



AF SA

ALLIANCE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF FOOD MARKETS IN AFRICA

WHAT KIND OF MARKETS DO WE NEED FOR THE TRANSITION TO AGROECOLOGY?

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE, 27-29 OCTOBER 2020

CONFERENCE REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) comprises a broad group of civil society actors who are part of the struggle for food sovereignty and agroecology. Its members represent smallholder farmers, pastoralists, hunter/gatherers, indigenous peoples, faith-based institutions, and environmentalists from across the continent. AFSA is a network of networks, with members active in 50 African countries.

From 27 to 29 October 2020, AFSA held its third Biennial Food Systems Conference and Celebration. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, AFSA decided to hold this conference virtually. The three-day event explored issues relating to “Shaping the Future of Food Markets in Africa: What kind of markets do we need for the transition to agroecology?” Three main objectives informed each day of the conference:

1. Understanding African markets and trends,
2. Shaping the future of markets for the transition to agroecology, and
3. Changing policy towards markets for healthy food systems

Over the three days, the conference brought together over 200 delegates from 64 countries, 37 of which were African. Participants represented farmers, research and development institutions, governmental organisations, and non-governmental organisations. AFSA created a [conference website](#) to promote the event and share presentations from the speakers. Video recordings of speaker presentations were uploaded to AFSA’s [YouTube channel](#).

The conference offered live interpretation in French and English, which enabled delegates to participate and engage with the presentations in their language of choice. Those unable to connect to the conference using the Zoom platform could watch the live streaming of the event on AFSA’s Facebook page. Participants were encouraged to use AFSA’s social media pages to ask questions or continue the conversation using the conference hashtags: #AgroecologyMarkets, #AfricaFoodSystems, and #AfricaFeedsAfrica.

AFSA Chairperson Dr Chris Macoloo and AFSA Coordinator Dr Million Belay gave a warm welcome to all the delegates. Both Chris and Million emphasised the importance of African markets in advancing the transition to agroecology. Dr Laila Lokosang, Advisor for Food and Nutrition Security at the African Union, gave the conference’s official welcoming address.

Each day of the conference began with a unique component – food celebrations: a series of films, photography, art projects, youth voices, and stories from across the continent. Several films spotlighted community seed and food stories from different countries, emphasising the importance of preserving indigenous seeds, food, cultural knowledge and food markets. Youth shared their views on the problems in informal African markets through short video clips. The videos provided inspiration and excitement ahead of the excellent speakers each day. Creativity informed other aspects of the conference too, with speakers sharing traditional rites or mystics, performing songs and poems, or sharing their stories from the field. These moments imparted a sense of unity and connection amongst

3rd
Biennial
Food
Systems
Conference
and
celebration

200
Delegates

64
Countries

57%
African
Countries

**Live
via**
Zoom,
Facebook,
social
media
pages

participants in a virtual event.

Four keynote speakers shared their expertise and thinking on crucial themes relating to African markets and agroecology:

African Mass Markets

Charles Dhewa emphasised the significance of African mass markets and explored their characteristics in West Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa, and North Africa. Charles considers African mass markets as the foundation of local economies, supporting ecologically sensitive trading and consumption. With a different setup or structure to supermarkets, mass markets are where food sovereignty and food systems framings intersect. They also reflect indigenous commerce and tend to be more flexible and people-centred. Charles used a map of Africa to demonstrate and explain the extent of various food markets across the continent.

Territorial Markets

Dr Mamadou Goïta's presentation unpacked the concept of territorial markets – he provided the following definition: they are “highly diverse markets through which most of the food consumed in the world passes, which may operate at a local, cross-border or regional level, in rural, peri-urban, or urban settings, or all of these contexts; and are directly linked to local, national or regional food systems in that food is produced, processed, and traded within these systems”. As Mamadou explained, a key distinction between territorial markets and other market setups (e.g. global, urban, local, etc.) is that they are deeply rooted in a specific territory in line with cultural norms. In other words, the majority of the people buying, selling, or producing for these markets come from a specific geographical area. Further characteristics of territorial markets consist of the inclusivity and diversity of actors, the diversity in relationships and arrangements between actors, and their multiple social, economic, cultural, political, and ecological functions. Territorial markets may be formal or informal and are often located at different territorial levels (e.g. local to regional). Mamadou ended by highlighting the need for further research and public policies to strengthen understanding and support for territorial markets.

Agroecological enterprises inspire change

Dr Jen Astone reviewed key findings from an action research project between the Agroecology fund and AFSA. She first spoke about the importance of agroecological enterprises as an alternative that benefits farmer livelihoods. However, one of the challenges that entrepreneurs face is investors' perception that agroecology is not a viable business model, with most investments focused on productivity and income. Two main questions are guiding the research:

- 1) What do entrepreneurs need to create an enabling environment for agroecology?
- 2) What are the financial and non-financial areas of support?

Several findings show that most agroecology entrepreneurs rely on personal and group savings; they also engage in diverse activities and experience a challenging environment due to competition, poor or limited policies, and inadequate infrastructure. Jen highlighted stories of inspiring entrepreneurs across Africa who are innovating in areas of production, aggregation, farm inputs, and infrastructure to bakeries, honey, and even eco-tourism. A key point to take from Jen's presentation is the importance of agroecological enterprises that can help scale agroecology.

Reorganising markets for agroecology

Prof Olivier De Schutter asserted that Africa is the last frontier where the tension between two opposing views on agricultural development is playing out – green revolution agriculture vs agroecology. He explored the benefits of agroecology, specifically noting the cultural, social, environmental, and health benefits. Despite its many benefits, agroecology requires further support, which can be attained through collective learning amongst farmers and accelerating the transition from mainstream agriculture to agroecology. Prof De Schutter also identified local investments, farmer cooperatives, and public procurement as ways to reorganise markets for agroecology to become more profitable.

Additional speaker highlights

FAO Address

Dr Allison Loconto gave an opening address for the conference on behalf of the FAO group working on agroecology. Her presentation provided an overview of the FAO's work to support agroecology. Following two global symposiums in 2014 and 2018, FAO launched an initiative to scale up agroecology while building synergies across multilateral organisations. More recently, FAO has worked with governments in Mexico, Senegal and India to develop and implement policies to support agroecology. Alison also pointed out that the 10 elements of agroecology¹ have a vital role to play in creating agroecological markets. Allison ended her address by sharing FAO resources.

Supermarkets out of Africa! Food systems across the continent are doing just fine without them

Susan Nackacwa discussed the research conducted with different organisations in Uganda, Kenya, Senegal, and Southern Africa on the rise of supermarkets. A central point made in her presentation is that the rise of supermarkets across Africa has had adverse effects on African food systems. Hypermarkets, supermarkets, 24-hour convenience stores, and wholesalers have emerged due to supermarkets' marketing and expansion tactics. While supermarkets have started to change African food systems, they still only serve a small population on the continent – primarily middle to upper classes. As Susan indicated, individuals can get involved and take action by supporting farmers' markets, smallholder farmers, sustainable production, or joining movements such as Swaziland Justice Forum.

Side Event Speakers

Following the discussion sessions on day 1 and 2, participants had the option to choose between three side events focused on different topics. The speakers included 1) Bibi Giyosi and Prof Cecilia Onyango; 2) Pat Mooney; 3) Dr Naude Malan; 4) Charles Dhewa and Hervé Bouagnimbeck; 5) Susan Nakacwa, and 6) Dr Scott Drimie.

The Revitalisation of Indigenous and African Food Cultures

Bibi Giyosi discussed the flaws of the modern food system, specifically its inability to provide healthy, nutritious food for all. Today's food system often excludes or leaves out the poorest, most vulnerable, and marginalised groups within society. The shrinking of crop diversity from 7,000 to roughly 12 species has also negatively affected consumption patterns – with only a few crops comprising 80% of the human diet. In light of these facts, Bibi argued that indigenous, traditional, and local foods could address some of the modern food system's failings, specifically the triple burden of malnutrition: undernutrition, overnutrition, and micronutrient deficiencies. She reinforced her point by sharing Botswana and Kenya's stories, where efforts to revive indigenous foods and culture have been successful.

Professor Cecilia Onyango believes an effective way to revitalise indigenous and African food cultures is to improve awareness of their importance amongst consumers and policymakers. She first unpacked the concept of food culture, highlighting its dependence on a specific set of cultural values, attitudes, habits, and customs of a group of people. However, food culture is dynamic and may change with influences from other cultures. As Cecilia explained, one of the reasons for the decline of indigenous food cultures is the perceived superiority of modern food culture and its products. The decline of indigenous food cultures has had several consequences such as the loss of traditional knowledge, loss of food and seed sovereignty, and a lack of educational curricula on indigenous foods. According to Cecilia, food literacy, integration of agroecology into educational curricula, seed saving, and favourable policies are a few ways to revitalise indigenous and African food cultures.

¹ The ten principles of agroecology include diversity, co-creation and sharing knowledge, synergies, efficiency, recycling, resilience, human and social values, culture and food traditions, responsible governance, and circular and solidarity economy.

Challenging the feed the world narrative: Blockchain technology vs trading in territorial markets

In his discussion, Pat Mooney explored food governance issues and challenged the feed the world narrative by unpacking corporate interests and big data. Pat emphasized three main themes:

- 1) There are concerning trends taking place within the global food system with big companies (e.g. Microsoft, Amazon, etc.) using the climate, health and other crises to put forward structural proposals ahead of the Food Systems Summit in 2021. According to Pat, these companies intend to restructure, control, and access the global food system and its markets by managing digital data and blockchain technology.
- 2) There are also positive changes that have taken place since the first World Food Summit in 1996. These include the growth in support for local markets, growth of healthier, more sustainable habits and food preferences (e.g. the rise of vegetarianism, flexitarians, etc.), and an increase in organic or no chemical farming to name a few. These trends illustrate that there is progress towards more sustainable and healthy food systems.
- 3) Territorial markets have gained prominence after COVID-19 exposed the flaws and vulnerability of the current industrial food chain. Europe, the US, and China now view territorial markets as safer for food security. A key message from Pat's discussion is that COVID-19 has strengthened the case for territorial markets in Africa and across the world.

Harnessing networks and technology to link small-scale or emerging producers directly to markets#

Naude Malan provided insight into the importance of networks and technology for connecting small-scale or emerging producers directly to markets. His discussion highlighted several aspects that are essential for farmers to consider. These include: 1) their role as leaders, feeders, and transformers of community systems means their ability to innovate is vital; 2) their ability to produce and sell cheaper food than supermarkets; 3) the importance of understanding the needs and desires of their local community, and 4) developing multifaceted enterprises that understand and work with the whole cycle. Naude also identified technology platforms like WhatsApp, Emails, Facebook and Websites as tools smallholders can use to connect and link to markets. Farmers can use these platforms to do business with their phones or even conduct market research.

Supporting the farmer: Building new value chains for agroecological produce:

Charles Dhewa and Hervé Bouagnimbeck discussed how to support the farmer through new value chains for agroecology. Charles started the conversation by identifying key market challenges, specifically mentioning the distance between markets and farmers, the seasonal nature of produce, and value chains linked to temporary funders. He also looked at ways to support farmers in the context of agroecology, suggesting the protection of sections within rural areas to produce specific commodities. He used two projects from Zimbabwe - one in Chimanimani District and the other in Mount Darwin town - as examples.

Hervé focused on the importance of certification to guarantee that produce is organic. He explained that attracting consumers to organics requires understanding the quality they desire. Hervé spoke about the importance of producers conducting a market analysis, undergoing participatory guarantee system (PGS) training, and certification to guarantee the quality of their producers to consumers.

Building local markets in the age of big retail

Susan Nakacwa's presentation emphasised the importance of smallholder farmers, agroecology, and local markets. She argued that local markets with agroecologically produced foods tend to be healthier, more sustainable, and resilient than imported food. Yet there are still several obstacles hindering a transition to local smallholder driven agroecological markets, namely food aid, food safety scandals, poor food labelling, and the promotion of foreign goods over local. One of her concluding points identified agroecology as a solution to the many challenges associated with mass production or industrialization.

