



PAFO-COLEAD INNOVATIONS SERIES: Innovations and successes of African farmer-led businesses and SMEs

Session n°25

Foresight: Key agrifood changes impacting entrepreneurs

Wednesday 5 November 2025

HIGHLIGHTS

About the PAFO-COLEAD Innovations Series

Launched in November 2020 by the Pan-African Farmers' Organization – PAFO and COLEAD, the **Innovations Series** showcase the successes of African farmer-led businesses and SMEs, highlighting transformative innovations across value chains. These sessions promote knowledge exchange between entrepreneurs, researchers, policy makers, financiers, and farmer organisations while supporting collaboration on emerging challenges and market opportunities.

Session n°25, held on the 5th November 2025, explored how foresight can equip African agrifood entrepreneurs to anticipate key changes, climate impacts, demographic pressures, digital transitions, safety requirements and respond proactively. The session gathered **379 persons**, registered to exchange experiences, ask questions, and access strategic insights shared by entrepreneurs and supporting organisations.

All information about the session is available on [Agrinnovators](#) entrepreneur's platform.

Recording of the session: [Link](#)

About foresight and agrifood changes in Africa

Africa's agrifood sector is entering a decade of rapid transformation shaped by demographic growth, urbanisation, climate risks, technological acceleration, and shifting consumer expectations. By 2050, Africa's population is projected to surpass 2.5 billion, with more than 60% of food demand driven by urban consumers. At the same time, climate change threatens yields, water availability, and food safety. Compliance with Sanitary and Phytosanitary standards (SPS) and traceability requirements has become essential for accessing domestic, regional, and export markets. Digitalisation, biotechnology, and emerging data tools offer new pathways to improve productivity, resilience, and competitiveness.

Foresight helps entrepreneurs and institutions anticipate disruptions, identify opportunity frontiers, and design future-ready business models. Scenario planning, trend monitoring, and risk scanning enable agrifood SMEs to transition from reactive problem-solving to strategic innovation.



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Key points discussed

Climate pressures and shifting production realities

Climate change is already reshaping African food systems affecting rainfall patterns, increasing input losses, degrading soils, and pressuring water resources. Farmers must adopt regenerative techniques, climate information services, water-efficient practices, and agroforestry approaches to protect yields and build resilience. Climate projections and seasonal forecasts now guide planting dates, fertilizer application, crop choice, insurance, and investment decisions.

Digitalisation, data, and new business models

Digital integration is becoming indispensable. Entrepreneurs emphasised the emergence of “one-stop digital platforms” providing training, equipment, mechanisation, market access, and financial scoring. Logistics and export-oriented SMEs are also integrating AI and data analytics to improve planning and traceability. However, adoption challenges persist due to digital literacy gaps, connectivity constraints, and low trust in digital tools within rural communities.

Food safety, standards, and market requirements

Compliance with international quality and food safety standards are important. Farmers require technical support to meet international requirements (e.g., on chemical residues, traceability, handling). Weak infrastructure and limited finance remain barriers to achieving consistent export readiness. There is a need to reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers and strengthen national inspection systems.

Policy coherence, investment, and foresight

Speakers noted that Africa’s policy environment often remains reactive. The transition from Malabo to the Kampala Declaration presents an opportunity to embed foresight into agricultural planning. Governments must use evidence and data analytics to design implementable policies, accelerate regional mutual recognition agreements, modernise border systems, and support blended finance mechanisms.

The role of partnerships and multi-stakeholder platforms

Across all the presentations, collaboration emerged as a decisive factor. Entrepreneurs stressed the need for partnerships with farmer organisations, research bodies, financiers, governments, and cooperatives. Innovation platforms, as promoted by FARA, help connect farmers, scientists, policymakers, and SMEs around shared value chains to solve problems collectively and scale technologies effectively.

Meet the businesses and entrepreneurs



Judith Kipchumba
Founder, Spring
Agriventure, Kenya



Augustine Appiah-Kubi
Founder, Okubis
Farms, Ghana



Noël N'Guessan
Co-founder, LONO,
Côte d'Ivoire



Laila Achieng
CEO, CNS Nutri
Foods, Kenya

Judith Kipchumba, Founder, Spring Agriventure, Kenya

Judith Kipchumba is the founder of Spring Agriventure, a Kenyan enterprise supporting smallholder potato farmers in Elgeyo Marakwet. The company supplies certified potato seeds, farm inputs, tree seedlings, biogas systems, and trains farmers in regenerative agriculture and climate-smart soil practices. In 2025, Spring distributed 40 tons of certified seed and 5,000 tree seedlings, while equipping households with clean-energy solutions.

