



THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE INDUSTRY SERIES



FRUIT AND VEGETABLES SCHEME



OECD-COLEAD Fruit and Vegetables Industry Series

Session n°9: Impact of Labour Shortages in the Fruit and Vegetable Industry

Thursday 10 April 2025
9:00-10:30 UTC/11:00-12:30 CET (*time in Paris/Brussels*)

BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS

Christophe Aubé - CEO of Agreenculture & Director of Robagri, France



Christophe Aubé is a leading expert in technological innovation applied to agriculture and the President and CEO of Agreenculture, a company dedicated to designing and deploying innovative technological modules that enhance the autonomy, intelligence, and safety of off-road agricultural machinery. With a mission to drive the transition towards more efficient and sustainable farming, Agreenculture develops robotic and smart embedded solutions that optimize productivity and improve working conditions for farmers. In addition to his role at Agreenculture, Christophe Aubé serves as the Director of RobAgri, an association representing the French agricultural robotics sector, which unites over 85 members, including startups, industrial manufacturers, research institutes, and competitiveness clusters. Leveraging his extensive experience in robotics and agricultural machinery, he actively contributes to advancing the sector's efficiency and sustainability.

Roxana Barbulescu – Associate Professor, University of Leeds, United Kingdom



Dr. Roxana Barbulescu is an Associate Professor in the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds, UK. She holds a PhD in Social and Political Sciences from the European University Institute in Florence and has previously worked as a Research Fellow at the Centre for Population Change (CPC) and the College of Europe (Natolin Campus). Specializing in migration, social inequalities, and integration, her research explores migrant communities, mobility practices, and economic migrants' well-being. She has contributed to projects such as the ESRC-funded Feeding the Nation on seasonal migration in UK farming and has provided expert analysis on migration issues.



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Isolina Boto – Head of Networks and Alliances, COLEAD

Isolina is the Head of Networks and Alliances at COLEAD, a non-profit association of private sector operators in the agrifood sector active in the European Union (EU), Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) regions. Isolina has more than 25 years of experience in agricultural development. She started her career with the European Commission, worked with various ACP embassies and NGOs in areas related to food security, rural development and trade. Before joining COLEAD, she was the Manager of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) Brussels Office (2004-2020) implementing policy initiatives related to the ACP-EU cooperation in the field of agricultural and rural development. She has led trade and agribusiness projects in support of capacity development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), entrepreneurs and farmers organisations across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.



José Brambila-Macias – Programme Manager, Trade and Agriculture Directorate, Agricultural Codes and Schemes, OECD

Dr. José Brambila is the Programme Manager of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme. He has a strong econometric background with a specialization in development economics. Before joining OECD, he worked for the University of Reading, UK, as a Research Fellow and as a consultant for FAO's Trade and Markets Division. Previously he worked for OECD's Statistics Directorate and at the International Monetary Fund in the Western Hemisphere Department. His areas of expertise include panel cointegration, pseudo-panels, quantile regression, generalised method of moments (GMM) and time series analysis.

Thomas Hildenbrand – Director of the Fruit Department at SIPEF, Belgium

Thomas Hildenbrand is the Director of the Fruit Department at SIPEF, a Belgium-based agro-industrial company specializing in tropical agriculture. Trained as an agronomist with a master's degree in agricultural technology (horticulture), he began his career in Switzerland in 1983 before joining SIPEF in Côte d'Ivoire in 1984 as Production Manager and later General Manager at Plantations J. Eglin SA. Between 1990 and 1994, he founded and developed Société Bananière de Motobé, now part of Plantations J. Eglin SA, where he continues to serve as a director. In 1994, he moved to SIPEF's headquarters in Belgium as a management representative and now leads the Fruits Department, playing a key role in the company's operations. With extensive experience in the fruit industry, he is also a member of the Board of Directors at COLEAD, where he contributes to the development of inclusive and sustainable agricultural practices.



Jeremy Knops – General Delegate, COLEAD

Jeremy Knops holds a master's degree in business engineering from the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (SBS-EM). Prior to joining COLEAD in 2009, he was involved in Guatemala with the daily operations of a farmers' cooperative exporting loquats to the EU and the US. He started to work for COLEAD as an expert in charge of matters related to private standards and certification for ACP producers and exporters of fruit and vegetables. Jeremy is an accredited coach for leadership and professional development. He was appointed as General Delegate of COLEAD in June 2019.



Alice Riouall – CEO, Mango So, Burkina Faso



Fatmata Alice Riouall, founder and CEO of Mango-So SARL, has successfully transformed her small street business into a prominent agro-processing company in Burkina Faso. In 2000, she relocated to Toussiana to ensure a steady supply of mangoes, and by 2009, she had expanded her expertise, becoming president of GIE CDS, specializing in organic dried fruits and vegetables. In 2016, Mango-So was officially registered as a limited liability company, employing over 300 people, 90% of whom are women, and exporting 90% of its dried mangoes and coconuts to Europe. Alice's commitment to quality is demonstrated through the implementation of HACCP standards and the acquisition of organic certifications. Recognized by APEX in 2015 as the best dried mango exporter, she continues to innovate with new products like mango jam and syrup, and has plans to diversify further by processing cashew nuts. Beyond her entrepreneurial achievements, Alice is passionate about supporting education, gender equality, and community development, making a significant impact both in business and in her local community.



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