The practicalities of place: Exploring approaches to the localisation of food

Dr Scott Drimie explored seven domains when looking at the localisation of food, bringing together the concept and politics of agroecology. Scott identified experimentation as the first domain, highlighting the need for ongoing reflection and grounded, context-specific experiments to find innovative solutions. The second domain entails working at different scales with multiple actors, ideas, and thinking required. Applying the principles of agroecology is the third domain – the principles serve as a useful guide to address and transform local food systems. Actor analysis – the fourth domain – involves determining who the actors are within the system, while the fifth domain focuses on identifying the different enablers who connect and enable the flows of food to work. Exploring the power dynamics within the food flow or system is the sixth domain; the aim is to understand who holds power and identify the different types of power. The seventh domain is continuous learning and adapting to advance the fundamental shifts towards agroecology or food sovereignty.

Key themes from group discussions

Each day, delegates joined group discussions where they shared their thoughts on a specific set of questions. Numerous themes emerged from the discussions relating to the questions posed and the conference objectives. Many themes arose during the group sessions, falling into three key categories:

1. Understanding African markets and trends:

One group used the term 'African market mosaic' to describe the diversity in the characteristics of markets. The main points that arose around African markets and trends include:

- ◆ The diversity in produce at African markets means consumers have easy access to a variety of fresh produce, including indigenous and seasonal foods;
- ◆ There is diversity in the setup, size, and geographical scope of markets;
- ◆ There is a diverse range of actors (producers, consumers, and traders) involved in African markets;
- ◆ Markets have a strong female presence as they provide women with a source of income and employment;
- ◆ Markets are accessible and usually form part of the social fabric as a place for people to exchange goods and meet.

2. Shaping the future of African markets for the transition to agroecology

Group responses to questions on day 1 and 2 identified several weaknesses associated with African markets. Future African markets must overcome these weaknesses to advance the transition to agroecology. Main points include:

- ◆ Improving infrastructure to maintain sanitation and hygiene within markets. Markets need to have the necessary infrastructure and facilities for vendors such as cold storage facilities.
- ◆ Effective policies and regulations to support agroecology are largely absent today. Political will and effective policies for African markets could go a long way to support the transition to agroecology.
- ◆ Improving the labelling and packaging of products through participatory guarantee systems (PGS) will enhance consumers' trust in the food source and safety at markets.
- ◆ More consumer awareness means more people value healthy, wholesome and indigenous food produced through agroecological methods. People are more aware and connected to the environmental and socio-economic benefits of buying local and agroecologically produced food.
- ◆ Extension service training will improve support for smallholder farmers and help those transitioning to agroecology.



3. The way forward: Changing policy towards markets

Million identified territorial markets as the primary focus and presented a few suggestions on AFSA's way forward, specifically research, advocacy, mobilisation, and educational efforts. He asked groups to discuss these areas and identify additional points to include within each category. The main ideas that emerged for each include:

Research

There was a strong call to do further research into numerous areas that would support and strengthen Africa markets. The main areas identified involve understanding why African markets are not recognised, how to support value addition and food traceability, and improving the mechanisms used to certify the quality of products available in these markets. The research could also investigate the role of cooperatives and peasant farmers, food waste issues, and the African Continental Free Trade Area's impact on territorial markets.

Advocacy

Moving forward, advocacy efforts need to centre on improving governments' recognition and investment in small markets, protecting traders and consumers' rights, and driving investment toward better infrastructure for markets. Youth voices, public procurement, and PGS are other areas to include in advocacy campaigns.

Mobilisation

Diverse groups need to be mobilised to support agroecology and territorial markets, ranging from other African social movements to farmers, consumers and even political decision-makers. Each stakeholder has an essential role to play in advocating for territorial markets as a means to transition to agroecology.

Education

Education is essential to improve consumer awareness of healthy and nutritious food produced through agroecological methods - a central theme throughout group discussions over the three days. Groups also emphasised the importance of enhancing consumer/citizens' awareness of agroecology's environmental and health benefits while also cultivating an understanding of agroecology among children.

The overarching role of AFSA

An additional category that came from one group is for AFSA to play an overarching role of coordinating, connecting, and joining the diverse networks within the agroecology space.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing socio-economic, environmental and political crises across the globe. It has re-exposed the flaws underpinning the global developmental model and narrative. In terms of food systems, the government-imposed COVID-19 lockdowns disrupted food supply chains with consequences for African markets, school feeding programmes, informal trade, and food prices, to name a few. Simultaneously, the health crisis has reinforced the importance and resilience of shorter supply chains and traditional African markets to withstand global crises.

Yet the pandemic is only one in a series of interrelated health, food, social, and climate crises facing the global community. At this historical juncture, COVID-19 has left us with an unprecedented set of challenges and uncertainty, but also an opportunity to shift toward alternative pathways. There has never been a more critical time to strengthen traditional African markets as key components in the transition to agroecology. Markets embody the connection between people and the planet – they bring together food producers and consumers. Markets are a space where people trade food or other goods, but also where ideas and culture mix. The challenge is that markets do not always meet the needs of producers or consumers. Strengthening African markets for agroecology depends upon balancing power dynamics as well as developing new approaches to processing, distributing, and trading food.

These were among the many issues discussed at the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) led conference at the end of October 2020. AFSA is a network of networks – a broad alliance comprising a diversity of civil society actors representing smallholder farmers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, faith-based institutions, and environmentalists. Its members are active in 50 African countries. AFSA's conference took place virtually from 27 to 29 October on the theme "Shaping the Future of Africa Food Markets in Africa: What kind of markets do we need for the transition to agroecology?" As its third Food Systems Conference, AFSA focused on the future of African markets as central components for the

transition to agroecology. The conference set out to explore three main themes:

1. Understanding African markets and trends;
2. Shaping the future of markets for the transition to agroecology;
3. Changing policy towards markets for healthy food systems.

The conference also involved a few unique components. The conference started each day with a series of films, photography, art projects, youth voices, and stories from across the continent. Several speakers shared traditional rites or mystics from their regions, some performed songs or poems, and others shared their stories from the field. These creative touches set the conference apart from many other virtual events in 2020 by cultivating a sense of unity and human connection amongst participants.

There were four keynote speakers – Charles Dhewa, Dr Mamadou Goïta, Dr Jen Astone, and Prof Olivier De Schutter. Charles is the Chief Executive Officer of Knowledge Transfer Africa, Mamadou is the Executive Director of the Institute for Research and Promotion of Alternatives in Development, Dr Jen Astone is the founder of Integrated Capital Investing, and Prof Olivier De Schutter is the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. Several speakers presented on a range of topics in parallel side events on Day 1 and 2. The speakers were: Bibi Giyosi, Prof Cecilia Onyango, Pat Mooney, Dr Naude Malan, Charles Dhewa, Hervé Bouagnimbeck, Susan Nakacwa and Dr Scott Drimie.

The conference allowed delegates to participate in their preferred language of choice – French or English – through a live interpretation. AFSA also live-streamed the event to their Facebook page and encouraged those who joined each day to continue the conversation on Twitter using the conference hashtags: #AgroecologyMarkets, #AfricaFoodSystems, and #AfricaFeedsAfrica. Delegates also had the opportunity to share their thoughts on the conference objectives during group discussions. These discussions paved the way forward for AFSA's research, advocacy, mobilisation, and education efforts.

DAY ONE – **LEARN**

Films & Celebrations

Opening ceremony: Gertrude Pswarayi-Jabson, PELUM Zimbabwe

Official welcome: Dr Chris Macoloo, AFSA Chairperson

Purpose and Programme of the Conference: Dr Million Belay, AFSA Coordinator

FAO Address: Dr Allison Loconto, FAO

Supermarkets out of Africa! Food systems across the continent are doing just fine without them

Official opening speech: Dr Laila Lokosang, AU

Discussion Session



FILMS & CELEBRATIONS

Day 1 of the event opened with a series of films and celebrations from across the continent, and a discussion between Famara and Leonida.

OPENING CEREMONY: GERTRUDE PSWARAYI-JABSON, PELUM ZIMBABWE



The lead facilitator for the conference Gertrude Pswarayi-Jabson welcomed everyone to AFSA's first virtual conference. As with most virtual events in 2020, Gertrude began by outlining some ground rules and explained the conference offered live interpretation in French or English, allowing delegates to participate in their language of choice. Participants were encouraged to use AFSA's social media platforms for any questions or to continue the conversation on the topics under discussion. Gertrude directed everyone to AFSA's Facebook page for live streaming of the event and to the Twitter handle, encouraging them to include the speaker handles and the conference hashtags: #AgroecologyMarkets, #AfricaFoodSystems, and #AfricaFeedsAfrica.

With participants from 37 African and various other countries, Gertrude instilled a sense of unity in the opening ceremony of the virtual event.

She invited all participants to participate in a process as a way of entering into the sacred and shared space, as children of mother Earth. Gertrude shared a traditional clap used in Zimbabwe to greet elders or thank them for their contributions, but also mentioned that the clap serves as a reminder of the rhythm of the heart. Gertrude performed the traditional clap and invited participants to join along while using powerful words to welcome everyone into the event.

Getrude's heart-warming rendition of a traditional Zimbabwean clap

Let this clap remind you of the rhythm of your heart. I welcome you, the individuals from all four corners of the world. I acknowledge your parents whether they are living or whether they have joined the spiritual realm. I acknowledge their presence because you are here.

I also acknowledge your grandparents - the ones who gave birth to your parents: they gave birth to your mother; they gave birth to your father and because of them, you are here. I acknowledge your great grandparents, those that we have forgotten their names. They gave birth to your grandparents: to our grandmothers, to our grandfathers, and because of that, we are here.

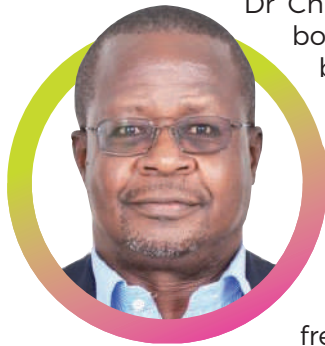
But I also want to acknowledge the children of the Earth - the four legged ones: those who crawl, those who fly, those who live in the waters, those whose feet touch the soils. I acknowledge the presence of the children of Earth: the forests, the trees, the water bodies, the mountains, the rivers, because they are children of Earth. I acknowledge them and welcome them in this space. I acknowledge them because we all come from the same source - the Great Spirit. Let there be peace, let there be harmony, let there be jubilation.

As we enter into this space, I invite you all to be compassionate. We are being called to gather during this time virtually, but let's be compassionate; let's remember to show love, we are one people coming from all four corners of the world. As we gather in this sacred space, may we bring our energy, let us bring love and let us remember that not only humans exist but also we have other children of the world from different kingdoms.

Stories from the field: Mariama Sonko (We are the Solution, Senegal)

Following Gertrude's warm welcome to the conference, she handed over to Mariama Sonko to share a story from the field in Senegal. Mariama spoke in French, introducing herself, and her experiences.

OFFICIAL WELCOME: DR CHRIS MACOLOO, AFSA CHAIRPERSON



Dr Chris Macoloo, AFSA Chairperson, officially welcomed AFSA members, AFSA board members, and guests to the conference. He set the tone for the conference by recognising the conference as an occasion. It represents an opportunity to review where AFSA is and identify objectives for the future.

Chris turned his attention to the theme of the conference, underlining the complexity of markets. Even though many people think the term refers to 'supermarkets' or regional markets (where countries trade), Chris highlighted that open-air markets were prolific across the African continent for generations and have performed critical economic and social functions.

On the one hand, they have been and continue to be a place to buy or sell fresh, healthy African produce, and on the other, markets have typically been a social space for people to gather or even meet their future partners. Like many other sectors, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a detrimental effect on open-air markets. Ultimately, the crisis revealed their importance for providing access to healthy, nutritious produce.