Judith highlighted that population growth, shrinking available land, and climate change are accelerating pressure on African food systems. She stressed that carbon must be “returned to the soil” through regenerative practices to improve soil health and sustain yields. She also emphasised that youth who make up 70% of the population and widely use smartphones represent a major opportunity for digital agriculture if equipped with the right information and support.

Augustine Appiah-Kubi, Founder Okubis Farms, Ghana

Augustine Appiah-Kubi is the founder of Okubis Farms in Ghana’s Ashanti Region, where he promotes an integrated agroforestry system combining ginger, turmeric, cocoa, and staple crops. His enterprise works closely with farmers in ginger-producing communities, training them in drip irrigation, mulching, composting, and organic soil management, while introducing tree crops to counter deforestation and soil degradation.

During the session, Augustine outlined major agrifood pressures in Ghana: cocoa production falling from 1 million to 492,000 metric tons, 30–50% post-harvest losses, and a widening gap between global demand and local supply for ginger and turmeric. Limited financing and land degradation particularly due to small-scale mining discourage youth from agriculture. He explained that partnerships with extension officers help farmers adopt climate-smart practices, especially as rising ginger prices make adoption more attractive. He stressed that Africa’s future lies in foresight, agroforestry, innovation, and inclusive value chains that empower youth and women.

Noël N’guessan, Co-Founder, Lono, Côte d’Ivoire

Noël N’Guessan is the cofounder of LONO, an environmental engineering company operating in Côte d’Ivoire and the Netherlands. With a team of 20 engineers and technicians, LONO develops agro-industrial circular economy solutions, produces organic fertilizers (compost and biochar), and runs a specialised biomass analysis laboratory. The company works with cooperatives, mills, and agribusinesses to recycle organic waste, support soil regeneration, and improve nutrient circularity across value chains.

In his intervention, Noël highlighted that agroecology and circularity are fundamental to Africa’s agrifood future, as soils are becoming increasingly depleted and millions of tons of carbon-rich biomass remain untraced each year. He emphasised the need to improve mineral circularity, strengthen traceability systems, and make certification more accessible. He noted that climate pressures require new agricultural models based on compost, biochar, digestate, fungi, and regenerative practices. Noël also stressed that aggregation is essential working with existing operators such as grain mills enables economies of scale, efficient distribution of organic inputs, and faster adoption by farmers. He encouraged entrepreneurs to explore emerging opportunities in carbon certification and large-scale biochar use, which can generate value and support climate-resilient agriculture.

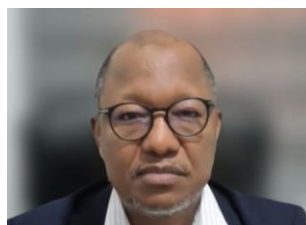
Laila Achieng, CEO, CNS Nutri Food, Kenya

Laila Achieng is an entrepreneur with 18 years of experience in supply-chain logistics and international trade. Through CNS Nutrifoods, she exports fresh produce such as avocados, cashew nuts, and mangoes, while preparing to expand into value addition and nutrition-focused products. Her logistics company supports exporters with market linkages, compliance, and export-readiness services, integrating AI and data analytics to strengthen planning and traceability. By bridging logistics and agribusiness, Laila positions smallholder farmers for better access to global markets.

Laila stressed that foresight for entrepreneurs is not about predicting the future but about building systems today for tomorrow’s pressures. She highlighted major disruptions shaping African agrifood systems climate stress, land pressure, urbanisation, evolving consumer demand for healthy and traceable foods, and rapid

digitalisation. She urged entrepreneurs to treat these disruptions as signals to innovate, not threats. Laila emphasised the importance of circular and regenerative models, stronger supply-chain resilience, value addition, and leveraging AI to remain competitive.

Meet the organisations supporting businesses



**ABDULRAZAK
IBRAHIM**
Cluster Leader,
Institutional Capacity &
Future Scenarios, FARA



DAVID ADAMA
Senior Specialist,
Continental and
Regional Engagements,
AGRA

Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), represented by Abdulrazak Ibrahim, Cluster Leader, Institutional Capacity & Future Scenarios

FARA is the African Union's apex body for agricultural research and innovation, working with sub-regional research organisations and national research institutes to strengthen science, technology adoption, and evidence-based planning across the continent. Represented by Dr. Abdulrazak Ibrahim, Cluster Leader for Institutional Capacity & Future Scenarios. The organisation supports countries to integrate foresight into National Agricultural Investment Plans, establish multi-stakeholder innovation platforms, and strengthen capacity for long-term policy and planning.

Dr. Ibrahim emphasised that foresight is now essential for navigating demographic growth, climate risks, shifting markets, and emerging technologies. He traced FARA's decade-long work in building foresight capabilities, including 20 country foresight hubs and real-time analyses conducted in Nigeria, Kenya, and Madagascar. He highlighted ongoing efforts with the African Union to institutionalise foresight at continental level through a readiness framework and a forthcoming Africa Foresight Charter. He encouraged entrepreneurs to engage through FARA's discussion groups, training opportunities, and national research platforms, noting that private-sector voices are needed in multi-actor foresight processes.

