



ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS TO IGNITE TRANSFORMATION IN THE NIGERIAN HORTICULTURE SECTOR

In January, HortiNigeria established a partnership with Tomato Jos, a tomato processing plant in Kaduna State, to establish a commercially and viable supply process. The partnership worked through two supply models, employing an outgrower approach. This has involved farmers working within the processing plants facility and those from agribusiness clusters established through the HortiNigeria program – Kudan Sabon Gari, Makarfi, Zaria, Soba, and Kubau in Kaduna State. A total of 500 smallholder farmer members of the National Tomato Growers, Processors and Marketers Association of Nigeria (NAPTAN) were linked to Tomato Jos, and approximately 150 metric tons (mt) of tomato has been supplied. In both models, HortiNigeria provided capacity building through training on eco-efficient practices.

Art Cardoso, the Chief Production Officer of Tomato Jos said “Over the past dry season, Tomato Jos experienced a successful partnership with HortiNigeria where we were linked with new smallholder farmers and engaged in an off-take agreement. The farmers successfully supplied tomatoes to our factory because of the support obtained through the partnership. We hope to build off this pilot going forward in 2023.”

Additionally, Mohammed Salasi Idris, the Program Director of HortiNigeria said, “A major challenge has been getting farmers who can supply the quality of tomato needed consistently.” With this partnership, the gap will be reduced, as more farmers within and outside the facility will be trained on good agronomic practices and linked with agro-input dealers and other service providers to ensure that supply is available at the right time. ■

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MEGA FIELD DAY: CREATING EDUCATIONAL AND NETWORKING HUBS

In March, HortiNigeria held a mega field day at Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education (SRCOE), hosting stakeholders across public and private spheres in Kano State. The field day promoted technologies to smallholder farmers both virtually and physically. Stakeholders present included community leaders, agro-input dealers, government officials, representatives of financial institutions, farmers, and students.

One of the Agro-dealers who participated at the event, stated that though he did not make sales he was glad he participated as he was able to showcase his business to farmers, who he has shared his contacts with and believes after sales will occur after the event with the contacts made.



Participants of MegaField Day at the HortiNigeria learning site in Kano State

Furthermore, Mustapha Khalid, an Onion farmer attending the field day from Dawakin Tofa LGA, noted that he was happy to make connections with actors within the value chain, particularly Agro-Input Dealers because they are not popular in his community where he lives and wells. During the event, he got the contact of

an Agro-dealer close to his community and has started making plans on buying pesticides for onion production he intends to cultivate in the wet season.

More than 2,700 people were present at the mega field day. ■

HORTINIGERIA AGRO-DEALER GRADUATION



Grace williams receiving her certificate during the Agrodealer Graduation in Kaduna state

In the first year of program implementation, HortiNigeria trained 30 agro-input dealers on agronomic and business management practices, Bolstering their capacity to serve smallholder farmers in their communities. The trainings ranged from topics on good agronomic and eco-efficient practices, increasing the agro-dealers'

knowledge and improving their capacity to respond to farmers' needs. The training was carried out both online and in person. Following the completion of the training modules, the agro-dealers received their certification. These agro-dealers were then provided further training on business management and proper integration into the ABCs. By the end of 2022, 3,895 farmers (3,571 males, 324 females) had received extension advisory services from the agro-dealers.

Grace Williams, an agro-dealer in Zaria, Kaduna State, explained that obtaining training and certification from the program has boosted her confidence in her abilities. Prior to now, Grace had not

attended any form of training on Agro-dealership and this limited her ability to transfer knowledge to farmers adequately. "I can say that with the knowledge gained and the certification I have received this is the beginning of better things for my business." She said. ■

STRENGTHENING FINANCIAL CAPACITY OF MSMEs THROUGH TRAINING



Group breakout session during the MSME training in Kano State

In January, a training on financial inclusion and business development was conducted for 55 micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), including farmers, agro-input dealers, and logistics coordinators.

One component of the HortiNigeria program focuses on facilitating access to finance for MSMEs; that means building

their capacity and making them bankable. The main objective of this training was to enlighten the MSMEs on the importance of recordkeeping and show how this can boost their ability to obtain loans from banks or other financial institutions.

The training gave the MSMEs the opportunity to identify the main challenges they face in managing their businesses and how these challenges can be solved.

Selection of the MSMEs was done with consideration for gender and youth inclusion, as the program targets the participation of 50% youth and 40% women. The training topics included basic recordkeeping, elementary financial literacy, and development of business plans that

will foster growth. This training will also be carried out in Kaduna, Ogun, and Oyo states within the year.

Hauwa Tanko Idris noted, “I am expressly happy about this opportunity that HortiNigeria has given me because now I know how important it is to keep a record of my profits and losses.” ■

FACILITATING COLLABORATIVE PLATFORMS FOR POLICY ADVOCACY

A consultative policy review meeting was held with stakeholders in 2022 to facilitate the creation of an enabling environment for the horticulture sector. As part of the program’s next steps, HortiNigeria, through the National Institute for Horticultural Research (NIHORT), convened the second consultative meeting in January 2023, with the theme “Tomato Value Chain: Outstanding Challenges and Sustainable Solutions.” Participants included Tomato Jos, Candel, Netherlands-African Business Council (NABC), Agricultural Fresh Produce Growers and Exporters Association of Nigeria (AFPGEAN), National Tomato Growers, Processors and Marketers Association of Nigeria (NAPTAN), Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), and the Ministry of Industry. Discussions during the meeting focused on the 2017 Tomato Policy, which aimed to increase domestic production and discourage importation of tomatoes to stimulate local production.