Moving to agroecology, Chris indicated that the majority of work on the topic focuses on the benefits of agroecology in terms of production, specifically how agroecology promotes biodiversity or improves soil health. Others view agroecology as subsistence farming, questioning its economic value or ability to feed the global population. Chris emphasised the importance of markets as ways of providing access to healthy foods cultivated through agroecological production. Markets must also be in the hands of the producers to ensure food sovereignty.

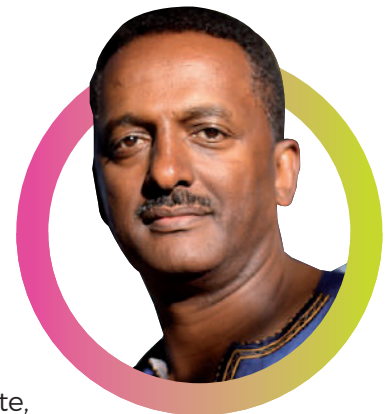
With his concluding remarks, Chris voiced his confidence in the likely success of the conference and inspired the audience with a quote from Nelson Mandela stating, "It always seems impossible until it's done".

PURPOSE AND PROGRAMME OF THE CONFERENCE: DR MILLION BELAY, AFSA COORDINATOR

AFSA Coordinator Dr Million Belay began by expressing his delight that 850 individuals from 64 countries registered for the conference, with 37 African countries represented. He gave the guests an overview of AFSA and its work as the biggest civil society movement in Africa. In short, AFSA is a broad alliance or network of networks comprising diverse civil society actors working in 50 of the 55 African countries, with two key purposes:

- 1) to fight the corporatisation of Africa's land, wildlife, forests, and agriculture in particular;
- 2) to propose agroecology as the solution to the multiple health, climate, food, and cultural crises.

In pursuit of these objectives, AFSA uses research, advocacy, mobilisation, and education to advance the agroecology agenda.



Million provided the rationale for the conference by first explaining AFSA's decision in 2016 to expand beyond agroecology into other food system issues. Two conferences followed: 1) the first took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2016 resulting in 10 strategic pathways for change; and 2) the second took place in Dakar, Senegal in 2018 on the topic of African food systems and SDGs. Following the last two systems conference, AFSA decided to focus on markets because they are a key component of the transition to agroecology. Million briefly defined markets as a place where producers and consumers meet to trade food or other goods. A place where we realise our connection to the planet and space where cultures and ideas mix.

Million outlined the structure and objectives of this three-day conference on Shaping the Future of African food markets intended to address three key objectives: 1) What are the trends of small African markets?; 2) How can we shape the future of African small markets?; and 3) How do we change policy towards small markets?

Million announced that each day of the conference would start with food celebrations: a series of films, photography, youth voices, and stories from across Africa. In his final remarks, he recognised the excellent speakers lined up and encouraged delegates to be active participants.

FAO ADDRESS: DR ALLISON LOCONTO, FAO



Representing the FAO group working on agroecology, Dr Allison Loconto spoke about the FAO's involvement and work to support agroecology in recent years. The organisation's work on agroecology first started with two global symposiums in 2014 and 2018. The symposiums led to the launch of an initiative to scale up agroecology while building synergies across multilateral organisations. Their recent efforts have involved working with governments in Mexico, Senegal and India to develop and implement policies to support agroecology. Alison also mentioned FAO's work with ECOWAS to develop a 10-year regional investment programme on agroecology in response to climate change and nutrition challenges. She highlighted how the 10 elements of agroecology² have an important role to

play in creating agroecological markets. Allison ended her address by sharing FAO resources specifically, a manual titled 'Enabling Sustainable Food Systems', along with a newly established Africa Family Farming and Agroecology Community of Practice that delegates were invited to sign up for.

After Allison's address, delegates watched a short film on smallholders reviving local seed diversity and food in Zimbabwe with support from the Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM). The key message from the film focused on the centrality of traditional seeds and food to the lives, livelihoods, and nutrition of local farmers.

SUPERMARKETS OUT OF AFRICA! FOOD SYSTEMS ACROSS THE CONTINENT ARE DOING JUST FINE WITHOUT THEM —Susan Nackacwa (Grain)

Susan Nackacwa, programme officer at GRAIN, spoke about the research Grain conducted with different organisations in Uganda, Kenya, Senegal, and Southern Africa on the rise of supermarkets. The report is available in French, Spanish, and English.

From the outset, Susan argued that African food systems are healthy and the way to go, but they have changed and become disorganised. These changes have become more apparent with the rise of supermarkets across the continent. Once considered the rich man's place to shop, Susan pointed out how supermarkets have taken hold



² The ten principles of agroecology include diversity, co-creation and sharing knowledge, synergies, efficiency, recycling, resilience, human and social values, culture and food traditions, responsible governance, and circular and solidarity economy.

in Africa through expansion and marketing tactics.

Expansion tactics have led to a range of hypermarkets, supermarkets, 24-hour convenience stores, and wholesalers, whereas marketing tactics such as ambience, cleanliness, and high-quality products have been used to create an 'overall customer experience'. Mostly though, supermarkets still serve a small population on the continent, mainly the middle to upper classes. Susan used Uganda as an example, where supermarkets only service 17% of the overall population.

Many Africans continue to shop in smaller markets because of their accessibility, their lending of credit, and their ability to meet consumers' smaller spending power.

As Susan reiterated a few times in her presentation, the rise and shift to supermarkets have had several negative implications for African food systems. The laws in different African countries have also primarily focused on the processes involved in setting up businesses, with little to no legislation in key areas such as labour rights of employees, health standards of imported items, protection of local producers or placing quotas on the number of local products on supermarket shelves.

Susan identified how a lack of legislation to protect local food systems has far-reaching consequences for small suppliers' entry into markets, along with a variety of effects on health and nutrition.

In her final remarks, Susan identified some ways to get involved and take action, including supporting small producers and farmers, supporting farmers markets, incentivising sustainable production, and building or joining movements such as Swaziland Justice Forum or Nakuru Kenya.

OFFICIAL OPENING SPEECH: DR LAILA LOKOSANG, AU

Following Susan's presentation, Dr Laila Lokosang, Advisor for Food and Nutrition Security at the African Union, gave the opening address – his speech was later than anticipated due to technical difficulties.

On behalf of the AU Commission, Laila recognised the importance of the conference theme and its relevance to the current realities and demands of African food systems. He identified how existing pressures (e.g. increasing population, climate change effects, depleted soils, and food import bills) have undermined and compromised the capacity of food systems to meet local demand, and provide nutritious food. Laila emphasised the need to rethink food systems, arguing that the future of food hinges on improving the efficiencies and capacities of markets, particularly in local and rural settings. He referred to work the AU has done to identify challenges underpinning access to markets, as well as identifying options to enhance market infrastructure and capabilities.

In his concluding remarks, Laila expressed satisfaction with the link between the conference theme and AU policy direction, noting the conference is taking place at a fitting time.



DISCUSSION SESSION DAY 1

As the conference moved into the afternoon programme, John Wilson introduced delegates to the group discussion session where they would have the opportunity to give their input on the complex issue of markets in Africa.

John informed participants that there were going to be two language groups – English and French – for the discussion session. Once French participants left for their discussion rooms, John explained that each breakout group had to select a chairperson and rapporteur to capture key discussion points. French participants received the same instructions in their discussion rooms. Groups had to focus their discussions on one of the two questions below; odd groups discussed the first question and even groups discussed the second.

Both Francophone and English groups were given time to discuss and share their thoughts around the chosen topics before providing a summary of their discussions in the plenary discussion. Rapporteurs' from each group shared their notes for this report.

Responses to Question 1:

What are the most important characteristics of African markets? And their strengths & weaknesses?

Characteristics of African markets:

When discussing the characteristics of African markets, a few relevant themes emerged during group discussions. One group came up with the term 'African Market Mosaic' to describe the diversity in the characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses associated with these markets. Diversity is a useful lens to highlight the main themes that arose from the discussions.

Diversity in produce: A key characteristic of African markets is the variety in the produce (fruits and vegetables) available, availability of indigenous foods, diversity in food colours, and food coming from different locations.

Diversity in structure, size, and scale of markets: Markets vary considerably in their size ranging from small to large scale. Further characteristics include the diversity in their set up or structure, as well as their geographical scope with local, national, and regional markets.

Diversity of actors involved: There is a broad range of actors (producers, consumers, traders, etc.) who participate in and form part of the market ecosystem. Some groups identified women as particularly important players in markets.

Strengths of African markets:

Across the groups, four key themes emerged in terms of the strengths of African markets, including:

- ◆ **Accessibility:** Markets are easy to access and are usually close by.
- ◆ **Diversity in products:** The lack of or limited specialisation means consumers have access to a wide range of fresh products,

including indigenous and seasonal foods.

- ◆ **Embedded in the social fabric of society:** Markets form part of local cultures by providing a space for people to exchange goods and services but also serving as a social meeting place.
- ◆ **Women-led:** Markets have a strong female presence providing them with a source of employment and income.

Weaknesses of African markets:

On the other hand, the main weaknesses identified include:

- ◆ **Insufficient infrastructure** to maintain sanitation and hygiene.
- ◆ **Lack of storage facilities** means foods have a short shelf life, leading to high food losses and waste.
- ◆ **Volatile prices:** Prices can vary depending on the season, post-harvest losses, as well as bargaining power between vendors and consumers.
- ◆ **Food safety issues:** There are no standards or little to no monitoring of food sold at markets. Limited or insufficient infrastructure also contributes to food safety issues.
- ◆ **Poor or insufficient packaging** of products



Responses to Question 2:

What do we see as the characteristics of African markets of the future in the transition to agroecology?

When asked to envision future African markets, delegates identified essential characteristics needed for the shift to agroecology. These include:

A shift in consumer awareness means more people value healthy, wholesome and indigenous food produced through agroecological methods. Along with the health benefits, people are more aware and connected to the environmental and socio-economic benefits of buying local and agroecologically produced food. Introduction of agroecology clubs at schools empowers youth to become active participants advocating for the transition to agroecology.

An increase in the number of local markets is essential for creating shorter and more localised supply chains. Shorter supply chains build the resilience of local food systems and enhance the connection between consumers and producers by cutting out the middlemen.

More demand for and preservation of traditional and indigenous foods due to an increased awareness of these foods and their value.

Improved labelling and packaging of products through participatory guarantee systems (PGS) improves consumers' trust in the food source and safety at markets. Through PGS systems, packaging and food waste adhere to environmental sustainability principles with biodegradable packaging and composting practices promoted.

A paradigm shift in thinking about markets and methods of food production creates an enabling environment and culture. Favourable policies guide and support the expansion of agroecology and African markets.

Improved infrastructure, quality control and organisation within markets due to more favourable policy environments. Markets are clean, hygienic, organised more efficiently, and have the necessary infrastructure and facilities for vendors such as cold storage facilities to preserve produce.

Improved transport systems and connectivity make markets more accessible to smallholders and consumers.



PARALLEL SIDE EVENTS



Following the discussion sessions, John Wilson introduced and went through the instructions for the three side events – the final session of Day 1's programme.

John informed participants that they had the option to choose between the events focused on different topics. With each event hosted in a separate room, delegates' chose whether to remain in the Lake Room or leave to the Forest or Mountain Rooms. Famara provided the same instructions in French.

THE REVITALISATION OF INDIGENOUS AND AFRICAN FOOD CULTURES

Moderator: Andrew Bennie (African Centre for Biodiversity)

Andrew Bennie welcomed participants and introduced Bibi Giyosi and Cecilia Moraa Onyango, as the two speakers for the side event. The session focused on the reawakening of agroecological production, consumption, and marketing of indigenous and African food cultures.