AGRA, represented by David Adama, Senior Specialist, Continental and regional Engagements

AGRA is a pan-African organisation supporting countries to improve agricultural policies, market systems, food safety frameworks, and opportunities for youth and women. Represented by David Adama, Senior Policy Advisor, AGRA collaborates with regional economic communities and governments to strengthen policy implementation, border efficiency, and farmer professionalisation across Africa.

David Adama underlined that Africa must translate foresight into actionable policy to respond to rapid urbanisation, climate shocks, digital transformation, and tightening food-safety requirements. He emphasised the need to leverage regional complementarities through food corridors, improve market access using mutual recognition agreements, and modernise border posts with digital tools. He highlighted AGRA's work on Food Safety Master Plans, the AU Food Safety Data Hub, and the Youth in Agrifood Performance Index as essential for evidence-based planning. Looking ahead, he identified four priorities for the Kampala era: stronger political leadership, data-driven investment plans, flagship programmes that attract private capital, and mutual accountability between governments, farmers, and civil society. He concluded that policies without evidence and farmer voices "lack legitimacy," and that institutionalising foresight is critical for guiding Africa's agrifood transformation.

Resources

1. Reports and Studies

AfDB, 2025, African Economic Outlook 2025, <https://www.afdb.org/en/knowledge/publications/african-economic-outlook>

AGRA, 2023, Africa Agriculture Status Report 2023: Empowering Africa's Food Systems for the Future, <https://agra.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Africa-Agriculture-Status-Report-2023-Empowering-Africas-Food-Systems.pdf-compressed.pdf>

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FAO, 2024, Food Safety, <https://www.fao.org/africa/news-stories/news-detail/food-safety--fao-strengthens-emergency-response-capacity-in-burkina-faso--mali--and-senegal/en>

FAO, 2024, The Future of Food and Agriculture: Drivers and Triggers of Transformation (2022–2024 update), <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc3440en>

FAO, 2024, The State of Food and Agriculture 2024 – Value-driven transformation of agrifood systems. Rome, Food science & nutrition, 2025, <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/65139780-d06c-4b7c-a2cd-3ed4256eaalc>

Foresight4Food, 2024, Building foresight capacity for African food systems <https://foresight4food.net/project/foresight-capability-for-food-systems-transformation/>

FPRI, 2021, Agricultural Investments and Hunger in Africa <https://foresight.cgiar.org/publication/agricultural-investments-and-hunger-in-africa-modeling-potential-contributions-to-sdg2-zero-hunger>

GSMA, 2025, The Mobile Economy Sub-Saharan Africa 2025, <https://www.gsma.com/solutions-and-impact/connectivity-for-good/mobile-economy/africa/>

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UNDP, 2024, Carbon Market, https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-06/undp_africa_carbon_markets_advocacy_brief_0.pdf

World Bank, 2023, Making the AfCFTA Work for Women and Youth, <https://www.worldbank.org/ext/en/region/afr>

World Bank, 2025, From Fields to Markets: The Role of Digital Platforms in West Africa's Agricultural, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2025/03/04/afw-from-fields-to-markets-the-role-of-digital-platforms-in-west-africa-agricultural-success>

2. Trainings and other opportunities

AUDA-NEPAD, Foresight for Food Systems Transformation (Training Series),
<https://foresight4food.net/webinars/>

CGIAR, Food, Climate & Future Scenarios Podcast Series, <https://www.youtube.com/@cgiar>

FAO, Digital Agriculture & Emerging Technologies Webinar Series, <https://www.fao.org/digital-agriculture/webinars>

FARA, Africa Foresight Academy (Online Training Modules), <https://africaforesightacademy.com/>

Foresight & Climate Risk Webinars, <https://climateservices.org/learning-resources/webinars/>

Foresight for Food Systems Podcast, University of Oxford / Foresight4Food,
<https://foresight4food.net/resources/podcasts/>

IFA, Climate Resilient Agriculture Learning Sessions, <https://www.ifad.org/en/events>

ITC, SME Competitiveness & Agrifood Market Access Training, <https://learning.intracen.org>

PAFO–COLEAD Innovation Series (All Sessions),
https://agrinnovators.org/session_region/africa-pafo-colead/

The African Food Changemakers Podcast (Formerly Nourishing Africa),
<https://afchub.org/podcasts>

World Bank, Food Systems, Trade & Digitalisation Webinars,
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/events>

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COLEAD: Ahoefa Soklou – Project Officer, Nina Desanlis-Perrin – Project Officer, Networks and Alliances



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