According to the Sector Coordination Manager, Mallam Abdullahi Umar, the policy has had some unintended consequences, causing harm to the targeted beneficiaries.



A cross section of participants during a working group session held at the event in Abuja

Therefore, this policy must be reviewed. One step HortiNigeria proposed is the formation of a sector-wide platform, and this has been initiated through the consultative meetings. The platform will coordinate national control measures for pest and disease outbreaks and respond to national issues affecting tomato production. ■

HORTIVANTAGE: CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY



CEO Berra Tomatoes encouraging women farmers to employ improved agricultural practices during the Hortivantage Launch in Kano State

To celebrate the 2023 International Women’s Day, HortiNigeria launched HortiVantage, a women’s empowerment activity, in Kano and Kaduna states. HortiVantage, seeks to mobilize opportunities for women’s financial empowerment and social inclusion through horticulture-based businesses as a source of livelihood.

According to Olubukola Olufunsho-Sanni, HortiNigeria Youth and Gender Specialist “The activity will help female producers become creative in their vegetable farming businesses, exposing them to information about opportunities within the horticultural value chain and sparking their desire to grow farming into a business for better opportunities.

The launch-initiated linkages between smallholder women farmers who have received training in cutting-edge agricultural methods with women influencers and other key actors within the Agri-Business Space. These connections encourage women to seek out better outcomes and seize opportunities for empowerment in the horticulture sector. Additionally, the event fostered an enabling environment for access to finance and the market.” Organisations present comprised Processing companies, Research Institutes, Farmers and AgroDealers. More than 2,500 participants were present at the event in both states, with activities comprising presentations, games, networking, and awards. ■

INITIATING CHANGE A STEP AT A TIME THROUGH SECTOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING



Participants of the sector professional training held in Kano State.

A training of sector professionals started on January 29. The training involved 59 trainees divided into two groups. One group was composed of members of Nigerian seed companies working within the Collaborative Seed Program, a Dutch funded program. So far, the trainees have attended three courses:

- Agricultural calculations.
- Seedling raising, land preparation, and crop management.
- Fertilization.

Other courses will include:

- Irrigation.
- Crop protection.
- Safe and responsible use of pesticides. ■

SHOWCASING HORTINIGERIA PARTNERSHIPS AND PRODUCTS



Lead Innovation and regional diversification talking with Participants at HortiNigeria booth at the Agrofood event, Lagos State

The eighth annual Agrofood and Plastprintpack event, organized by German tradeshow specialist Fairtrade, was held March 28-30 at Landmark Center, Lagos, Nigeria. This event has grown in scope, featuring 19 sessions, with 74 speakers who provided insights on trends in agriculture, particularly the horticulture sector. Stakeholders included various actors across the agricultural value chain from both within and outside the country. The HortiNigeria team participated in this event, with a booth at the Netherlands Pavilion alongside other programs funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The exhibition served as a platform for HortiNigeria to showcase its achievements during the past year since its launch. It also enabled the program to promote its business champions and collaborators, such as Solokad Multiventures, the National Horticultural Research Institute (NIHORT), Feed the West, Ecotutu, and Admiralty Farms. Other benefits enjoyed by the program's business champions and collaborators included gaining access to new markets and networking opportunities to build new business relationships. According to HortiNigeria Program Director Salasi Idris, exhibitions like this “allow

face-to-face communications and help people keep tabs on trends within the industry.”

The HortiNigeria booth hosted over 90 visitors and showcased products, including tomato and pepper powder and tomato and pineapple wine processed by NIHORT; biostimulants marketed by Solokad Multiventures; cooler bags, fresh boxes, and ice jelly bags sold by Ecotutu; and program fact sheets and crop guides. In addition, a presentation was given on horticultural innovations, and the program's business champions shared their experiences employing and selling these innovations.

During a presentation to the Honorable Otunba Adeniyi Adebayo, the Federal Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Idris emphasized HortiNigeria's actions on policy advocacy to promote an enabling environment for stakeholders, particularly the private sector. He mentioned the efforts with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), and others to hold the recent consultative review meeting on the tomato policy in January 2023. ■

AGRO-DEALERSHIP TRAINING: CHANGING THE GAME WITH NEW KNOWLEDGE

Mahmud Dankaka is a 44-year-old agro-input dealer. He resides in Kumbotso Local Government Area of Kano State, where he was born and raised. He attended Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education. His business has been what has supported his family over the years.

Mahmud said, "After HortiNigeria came to my community, I discovered that many farmers dealers have been suffering as a result of inadequate knowledge. Farmers follow the traditional method of fertilizer application. We usually use five or six bags of fertilizer on our farms, yet our yields are low. Now, with the knowledge obtained through HortiNigeria, we only need to use two to three bags of the appropriate inp, which is more than enough."

Mahmud shares what he has learned from HortiNigeria with smallholder farmers in his community. The farmers he has taught now refer their friends to him, invite him to supervise their farms, and seek his input on the best agricultural practices.

Through program interventions, Mahmud has been able to improve his household's standard of living. He has acquired land and built a house. He has also made new connections within Kano and other states. Mahmud also looks forward to going back to school to acquire a degree.

In January, Mahmud was certified by HortiNigeria and is recognized in his community as a graduate of the agro-dealer program. ■



Figure 8: Mahmud Dankaka a trained table top agro-input dealer in Kano state