SPEAKER 1: BIBI GIYOSE (NEPAD), BOTSWANA



Bibi began the discussion with a presentation on the 'Revitalisation of Indigenous and African Food Cultures: From Policy to Action'. Her presentation emphasised the importance of indigenous, traditional, and local foods and species for resolving some of the inherent flaws of the modern food system, specifically in terms of health and nutrition. Bibi's presentation discussed the following aspects:

Why indigenous, traditional and neglected species? On this issue, Bibi pointed out the failures of the modern food and agricultural system to provide adequate, healthy nutrition. Its lack of inclusivity often leaves behind or excludes the poorest, most vulnerable, and marginalised groups within society. Bibi pointed out the important role indigenous, traditional foods can play in tackling the triple burden of malnutrition: undernutrition (stunting and wasting), micronutrient deficiencies, and overweight and obesity.

Shrinking of diversity and consumption patterns: Bibi spoke about the changes in consumption patterns with crop diversity in agricultural production shrinking from 7,000 species to roughly 12 species, which now make up 80% of people's diets. A few crops like wheat, rice, maize, and potatoes contribute to 60% or above of dietary intake. With this context, Bibi questioned what has happened to the other 6988 crop species (e.g. sorghum or teff) as well as wild edible species.

Collapses in policy outlook and consumer needs: Policies have typically undervalued disregarded traditional, indigenous, and local foods, or considered them inferior to foreign/modern foods and diets. Additionally, poor awareness of traditional, indigenous species and foods has resulted in a lack of knowledge on their nutritional value, quality, availability, affordability, acceptability, and biodiversity.

Examples of success stories from Africa

Bibi referenced Botswana and Kenya as two examples of success stories in Africa. In Botswana, sorghum millers increased from one to 300 in the 1980s due to collaboration between partners along with government support for milling and value addition for the local market. Kenya's story shows how extensive research and marketing efforts (e.g. placing foods on supermarket shelves) are

useful ways to promote an increase in consumer demand for indigenous foods, such as African Leafy Vegetables.

COVID-19 and malnutrition: Bibi also illustrated how the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent government-imposed lockdowns disrupted food supply chains with consequences for school feeding programmes, informal trade, and food prices to name a few. In turn, these disruptions affected availability and access to healthy, nutritious food; and ultimately, intensified levels of malnutrition.

Bibi ended off her presentation by instilling hope that there is still an opportunity to do better when it comes to indigenous foods by:

- ◆ rethinking and reframing the nutrition of neglected, indigenous species;
- ◆ conducting further research into different plant and animal species;
- ◆ driving consumer education with a focus on nutrition;
- ◆ engaging the youth to get involved and participate with IT or social media platforms;
- ◆ adopting Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDG) as an entry point from policy to action.

SPEAKER 2: PROF CECILIA ONYANGO, BAREFOOT GUIDE, KENYA

Cecilia's presentation focused on the 'Revitalisation of Indigenous and African Food Cultures'. A key message from Cecilia's presentation centred is the importance of building awareness amongst consumers and policymakers to increase demand for indigenous foods. Some of the key issues discussed in Cecilia's presentation include:

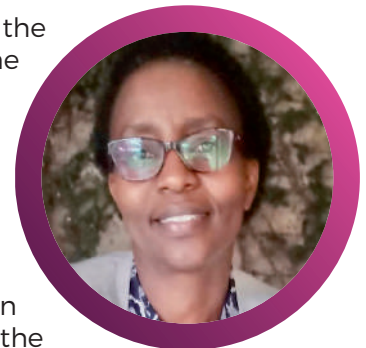
The Effects of COVID-19: Like Bibi, Cecilia unpacked the implications the COVID-19 pandemic had on food systems, but specifically emphasised the importance of food sovereignty in the context of crises.

What is the food culture? Culture refers to the values, attitudes, habits, and customs of a group of people. It influences our beliefs, lifestyle, and diet. Indigenous foods hold significant cultural value across different ethnic groups in Africa. But as Cecilia mentioned, food culture is dynamic and subject to change with influences from new or modern cultures.

What are the reasons for the decline of indigenous food cultures? Modern food cultures often considered superior, is one of the primary reasons for the decline in indigenous food. The ripple effect has led to a loss of knowledge and a lack of educational curricula on the nutritional and social benefits of indigenous foods.

Consequences of losing the indigenous food culture: Communities have lost their food sovereignty as they have moved from self-reliance to dependence on the modern food and agriculture system. Indigenous seeds and foods are no longer easily available or accessible.

Way forward: Cecilia identified food literacy, integration of agroecological or indigenous knowledge into educational curricula, seed saving and sharing, as well as favourable policies as necessary measures to revitalise indigenous and African food cultures.



Key Questions raised from the two presentations:

- ◆ How can we overcome the disconnect between the nascent agrifood industry and researchers?
- ◆ Has there been an uptake of indigenous products in supermarkets?
- ◆ Whose research are we talking about? Is it farmer-led research or research carried out in labs away from farms?
- ◆ Youth are more interested in convenience food. How do we repackage indigenous foods so they can compete with imported foods?

CHALLENGING THE FEED THE WORLD NARRATIVE: BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY VS TRADING IN TERRITORIAL MARKETS

Moderator: Bridget Mugambe

Bridget Mugambe, the programme coordinator for AFSA, moderated the session. Bridget briefly introduced Pat, highlighting his four decades of experience in international civil society movements, and then handed over to him.

SPEAKER: PAT MOONEY, ETC GROUP



Much of Pat's discussion focused on exploring three key themes: 1) the concerning trends linked to big data; 2) some positive changes in the global food system, and 3) the renewed focus on territorial markets. A key message to take from Pat's discussion is that COVID-19 exposed the flaws of the industrial food system; in doing so, the case for territorial markets in Africa and across the world has gained prominence.

Concerning trends with big data on the rise

Along with COVID-19, Pat argued that several changes occurring at the same time are contributing to the existing crisis – the vast changes in technology being one of them.

Pat provided critical insight into some of the concerning trends taking place within the global context. One of them is the structural proposals large companies are putting forward ahead of the Food Systems Summit in 2021. Companies like Microsoft and Amazon are using the current climate, food, and health, among other, crises to advocate for using their powerful technologies to access and control food and agricultural markets. In other words, Pat believes they are attempting to overrun the food system through the management of digital data and blockchain technology.

The battle ahead lies in their influence of the Food Systems Summit. Multinationals and big data companies have used their connections to the World Economic Forum to call for the summit. Pat voiced significant doubt and criticism of their intentions for the conference. He believes their proposals to restructure the food system and multilateralism are disingenuous; a false attempt to create a tripartite conversation between government, business, and civil society that will be more for show than anything.

Positive global trends

On a more positive, Pat briefly highlighted a few global changes that have taken place since the first World Food Summit in 1996. He asserted that the world has seen:

- ◆ growth in support for local markets;
- ◆ a growth toward healthier, more sustainable food systems (e.g. the rise of vegetarianism, flexitarians, etc.)
- ◆ a growth in organic or no chemical farming and
- ◆ a remarkable growth in commercial support for Free Trade products.

These trends demonstrate the progress made towards the popular consumption of organic, free trade, and nutritious food. They also reinforce the possibility of increasing the growth in these areas through a more coordinated effort from civil society.

The case for territorial markets

Despite the positive trends, there is certainly a need to fight back against the power and influence of large companies. One of the ways to do so is by strengthening territorial markets; another significant theme in Pat's discussion.

COVID-19 has done us one favour – it has exposed the vulnerability of the industrial food chain. Territorial markets, on the other hand, have gained status and justification that was lacking at the beginning of 2020. More recently, countries and regions such as the US, China and the European Union consider territorial markets safer in terms of food security. Pat emphasised that the AFSA conference is perfect timing – right now, there is an opportunity to advocate for strengthening territorial markets in Africa.



Key questions raised:

- ◆ Could you clarify what a territorial market is, what it consists of and the main barriers?
- ◆ The current liberal economic model – is it able to protect African territorial markets? Can it secure access to food?
- ◆ Would the Eat Lancet diet, the Green New Deal and One Health be part of the push towards the new multilateralism model?
- ◆ Do we have a chance against the industrial food system when compared to the (limited) quantities produced using agroecological farming?

HARNESSING NETWORKS AND TECHNOLOGY TO LINK SMALL-SCALE OR EMERGING PRODUCERS DIRECTLY TO MARKETS

Moderator: Leonida Odongo, Kenya

SPEAKER: DR NAUDE MALAN, UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

As moderator for the session, Leonida Odongo welcomed the 39 delegates present. Before handing over to Dr Naude Malan for his presentation, Leonida outlined the key objectives of the session, which included:

1. Gaining knowledge on harnessing technology in bringing consumers and farmers together;
2. Learning to use technology to eliminate the middle-man in the value chain;
3. Ensuring food producers are not exploited; and
4. Sharing ideas that connect farmers and consumers.

With the context set, Naude shared his experiences on harnessing networks and technology to link small-scale or emerging producers directly to markets. His discussion centred on the following points:

Farmers are at the forefront of community production systems. They are leaders, feeders, and transformers of the community system. At the same time, farmers need to understand the complexity of the economy and food system, while also recognising their power to change community systems. Their ability to innovate is key.

Farmers can produce food at cheaper prices than the supermarkets – this is key to their survival.

Farmers need to investigate their local area or community to identify the people they want to serve,



what they need, and what they eat.

Farms also need to be multifaceted enterprises. Farmers are encouraged to recycle waste (metal, glass and plastic), and compost food waste. Food sovereign farmers understand and work with the cycle.

Naude also identified several practical ways to use technology platforms like WhatsApp, Emails, Facebook and Websites for smallholders to connect and link to markets. Naude's advice to farmers is to:

- ◆ Do business with their phones by having a list of customers in your contacts, and by developing WhatsApp groups or an SMS list of recipients. Send messages daily to the groups or recipient list to keep people's interest. Pricing below supermarkets will draw consumers to you.
- ◆ Conduct market research by talking to 10-15 people to identify their needs. You will then know what they want. Start a Facebook page for your farm. Post something daily, and start groups for customers or products.
- ◆ Develop a website only when you are ready, making money, fully compliant, and trading.

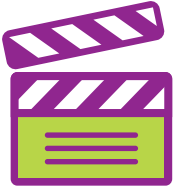


Key questions raised from the presentation:

- ◆ How can small-scale farmers deal with the issue of transport and competition in the food system?
- ◆ Is there any research related to farmers being able to use this circular system with Facebook and WhatsApp and how effective they are?
- ◆ How do we avoid the middleman in the value chain?
- ◆ Have you worked with groups/cooperatives since some farmers have no ability and technique?
- ◆ What is the relationship between the modern food system and farmer market?

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Day 2 of the event also opened with a series of films and celebrations from across the continent, and a discussion between Famara and Leonida. Gertrude welcomed delegates back to AFSA's first virtual conference and reminded them how to access live interpretation in French or English. She then handed over to Appolinaire Oussou to do the Mystica.

MYSTICA: APPOLINAIRE OUSSOU LIO, BENIN

Appolinaire shared his wisdom on the four elements needed to live a better life and produce food. The four elements are fire/sun, earth, air/wind, and water. He spoke about the symbolic representation of each and emphasised the importance of connecting to them daily. Appolinaire ended by pointing out that there is no sustainable production without these elements.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD: NNIMMO BASSEY, NIGERIA

After Appolinaire's Mystica, Nnimmo Bassey shared a poem he wrote following a successful food security conference in Maputo, Mozambique in 2004. Nnimmo's poem, titled "Mountains of Food, Oceans of Hunger", highlights the contradictions, politics and power that underlie the structure of the current food system.



An excerpt of Nnimmo Bassey's poem: *"Mountains of food, Oceans of hunger"*

Mountains of food
Oceans of hunger
How can this remain the lot
of our peoples?
From the south and from the
north
From the east and from the
west

When our stomachs rumble

We sing the same song
And dance to the same beat

Mountains of food
Oceans of hunger
Proud people from fertile soils
We stamped the earth with
bouncing steps
Once the rulers of the world
Today we are the wretched of
the earth
Hands stretched out with
empty bowls

When our stomachs rumble

We sing the same song
And dance to the same beat

Mountains of food
Oceans of hunger
Diets altered beyond
recognition
How can we know what we
are eating?
A simple question:
What did you have for lunch?
Becomes a subject for
scientific debate!

