation of nutrient-rich vegetables such as cucumber, lettuce, onion, and okra can play important roles. These versatile and flavorful vegetables add texture to culinary creations and an array of health benefits that contribute to overall well-being. Let's delve into the nutritional prowess of each of these vegetables and how they can enhance a healthy lifestyle:

Cucumber: Cool Cucumber, Hydration's Buddy

Crisp and refreshing, cucumbers are low in calories and high in water content, making them an excellent choice for hydration. They are packed with vitamins and minerals, including vitamin K, vitamin C, potassium, and magnesium. Additionally, cucumbers contain antioxidants like beta-carotene and flavonoids, which help combat inflammation and oxidative stress in the body. Incorporating cucumbers into salads, sandwiches, or as a crunchy snack can contribute to better hydration, improved digestion, and radiant skin. Cucumbers also help fight against inflammation, reducing the risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease and certain types of cancer. ■



Lettuce: Heart's Health Defender



Lettuce are particularly abundant in vitamin A, vitamin K, folate, and iron, which support immune function, bone health, and red blood cell production. Lettuce is also low in calories and carbohydrates, making it an excellent choice for weight management and blood sugar regulation. Including leafy greens in salads, wraps, or smoothies can boost nutrient intake and promote overall health and vitality. Lettuce also aids in reducing inflammation and supports heart health by reducing cholesterol levels and improving blood pressure. ■

April 2024

Training with Youth in Agribusiness (YAS) on GAP, Smart Farming and Mentorship

April 2024

Training with Greenport on Train-the-Trainers bootcamp with Entrepreneurial Farmers

April 2024

Financial Linkage Workshop for Value Chain Actors in Kaduna

April 2024

Netherlands-African Business Council (NABC) Presentation on Policies

April 2024

Participation in Soil Values Program Launch and Exhibition in Abuja

April 2024

Participation in Africa Works in Amsterdam Netherlands

April 2024

World Earth Day Campaign

April 2024

International Seed Day Campaign

May 2024

Launch of Cold Storage Facility at Soilless Farm by Eupepsia

May/June

Spray Service Provider Training in Kaduna and Kano

June 2024

HortiNigeria Learning Event in the South

June 2024

World Environmental Day Campaign

For more information on any of these events, contact the Communications Coordinator on +234 8174814264

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<https://ifdc.org/projects/hortinigeria>



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