When our stomachs rumble

We sing the same song
And dance to the same beat

Mountains of food
Oceans of hunger
Once enslaved with chains

Today ensnared by our belly
Shall we eat
or shall we not
If we are hungry
Must we fill our stomachs
with poison?
We have a right which can't
be denied
We must decide what we eat,
and when and how

When our stomachs rumble

We sing the same song
And dance to the same beat

Mountains of food
Oceans of hunger
We stand on mountains of
food
Yet food aid is forced on us
GE corn
GE soya and what have you
Many more still undergoing
tests

Introducing the day's programme & recap: Gertrude Pswarayi-Jabson

Gertrude gave a brief recap of the previous day in which delegates explored the theme: understanding African markets and trends through two key questions. Various speakers also provided further insight into some of the core characteristics underlying African markets. She explained that the main theme for day 2 is to explore ideas around shaping the future of markets for the transition to agroecology. Gertrude introduced the first speaker for the day Mariama Sonko, Chair of the rural women's movement – Nous Sommes la Solution (We are the Solution).

SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS CHALLENGING INDUSTRIAL MARKETING IN SENEGAL

MARIAMA SONKO

Speaking in French, Mariama's presentation looked at the story behind the production and marketing of Sum Pak – a range of stock cubes made from local ingredients and launched in South Senegal by We are the Solution. Mariama first explored how the introduction of industrial stock cubes replaced natural ingredients, and ultimately became a commonplace ingredient in Senegalese households and meals. Additionally, the excessive use of industrial cubes, with their high salt content, has led to an increase in cases of hypertension, kidney failure, and other health challenges in some communities.



History and benefits of the natural broth “Sum Pak”:

Launched in Casamance, South Senegal, the production of Sum Pak emerged as a healthy alternative to the widespread use of industrial stock cubes. Mariama identified a range of social and health benefits linked to the production of the natural broths. Some of these include:

- ◆ Healthier, more nutritious broths due to the use of local ingredients;
- ◆ Improving local consumption and consumer health;
- ◆ Creation of jobs and improved income for female processors;
- ◆ Strengthening local skills and knowledge; and
- ◆ Preserving the environment through the responsible use of raw materials.

Ingredients and preparation of Sum Pak:

Sum Pak is a natural flavour enhancer that uses several spices and local ingredients, making it rich in nutrients. Sum Pak Shrimp, used for meat dishes, consists of shrimp, green onion leaves, salt, garlic, pepper, chilli, white sorrel calyx, lemon juice, dry fish, bay leaves, and ginger. Sum Pak Nététou, used for fish dishes, uses the same ingredients but replaces shrimp with nététou, also known as sumbala (Mali, Guinea), daddawa, or iru (Nigeria). Preparing Sum Pak cubes involves a variety of methods (e.g. grinding products into flour, mixing techniques by sieving, etc.), all of which depend on manual labour.

Advocacy for change: Mariama also spoke about the diverse activities and actions carried out to market and raise awareness about Sum Pak. Marketing activities largely involved training and awareness building amongst farmers, grassroots leaders, and community radio hosts. Sum Pak products also featured in exhibitions and culinary tastings to promote the product.

Success and Challenges of Sum Pak: As she moved to the end of her presentation, Mariama spoke about some of the success and challenges faced in producing Sum Pak. A few of the successes highlighted consist of an increase in consumer demand for Sum Pak; affordability; boosting the income of producers and enhancing local knowledge and skills. Still, some challenges remain such as the difficulties in accessing equipment or biodegradable packaging, accessing media (tv) to promote products, and in sourcing some ingredients (e.g. néré, shrimp) during certain seasons or times of the year.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1: SEEDING FOOD SYSTEMS CHALLENGING INDUSTRIAL MARKETING IN SENEGAL

CHARLES DHEWA (KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AFRICA), ZIMBABWE

Charles Dhewa, Chief Executive Officer of Knowledge Transfer Africa, gave the first keynote address. In his presentation, Charles emphasised the significance of African mass markets and explored their characteristics in West Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa, and North Africa.



Why mass food markets?

'Mass' rather than informal markets is a more appropriate term to use given their centrality in feeding people, Charles pointed out. Set up differently to supermarkets or malls, African mass markets are where food sovereignty and food systems framings intersect. Charles considers these markets to be the foundations of local economies, supporting ecologically sensitive trading and consumption.

Last but certainly not least, Charles emphasised that mass markets are an expression of indigenous commerce and tend to be more people-centred. Unlike supermarkets, these markets offer people the flexibility to negotiate prices and portions, which came in handy as the effects of COVID-19 lockdown measures kicked in.

Examples of mass food markets in Africa:

Charles used a map of Africa to first illustrate the extent of mass food markets across the continent. He then explored each region, identifying examples of mass markets, as highlighted below.

West Africa:

- ◆ Mali: Sikasso food markets account for 80% of national potato production consumed across the country;
- ◆ Nigeria: Lagos alone has more than 30

markets;

- ◆ Senegal: There are big weekly markets such as the Mbawane market.

Southern Africa:

- ◆ Mozambique: the Mercado Central Market in Maputo sells fresh seafood, fruits, vegetables, etc.
- ◆ Zimbabwe: the Mbare market handles more than 70% of the commodities produced in the country;
- ◆ Malawi: numerous mass markets from Mitundu, Tsoka, and Lilongwe markets, among others.

East Africa:

- ◆ Ethiopia: the largest mass food market is Piassa Atikilt Tera, the capital;
- ◆ Tanzania: Population largely depends on mass markets;
- ◆ Rwanda: There are numerous mass markets in Kigali and other cities.

North Africa:

- ◆ Morocco: Various mass markets are found in the Casablanca, Rabat, Tangiers, and Marrakech;
- ◆ Egypt: Mass markets and street markets are found in Cairo, Alexandria, and other Egyptian towns/cities.

Mass markets and COVID-19:

Much like some of the previous presenters, Charles briefly acknowledged the effect of the COVID-19 lockdown measures on mass markets, with much of the trading pushed underground.

Centres of consolidation and liberation

In his final slides, Charles argued that African mass markets are centres of knowledge, nutrition, and social consolidation or cohesion. These markets embody the idea that agriculture is not simply about production or commodities; it is also about the rights and livelihoods of the people at the centre of the food ecosystem. In this way, Africa markets serve as crucial vessels for liberating African agriculture from neoliberalism.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2: TERRITORIAL MARKETS IN THE PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS.

DR MAMADOU GOÏTA, AFSA & INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT



Dr Mamadou Goïta's presentation examined the concept of territorial markets and their main characteristics. Territorial markets are one of a variety of market setups, ranging from global, internal, rural, urban, local or mass, informal, formal, commercial, labour, and financial markets.

land,

Mamadou defined territorial markets as "highly diverse markets through which most of the food consumed in the world passes, which may operate at a local, cross-border or regional level, in rural, peri-urban or urban settings, or all these contexts; and are directly linked to local, national or regional food systems in that food is produced, processed, and traded within these systems".

Along with the definition, he also identified some characteristics associated with territorial markets, including:

- ◆ They are deeply rooted in a specific territory in line with cultural norms (e.g. majority buying, selling or producing are from the territory);
- ◆ There is a diverse arrangement of horizontal relationships between independent producers, processors, traders, and consumers;
- ◆ They are inclusive and diverse in terms of the actors and products;
- ◆ They have multiple social, economic, cultural, political and ecological functions within their territory;
- ◆ They are formal or informal, or transitioning between the two;
- ◆ They are located at different territorial levels (local, national, and cross-border) and linked to food systems.

Mamadou reflected that there is a need for more research to gain a deeper understanding of territorial markets. Among other, future research could explore the following areas:

- ◆ the status of territorial markets and their

geographical scope;

- ◆ the rules and norms established by actors, the community, or the state that allows markets to function; or
- ◆ the role and place of women and young people in the pricing of products on territorial markets.

In the end, Mamadou pointed out the public policies needed to strengthen support for family farming:

- 1) improving social and political recognition of the agricultural profession,
- 2) regulating markets with preference given to territorial markets,
- 3) strengthening rights and access to resources land, water, seeds and institutional resources, and
- 4) providing access to common and public goods including basic social services.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 3: AGROECOLOGICAL ENTERPRISES INSPIRE CHANGE

DR JEN ASTONE, INTEGRATED CAPITAL INVESTING, USA

The third keynote speech came from Dr Jen Astone, founder of Integrated Capital Investing. Her presentation, titled 'Agroecological Enterprises Inspire Change', distilled key findings from an action research project between the Agroecology fund and AFSA. Based on data from ongoing action research, Jen shared examples and initial learnings about businesses and investors engaging in the transition to agroecology. The focus centred on small and medium enterprise development.



Purpose of the action research project:

Driving the research focus is a desire to investigate how financing can support agroecology, alongside grants, policy, and advocacy. The research project is currently in Phase 1, which

started in 2020 and will run until Phase 2 starts in 2021.

Two key questions are guiding the research:

- 1) What do entrepreneurs need to create an enabling environment for agroecology?
- 2) What are the financial and non-financial areas of support?

Jen also clarified that entrepreneurs refer to a wide range of actors including individual farmers, cooperatives, private companies, non-governmental organisations, social enterprises, women' associations, etc.

Why support agroecological enterprises?

Those involved in the project believe agroecology is an essential strategy to improve farmer livelihoods. Principled agroecological enterprises are essential to scale agroecology. When looking at advocacy agendas, small-scale agroecology farmers are an alternative to put forward for public support. Lastly, attracting political support to transform agriculture requires a vibrant agroecological entrepreneurial sector and policy environment across Africa.

What challenges do agroecological entrepreneurs face with investors in Africa?

Broadly speaking, investors ignore the holistic nature of agroecology as a viable business model; many primarily focus their investments on productivity and income. 80% of investments are also domiciled outside of Africa with their focus limited to select countries.

Jen highlighted that research recognises other credit providers such as local banks, microfinance institutions, self-help associations, local traders, etc. that provide credit to farmers.

Initial Findings:

To date, the project has received 68 responses from 17 countries in Africa to their survey. Jen outlined and presented reflections on the initial findings from the survey, as outlined below.

Entrepreneurs:

- ◆ primarily rely on personal and group savings (83%)
- ◆ engage in diverse activities and markets;
- ◆ spoke about their role in connecting consumers to farmers and increasing local nutritious food diversity;
- ◆ Experience is that outside providers emphasize production over business skills and marketing;
- ◆ Know farmers are seeking high-quality bio impacts due to low cost, effectiveness, and adaptation;
- ◆ Experience a challenging environment - competition, traders, policies, poor infrastructure, etc.
- ◆ Work at scale through cooperatives and associations to reach thousands.

Inspiring Entrepreneurs:

Jen shared stories of inspiring entrepreneurs and their businesses across Africa. Most of the entrepreneurs are involved in production and aggregation. For instance, L'Agriculteur et Fièrè in Guinea produces potatoes, corn, and beans for the local market. Another example is from Togo where Sath Agro-Business produces animal feed and eggs but is also an aggregator and processor. Businesses are innovating in many other areas ranging from farm inputs, farm infrastructure to agroecological products, bakeries, honey, and eco-tourism. For example, Le Marche Bio, a group in Senegal, is initiating an agroecological market.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION:

Moderated: Dr Fassil Gebeyehu, African Biodiversity Network

Following the keynote addresses, Gertrude invited participants to participate in the question and answer session. They could do so by placing their questions into the chatbox. Dr Fassil Gebeyehu moderated questions and answers between the delegates and the keynote speakers - Mariama, Mamadou, and Jen.

In South Africa, large-scale commercial farmers dominate the markets, making it very difficult for small-scale producers to get in, never mind agroecological producers. What is your reflection on what can be done practically here?

Charles responded to the question, noting first that part of the challenge in South Africa is the historical land issues. These historical legacies mean big players continue to dominate markets in South Africa. However, Charles considers mass markets a solution but to be effective, they require policy and policymakers who understand the importance of creating viable markets. Civil

society also has a big role to play in mobilising power and advocating for agroecological markets.

To what extent do you think the Participatory Guarantee System would be useful for local marketing of Agroecology?

Jen and Mamadou responded to this question. Jen pointed out that their research will still look into PGS, as it did not come up as a significant piece in the initial findings. Mamadou responded positively, acknowledging the important role of PGS for marketing agroecology.

What measures are you taking to respond to the aggressive push by Auchan and other big agri-industrial companies to invade all Senegalese food business?

Mariama responded to this question, noting the work they are doing at the grassroots level by establishing the SumPak product with consumers. She clarified that their focus is on empowering consumers to take ownership of their food but Mariama did recognise their difficulties in trying to commercialise the product.

There is no good price for smallholders' produce. What practical measures can be taken by governments or civil society?

From Charles' perspective, farmers are usually price takers, as opposed to middlemen who often take the greatest share. Part of the problem lies with the volumes smallholder farmers produce, the cost of transporting produce, poor infrastructure, ineffective market systems, and limited branding.

A possible niche in South Africa is not to go head to head with the large centralised produce markets, but to develop smaller, decentralised fresh produce markets that are closer to end-users.

Charles agreed but stated that different commodities need to be mobilised to guarantee demand for the local market. There is no market if everyone has the same product.

Can you provide some examples where there is a functioning logistics transportation system for farmers to get their products to market without being held ransom by collectors, aggregators and wholesalers?

Mamadou spoke about organisations in different markets that are coming up with solutions to avoid problems relating to intermediaries. There are different cases where farmers are organising

their access to resources such as inputs, transport, or even extension services. Some of them hire trucks or have facilities to transport fresh fruit or vegetables from one city to another. In the case of Mali, they have been working in production areas ensuring there are 2 or 3 trucks used to access markets.

Charles added that some of the collectors are also women. He emphasised the importance of understanding the gender dynamics and relationships between farmers and intermediaries. Jen also pointed out that the focus is often on production and not on some of the other issues like logistics. Farmers' organisations are ready and wanting to get more involved in transportation and logistics, but they need support to pilot in these areas.

Further comments and questions from the chatbox:

- ◆ Any export from an agroecological farming system must consider circularity so that the soil and its nutrients exported via produce can somehow be replenished. Cultivators need to be sufficiently compensated to keep the system robustly agroecological.
- ◆ We tend to see middlemen as the enemy of producer, but since farmers often produce little amounts, they are often necessary to aggregate. Do you see examples of middlemen that have fair relationships with farmers and if so, how did these more equal relationships develop?
- ◆ Modernity has many failures. Perhaps there needs to be a reflection on other localities in the world and what has befallen them in the pursuit of modernity for modernity's sake.
- ◆ Could you share examples on policy tools that are already in place in some African countries that support our push towards resilient food markets?
- ◆ How can agroecological markets support social cohesion, and community development more broadly, and look at resilience and support for multiple roles and connecting farmers, aggregators, transporters, and consumers?
- ◆ We had heard yesterday about a greater space opening up for territorial markets in policy spaces and public discourse due to COVID-19. How can we build on this momentum for agroecological territorial markets? What are the advisory services required and how do we see them being delivered?

Gertrude invited delegates to do some stretches during the 10-minute break; a short film on rice production in Senegal was played afterwards.

INSIGHTS FROM A LONG TERM STUDY OF INFORMAL MARKETS IN ZIMBABWE - HOW SMALL MARKETS OUTCOMPETE SUPERMARKETS

SPEAKER: CLEVER MUKOVE, KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AFRICA, ZIMBABWE

Clever Mukove, a colleague of Charles Dhewa at Knowledge Transfer Africa, shared insights from a long-term study on informal markets in Zimbabwe. The study specifically looked at how small markets outcompete supermarkets.

Differentiation of local Zimbabwean markets

Clever used a table to illustrate the differentiation of markets and producers in Zimbabwe. He spoke about the characteristics and supply chains of four main categories:

- 1) production area/local markets comprising subsistence producers;
- 2) district/growth point markets serving a whole district;
- 3) rural roadside markets refer to local producers along the roads or highways to cities and towns;
- 4) City and town markets comprising mass markets or super aggregators, farmers markets, and wholesale markets.

Within category four, vendors are the main players in mass markets, distributing more than 60% of the goods within these markets More than 80% of commodities are distributed through informal markets, compared to supermarkets who only distribute 10 -15%.

Why is most trading going through informal markets?

Clever unpacked some of the reasons underpinning the finding that informal rather than formal markets distribute more food. He compared the reasons why both producers and consumers prefer either mass markets or supermarkets. Small-scale markets offer far more benefits that cater to consumers and producers' everyday needs. For instance, consumers prefer these markets because they are a one-stop-shop, accessible, and are flexible when it comes to tasting, price negotiation, and discounts.

PRESENTATION OF DAY 1 SYNTHESIS

Moderator: **John Wilson & AFSA members**

Million and Bethule took a futuristic view when presenting a brief synopsis of Day 1. Acting as a journalist in Uganda, Million interviewed Bethule about her reflections and experience of the changes that had taken place in markets since the conference 20 years ago.

DISCUSSION SESSION DAY 2

Moderators: John Wilson & AFSA members

Much like day 1, John reminded delegates that the group discussion session is an opportunity for delegates to participate by sharing their experiences, questions, issues, and opportunities. Their responses will help AFSA develop a clear way forward to transform marketing on the continent as part of the transition to agroecology. English and French speakers received the same instructions as day 1 before moving into their breakout rooms.

Group responses to questions:

Groups raised many important yet similar themes to those raised on day 1. Infrastructure came up as a prominent issue, followed by the need for policies and political will. Other popular topics included consumer awareness, closer ties between producers and consumers, and access to healthy foods.



1. What are the key changes that need to happen to strengthen African markets for the transition to agroecology?

Policies and regulations: These are largely missing in African markets today. A few groups spoke about the need to cultivate political will across levels of government (local to national), specifically to develop favourable policies to strengthen African markets. COVID-19 exposed the flaws associated when local markets are not valued. Another group warned that regulations should not create additional burdens through red tape; rather, regulations must be to the advantage of smallholder farmers and agroecology. One group provided an example from Brazil where Lula's government developed policy directing public institutions (e.g. school canteens) to supply agroecological food.

Infrastructure: Unsurprisingly, all groups discussed infrastructure. Many of the discussions reinforce the point above about obtaining support from national and local governments. Groups raised the following aspects of infrastructure to improve:

- ◆ the amenities (e.g. storage facilities, processing mechanisms),
- ◆ cleanliness and safety,
- ◆ markets as spaces that are multi-functional (e.g. a place for social gatherings),
- ◆ accessibility to smallholder farmers,
- ◆ food waste recycling facilities, and
- ◆ processing centres.

All of this of course requires proper investment.

Consumer/eater awareness of food quality: Groups suggested creating designated spaces within markets for agroecological produce and information on its benefits to raise awareness amongst consumers. These designated spaces would incentivise other producers to transition to agroecological production; they would also help to overcome existing shortcomings of labelling. As one group emphasised, the media must also play a vital role in increasing consumer literacy about agroecology. In short, consumers need to understand the socio-economic, health, and environmental implications of their food choices. They need to be aware of and value the health and nutritional benefits of agroecologically produced food.

Protection from the unfair competition:

This refers specifically from multinational agribusinesses and foreign goods.

Extension service training on the principles and practices of agroecology to support emerging farmers and even transition conventional farmers.

A stronger agroecology community: This is essential to achieving the above mentioned. A stronger community hinges on extending and deepening existing networks.

A whole-system approach will help support an agroecological approach from production to processing, to transport, marketing and selling.

2. How can the strengthening of African Markets promote/protect farmers and consumers' rights?

Rights to a safe, hygienic place to buy food:

Markets form part of the 'fabric of society'. Better multi-functional infrastructure will promote people's right to a safe and hygienic place to buy their food.

Rights to safe, healthy, and diverse food:

Strengthening markets with a strong emphasis on agroecological produce will promote consumers' rights to safe, healthy, and diverse food and thus to greater overall health for them and families. They will be able to make more informed decisions.

More legal recognition and protection from local authorities:

Strengthening African markets depends on enhanced policies and recognition from local authorities. If policies are in place, producers and consumers alike can hold their elected officials accountable for implementing the appropriate regulations, including protection from non-agroecological produce.

Closer links between producers and consumers:

One group warned that producers and consumers rights are often at odds due to the price of goods, with actions sometimes favouring one or the other. By establishing closer links between producers and consumers closer together, an agroecological market will cut out middlemen to some extent and promote fairer prices for both. One group also suggested promoting consumer groups in urban and rural areas.

Advance gender equity: One group felt that markets could form part of advocacy to promote women's access to land.



PARALLEL SIDE EVENTS

John Wilson went over the instructions for the final session of Day 2's programme – the three side events. The same as day 1, each event took place in a separate room. Depending on their preferred topic, the delegates chose whether to remain in the Lake Room or leave to the Forest or Mountain Rooms.

SUPPORTING THE FARMER: BUILDING NEW VALUE CHAINS FOR AGROECOLOGICAL PRODUCE

Moderator: Dr Jen Astone, Integrated Capital Investing, USA

SPEAKER 1: CHARLES DHEWA, KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AFRICA



Charles started the conversation by sharing his views on this topic. His discussion highlighted issues relating to markets before discussing examples of useful ways to support farmers.

Market challenges

Charles reflected that markets tend to be in the cities far away from farmers, requiring them to travel long distances to sell their produce. They often link to specific value chains promoted by a funder or development partner. Once the project stops and the funder leaves, the market falls away. A further challenge is the seasonal nature of produce sold at markets. Markets tend to operate when produce is in season.

Supporting farmers

How do we support farmers especially in the context of agroecology? On this question, Charles reflected that there is limited or less contamination in the soil and water in many rural areas, especially compared to commercial farms. Charles suggested protecting or cordoning off certain areas to produce specific commodities. He used two projects from Zimbabwe as examples.

Zimbabwe Projects

1. Chimanimani District

Chimanimani District in Manicaland province produces a lot of fresh produce such as fruits and herbs due to good rainfall. Farmers travel individually to sell their products in Harare, rather than aggregating at a local place and adding value to their products.

Charles explained that they have tried to set up a local market in Chimanimani, with the help of other development partners like World Vision. The aim is to support farmers to grow crops like bananas in that region, while also promoting ripening of bananas and other fruits at the source.

The ripple effect is that a local market will likely encourage and mobilise other farmers to produce more given their proximity to a local market.

2. Mount Darwin Town

Mount Darwin is a town in Mashonaland Central province in Zimbabwe. Here local markets are being set up close to farmers producing grains, rearing indigenous chickens, guinea fowls, etc.

The project aims to identify niche buyers who will go to the local markets and buy in an organised manner. Support for agroecological produce also requires standardisation such as sorting, grading, and traceability, as well as branding so farmers do not lose selective consumers to middlemen or supermarkets.

SPEAKER 2: HERVÉ BOUAGNIMBECK

The second speaker, Hervé Bouagnimbeck, spoke about the importance of certification to guarantee the produce is organic. Organic producers are important, but it is also essential to have people who want to eat organically produced food. Attracting consumers to organics requires understanding the quality they desire. Hervé identified market elements that are vital for producers.


**Elements of markets important for producers:**

Market analysis: It is important to understand how markets work and the prerequisites which producers need to meet. A project in Cameroon is working with 180 producers through the PGS.

Training: An important element, sometimes neglected, is the training of producers through PGS. These training sessions could be practical or theoretical. Producers must play a role in developing PGS tools to guarantee their buy-in and participation.

Certification: This needs to be encouraged so farmers do not only produce for the project but also for themselves.

Key questions raised:

- 
- ◆ What is working in terms of getting consumers to pay more for agroecologically produced products?
 - ◆ Who bears the cost of traceability of products?
 - ◆ Is certification feasible given the low level of development of local markets?
 - ◆ In Kenya for example, there is an increasing demand for safe African foods by middle and high-income consumers and yet the small producers are not able to sell to them either because of the small quantities and seasonality of production and/or the food safety concerns. What do you see as a solution to these challenges?
 - ◆ Who sets the standards for the participatory Guarantee? Do farmers themselves set these standards? what are the compliance challenges farmers are facing?
 - ◆ Are consumers willing to pay more for food which is certified and traceable?

PRACTICAL INSIGHTS: BUILDING LOCAL MARKETS IN THE AGE OF BIG RETAIL

Moderator: Sabrina Masinjila, African Centre for Biodiversity, Tanzania

SPEAKER: SUSAN NAKACWA, GRAIN, UGANDA

As the moderator, Sabrina Masinjila welcomed the 25 participants who joined the session. Sabrina introduced the speaker for the event – Susan, a Ugandan program officer at GRAIN with a passion for researching, documenting and making the case for smallholder farming on the African continent.

**The case for agroecology and smallholder farmers:**

A key message from Susan's presentation is the important role smallholder farmers' play in supporting healthy, sustainable agricultural practices. Smallholder farmers produce roughly 80% of Africa's food.

Susan also made a case for agroecology and local markets, emphasising the health benefits. Local

agroecologically produced foods are healthier and more sustainable compared to imported foods. They may also be more resilient to global and regional shocks or crises. For instance, during the COVID-19 lockdown, certain markets closed which created space for local markets to emerge. Farmers managed to supply to these markets.

Challenges faced:

Although there are certainly benefits to transitioning to smallholder supported local agroecological markets, some obstacles remain.

Promotion of foreign over local products: Imported produce and products continue to receive marketing preference and promotion over local goods.

Food aid is problematic: This is because it contributes to food safety scandals and undermines local food systems.

Food safety scandals: These are rising across the continent, and Susan pinpoints cross border trading as the cause. She mentioned research is taking place to map food safety scandals and invited participants to share scandals with them. Susan highlighted several scandals, including the Teff scandal in Ethiopia, Aromat and GMOs in Kenya, the 2018 listeria outbreak from polony and other cold meat, and an incident of salmonella in Nigeria.

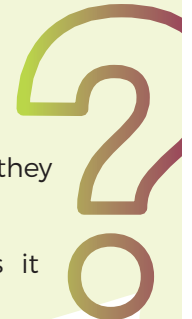
Proper food labelling: This remains limited and therefore contributes to many of the food poisoning issues.

Concluding thoughts:

There were many concluding thoughts from this session. The main message is that agroecology is a solution to mass production or industrialization problems. Further concluding thoughts centred on the need for policies dealing with standards, trade policies to protect smallholder farmers and consumer awareness.

Key questions raised:

- ◆ Can we have the map of these food scandals?
- ◆ How do people share information with you on these food scandals?
- ◆ Have you noticed/studied what the key features of these food scandals are? Where they originate, the pathways of travel, how they are identified?
- ◆ Do other countries have a refusal policy on imported goods?
- ◆ Who are the main consumers of these products, what section of society is it predominantly affecting?



THE PRACTICALITIES OF PLACE: EXPLORING APPROACHES TO THE LOCALISATION OF FOOD

Moderator: Luke Metelerkamp



SPEAKER: DR SCOTT DRIMIE

Dr Scott Drimie's presentation focused on seven domains of thoughts for reflection, which brings together concepts of agroecology and the politics of agroecology. These domains offer a way of exploring how localization of food happens:

1. **Experimentation:** The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that top-down or normative approaches are misguided. With only 10 years left to prepare for the climate crisis, a fundamental shift in complex adaptive systems is required. There are no silver bullets to this problem. We need continuous reflection and grounded, context-specific experimentation to

find the solutions.

2. **Work at different scales:** Localisation is important, but Scott emphasised the need to work at and across multiple scales simultaneously to learn. Producers, consumers, and extension, training, and support agents, among others, need to be involved. Each part of the system requires new thinking, ideas, and training.
3. **Apply Principles:** Using agroecology principles is a useful guide to address and transform systems, i.e. the de-concentration of the existing food system. Principles allow us to interrogate “weasel words” pretending to align with agroecology thinking and action by different actors. In truth, these words only pay lip service to agroecology without really applying the core principles. Obvious terms are “climate-smart agriculture” and “sustainable agriculture”, while other terms such as “lifestyle diseases” place the focus onto those worst impacted by the system rather than on the structural underpinnings.
4. **Actor analysis:** This involves determining who the actors are within the system. There are several questions to ask, including who is there? Who is not there? And in what process are they there? How are they connected within the system? Who are the different producers and consumers? This is important if we want to recalibrate and re-establish formal and informal markets, and if we want to support smallholder farmers and other producers with input supplies (e.g. seeds), etc. All of these are essential for creating diversified food sources beyond the conventional supply chain.
5. **Find the different enablers:** Along with actors, it is essential to identify the enablers who connect and enable the flows of food to work. Equally, we need to find and understand whether new enablers can play facilitation and connecting roles. Identifying different enablers is about seeking out and encouraging a “coalition of the willing” to build or strengthen.
6. **Understand who is holding power in the food flow or system:** A further domain to consider is power dynamics, specifically who holds power in the system and the different types of power. Many farmers were too dependent on extension workers, but participatory guarantee systems helped connect farmers to consumers. Savings and credit groups also generated sources of finance to create self-reliance within the system. As a result, farmers had more power to push back against the main system.
7. **Learning and adapting:** Concerning the first six domains, learning by doing encourages change or adaptation. Learning processes may include government actors, but principles must guide the learning to change power. Learning needs to occur to advance fundamental shifts towards agroecology or food sovereignty.

Key questions raised:

- ◆ How do we transform the system and address powerful forces working against agroecology? The word “recalibrate” seems to be tinkering, reforming the existing system only?
- ◆ In your experience, have you seen the effect of the 7 domains on the policy front? For example on local or national budgets in the countries where you have worked?
- ◆ How do you draw the actors in? How big do you go to find ways to leverage change in a big and powerful system?
- ◆ How do the 7 domains fit into that idea of territoriality?
- ◆ Participants also shared the following resources to map actors:
 - ◆ <https://www.communitysense.nl/>
 - ◆ https://www0.sun.ac.za/cst/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CST-Toolkit_netmap_Web-1.pdf



DAY THREE –

ACT

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FILM & CELEBRATIONS

As with the previous two days, day 3 began with a series of films and clips showing food system stories across Africa. Leonida and Famara also discussed some of the changes needed to transition to agroecological markets. Gertrude officially opened day 3 by handing over to Injairu Kulundu-Bolus to perform the mystica.

MYSTICA: INJAIURU KULUNDU-BOLUS, ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING RESEARCH CENTRE, RHODES UNIVERSITY

Gertrude welcomed Injairu Kulundu to kickstart the third and final day of the conference with a mystica. Injairu's Mystica involved some powerful singing and drumming. Her soulful song and powerful voice set the tone for day 3.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: ELISABETH MPOFU (LA VIA CAMPESINA)

Elisabeth Mpofo is the General Coordinator for La Via Campesina and an activist organic farmer based in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. She expressed pride in being an AFSA member and working towards food sovereignty and agroecology across food systems. Elisabeth shared her revelations and experiences during COVID-19, while also recognising its impact on the global community and food systems. For Elisabeth, COVID-19 provided an opportunity to spend more time working on her farm and planning for the coming season. She realised the significance of creating her market, rather than going to a market. Buyers now come to her farm to buy produce. A message to take from Elisabeth's story is the value of empowering smallholder farmers with enough knowledge and skills to sell and market their goods.

Introducing the day's programme and recap:

Gertrude Pswarayi-Johnson

Gertrude welcomed everyone back to the conference and introduced the final day's programme and objective. First, she reminded delegates that the previous two days examined the characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of markets. The objective of the final day, on the other hand, is to gather input from participants on the changes needed to shape future food markets in Africa. As Gertrude explained, their input will inform AFSA's strategy moving forward.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: CHANGING POLICY TOWARDS MARKETS FOR HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS

PROF OLIVIER DE SCHUTTER, UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON EXTREME POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Bethule Nyamambi introduced Prof Olivier De Schutter, the final keynote speaker and "cherry on top of the conference cake". His address discussed why it is important to improve support for agroecology, ways to support agroecology, and the ways markets can be reorganised to be more effective, desirable, and viable.



Africa as the last frontier

Prof De Schutter characterised Africa as the last frontier between two opposing views battling out how agricultural development should proceed. The origin of the first view dates back to the 1960s in Southeast Asia with the start of the Green Agricultural Revolution. It is associated with large-scale irrigation, external inputs such as chemical fertilisers and pesticides, and GMO seeds. On the other hand, there is agroecology, a second view, which bets on diversity and working with nature. A clear example is agroecology's promotion of rainwater harvesting rather than large-scale irrigation schemes and the use of biochemical controls. Prof De Schutter expanded on agroecology, exploring its benefits and the conditions required to support its growth.

Why agroecology needs to be supported

As De Schutter stressed, agroecology does not only produce food and support smallholders farmers' economic livelihood and stability. It also creates cultural, social, and environmental benefits. Agroecology enhances soil fertility, conserves water, and boosts health and nutrition through more diverse, nutritious diets, among many others.

How to improve support for agroecology

With many challenges or obstacles to agroecology remaining, De Schutter pointed out a few ways to expand support for agroecological farming:

Accelerate collective learning amongst farmers: One way to further learning about agroecology is to encourage horizontal methods of learning and exchange from farmer to farmer. Farmer field schools and farmer cooperatives are two examples. Context matters when it comes to learning about agroecology. Application of its practices will vary depending on the context and issue.

Accelerate the transition from mainstream to agroecology: Here De Schutter discussed the governance aspects of transitioning from mainstream agriculture to agroecology. Improving the support and protection of farmers who are making the transition requires a range of agroecology policies.

Organisation of markets

On this theme, De Schutter addressed the pressures placed on farmers to modernise by

adopting green revolution techniques. Five key reasons explain why more farmers and food systems are not moving to agroecology:

1. Elites view of progress and development is unilinear and based on rich countries' development in the 1920s/1930s;
2. The pressure for export-led agriculture means more uniformity and using the seeds given to you. There is also a link between macroeconomic and agroecological choices.
3. The governing elites have a vested interest in the existing system;
4. A lack of trust in agroecology to produce enough food creates a vicious cycle. One where agroecology never has a chance to prove itself due to the lack of investment.
5. The question of competitiveness forces us to question how markets are organised. This false dichotomy creates a dilemma for farmers to choose between producing high-value cash crops or subsistence farming.

We need to reorganise markets for agroecology to become profitable.

What does reorganising markets mean?

As he came to the end of his address, De Schutter identified three ways to reorganise markets for agroecology.

Invest in local over global: Investments need to be directed toward local or regional markets rather than export-led or global supply chains.

Organise farmers into cooperatives: Cooperatives can facilitate marketing, processing of raw materials, and enable farmers to move higher in the value chain by providing certain goods. Too often decision-making processes marginalise or exclude farmers' voices, but cooperatives offer a way to strengthen farmers bargaining power and political weight.

Use of public procurement: Finally, public procurement is an effective development tool, as recognised in the sustainable development goals (SDGs). One example is the national school feeding programme in Brazil where family farms using sustainable forms of farming receive priority. Another is the public distribution system in India, which provides a decent income for 150 million family farms. There also changes to agreements within the World Trade Organisation, allowing countries to use procurement as a development tool to support family farms and agroecology. However, no African countries have joined yet.

THE AFRICA WE WANT: SHAPING POLICIES FOR SUSTAINABLE AGROECOLOGICAL MARKETS

Moderator: Bethule Nyamambi, Trust Africa

Following Prof De Schutter's address, Bethule Nyamambi began the panel discussion by introducing the topic. She added some reflections, noting that policy spaces have not been very open to smallholders and agroecology. Bethule listed two questions for each panel speaker to discuss and reflect on: 1) what are the opportunities, challenges, and entry points for agroecology in the public arena? 2) how do we translate or transform the current policy landscapes to influence change? 3)

SPEAKER 1: MAMADOU GOITA

Mamadou's response brought to light how the local level can influence continental decisions. He looked at the lesson and opportunities that arise from global crises, such as the food price crisis in 2008 and the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, the pandemic provided an opportunity to access food at various levels, but also to realise the flaws of relying on international markets. Mamadou pointed out how that agroecology benefited during COVID-19 with farmers less reliant on inputs from markets. One of his main arguments recognised the opportunity to come together and push for transformation because science is in favour of agroecology. Doing so requires scaling up and creating a bigger social movement.



SPEAKER 2: CHARLES DHEWA

Charles spoke about the need to look at different entry points, levels of policymaking, and reinforcing both the productivity and health benefits of agroecology. Along with De Schutter's two opposing views of agriculture, Charles identified a third. He mentioned that many farmers are experimenting with agroecology and chemical agriculture in Africa. He reckons expanding the third approach may offer a pathway to more agroecology and less of green revolution agriculture. Charles also highlighted the need to clarify the meaning of agroecology and promote its health benefits to policymakers. Africa's youthful population is also an advantage, with many young people asking serious questions about food and indigenous or traditional foods. For Charles, a key challenge is development partners who promote green revolution agriculture and in doing so, remove indigenous foods. There is a need for a clear advocacy strategy targeting these development partners.



SPEAKER 3: FATIMA KELLEHER

Fatima began by exploring the challenges for agroecology, specifically discussing the politics and power underpinning the food system. The green revolution and food insecurity is a powerful narrative, fuelled and funded by corporate interests. She draws her analysis from economic research, which shows that the green revolution has affected women in particular, and has done little to reduce hunger. Africa is at the frontline of the battle between opposing ideologies.

Looking at opportunities, Fatima said it is necessary to have "pessimism of intellect and optimism of the will". Much like other speakers, Fatima pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fallacy of the existing global market system. She added that there is no better time to



convince policymakers than when things are not business as usual. Despite challenges the continent has faced, local food systems are resilient with examples of community-supported agriculture models, shorter supply chains, or farm to fork. It is important to use these examples as a demonstration and a roadmap of alternative development pathways. With so much happening at the grassroots level, there is an opportunity to bridge the gap between micro and macro levels. A further opportunity lies in changing the way policymakers think about agroecology.

SPEAKER 4: ANDREW BENNIE



The fourth speaker, Andrew Bennie, identified further entry points. His first entry point looked at the opportunities at a policy level and with policymakers. He spoke about the need to develop policies and programmes that promote farmers' rights in line with Article 9 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Further opportunities lie in reviving public investment in agroecology and farmer learning.

There are also entry points within the marketing and consumption side. Andrew stressed the importance of decentralised storage, packaging, and processing. In terms of creating demand amongst consumers, there is opportunity to increase consumers' valuing of agroecology. Local governance structures must also play a role by developing policies to support agroecology. One of his suggestions is for local governments to use zoning to restrict the distance between formal and informal/local markets.

Andrew recognised the challenges informal food systems and markets face, especially with the competition from import markets. These challenges only intensified during COVID-19.



Main questions raised in the panel discussion:

- ◆ To what extent is the current market driving agroecology practices?
- ◆ To what extent is agroecology related to deforestation and environmental degradation?
- ◆ How do we engage with policymaking and ways to invest, mobilise and strengthen policies around agroecology markets?

PRESENTATION OF DAY 2 SYNTHESIS:

Moderator: John Wilson & AFSA members

John briefly mentioned that Million would present suggestions on the way forward based on the group discussions from Day 1 and 2 of the conference.

Million first spoke about how the narrative of market-led agriculture has created challenges such as the erosion of diversity in food crops. With these challenges in mind, AFSA proposes territorial markets as an alternative pathway. Million reminded participants that AFSA is an advocacy and not an implementing group so recommendations must suit their objectives. Million handed over to Mamadou to review the concept of territorial markets. Once again, Mamadou outlined the different types of markets (e.g. global, local, regional, territorial, etc.) before defining territorial markets and their characteristics. Territorial markets are:

“diversified markets, through which most food consumed around the world passes, which can operate on a local, cross-border or regional scale, in rural, peri-urban, or urban, or all these contexts; and they are directly related to local national, or regional food systems, since this food is produced, processed, and marketed within these systems”.

Mamadou stressed that the concept of territorial markets has replaced the idea of local markets. Unlike local markets, territorial markets can describe local, national or regional ones. Further characteristics of territorial markets include being formal or informal, rooted in the territory, and occupying different scales.

Mamadou handed back to Million to present AFSA's way forward. He highlighted that their overall recommendation is to advocate for territorial markets with several points under research, advocacy, mobilisation, and educational efforts for territorial markets.

DISCUSSION SESSION 3: THE WAY FORWARD

John divided participants into groups in the same way as Day 1 and 2 of the conference. This time groups had to brainstorm how AFSA should work and identify any additional points within each of the four areas. Delegates received 50 minutes to discuss their thoughts before returning to the plenary room.

Moderator: Dr Million Belay

When groups returned to the plenary room, they had an opportunity to share ideas from their group's discussion. Million facilitated the session, asking for input under or in addition to the four key areas.

THE OVERARCHING ROLE OF AFSA: AN ADDITIONAL CATEGORY

One group pointed out that AFSA is a network of networks. AFSA can play an overarching role by coordinating, connecting, and joining the various networks within the agroecology space. Million agreed that this is an additional category and the importance of partnerships, as another group added.

RESEARCH AREAS

- ◆ Developing a more detailed understanding of territorial markets in Africa;
- ◆ Why these markets are not recognized and what to do about it?
- ◆ How do we support value addition?
- ◆ How do we improve food traceability?
- ◆ Consumers' perception of territorial markets;
- ◆ The mechanisms used to certify the quality and traceability of products available in territorial markets;
- ◆ The economic role of territorial markets;
- ◆ How cooperatives and peasant farmers can play a role;
- ◆ Food waste issues specifically how to reduce wastage, how agritourism can be positioned to reduced food waste and consumer food waste;
- ◆ What markets have agroecology products and identifying what is working already;
- ◆ Understanding the value of selling agroecological products for informal traders;
- ◆ Consumer trends;
- ◆ Understanding of the African continental free trade agreement and how it will impact territorial markets;
- ◆ The gender aspects concerning value addition;
- ◆ Who benefits from markets;
- ◆ Funding for research;
- ◆ Establishing cooperatives for markets;
- ◆ Using participatory action research as a method for conducting research.



MOBILISATION

- ◆ Encouraging African social movements to incorporate advocacy on territorial markets into their agendas;
- ◆ Mobilising local farmers and consumers to pressure governments to support agroecology;
- ◆ Support from political decision-makers towards agroecology;
- ◆ Stores having shelves for agroecological produce;
- ◆ Mapping to identify actors and see what's happening in different contexts and markets.



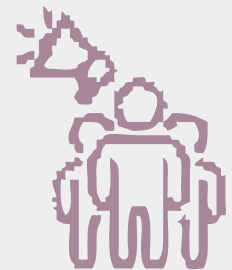


ADVOCACY

- ◆ Local governments recognizing and investing in the structure and management of small markets;

Protecting traders and consumers' rights;

- ◆ Investment in infrastructure, including buildings and storage facilities;
- ◆ Introduction of PGS for agroecological products;
- ◆ Public procurement.
- ◆ Attracting more youth to champion agroecology;
- ◆ The importance of ownership by producers themselves;
- ◆ The importance of cooperatives and the traditional role of extension offices;
- ◆ The importance of protecting local produce from imported goods;
- ◆ Transparency and accountability;
- ◆ Investing in more appropriate technology and market infrastructure;
- ◆ Policy recognition of agroecology;
- ◆ Peasant rights with the un declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas;
- ◆ Placing smallholder farmers at the centre of markets;
- ◆ Ensuring more responsibility among the private sector and development banks to shift their investments to agroecology.



EDUCATION

- ◆ Consumer education on the value of eating healthy and nutritious food;
- ◆ Educating traders on sanitation and preserving food items.
- ◆ Extension officers as key players;
- ◆ Increasing awareness of the economic dimension of local markets;
- ◆ Agroecology through formal and non-formal agroecology programmes or qualifications;
- ◆ The cultural importance of food;
- ◆ Embedding agroecology education within conventional markets to educate consumers;
- ◆ Increasing consumer/citizens' awareness of the environmental and health benefits of agroecology through agroecology hubs;
- ◆ Increasing understanding and knowledge of agroecology among children.



OFFICIAL THANKS AND CLOSING CEREMONY:

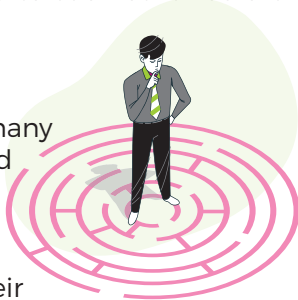
As the conference ended, Million thanked participants for their contributions. He also made a few announcements about an AFSA food policy event on 17 November, AFSA's work with journalists to produce a book on local markets, and invited delegates to complete the feedback form. AFSA Board Member, Fidele Houssou, thanked everyone for their participation and encouraged them to take the discussions with them and implement the ideas in their contexts. As the conference ended, delegates left very positive responses in the chatbox. Many remarked that the conference was well organised, provocative and inspiring, and several others thanked AFSA and all those involved. Gertrude officially ended the conference by handing over to Njairu to perform a final song, as participants turned their cameras on and waved to each other before signing off.

REFLECTIONS

Over the three days, many delegates expressed their gratitude and appreciation to AFSA for a well-organised conference. Their sentiments suggest the conference was a positive and stimulating experience for them, despite its virtual nature. The creative elements such as the series of food celebrations, mysticas, poems, singing and storytelling went a long way to bring connection and unity amongst delegates, despite their distance.

The programme contained excellent speakers who shared their expertise, were well-prepared, and provoked significant 'food for thought'. The transition between different segments of the programme and speakers was seamless – thanks to the hard work and efforts of the technical team behind the scenes. Facilitators such as Gertrude, John and many others played a vital role in making sure the programme and speakers stuck to the schedule.

Group discussions were another strong feature of the conference. These sessions enabled delegates to engage with each other and have stimulating conversations on their responses to the questions posed each day. Participants chose between moving into French or English language groups, which allowed them to participate in their preferred language of choice. Many important points emerged from these discussions, with several key themes apparent across the three days. These themes included the need to improve market infrastructure and facilities, consumer awareness of healthy food, and the need for better policies and regulations to drive change. African market mosaics became a term used to describe markets' diversity in produce, actors, and size.



THE WAY FORWARD

The final day of the event identified territorial markets as an alternative pathway to pursue agroecology. As a network of networks, AFSA must play an overarching role by coordinating, connecting, and joining the diverse networks within the agroecology space to advance this agenda. The way forward will focus on the points raised in discussions for research, advocacy, mobilisation, and education.

Research:

Among others, future research efforts need to explore the reasons behind the lack of recognition for African markets, how to improve value addition and food traceability, as well as investigating systems for certifying the quality of products available in territorial markets.

Advocacy

A strong advocacy agenda is essential to advance the lessons gleaned from the conference. Groups identified numerous areas to focus advocacy efforts on, namely increasing the recognition and investment in territorial markets from government and development groups. Advocacy campaigns can also highlight the value of public procurement as a developmental tool that can further the agroecology agenda, the importance of youth voices, and emphasise the need to protect traders and consumers' rights.

Mobilisation

Shaping African markets for agroecology will depend upon support from a diverse group of actors, ranging from decisions makers to consumers, African social movements, and farmers. Mobilising these groups into a coordinated effort is key.

Education

Education is essential to improve consumer awareness of healthy and nutritious food produced through agroecological methods, but also their awareness of the environmental and health benefits of agroecology. A passion and understanding for agroecology must also be cultivated among Africa's youth!

