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ARTICLE

Mulching for Sustainable Agriculture

NOTRE CHRONIQUE

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NOVEMBER 2023





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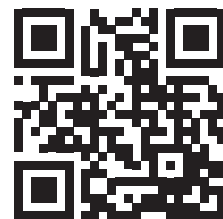
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Agribusiness in Today's Age: Navigating Opportunities and Challenges

By Prince Opoku Dogbey

In the contemporary agricultural landscape, agribusiness has evolved into a dynamic and multi-faceted sector, extending far beyond traditional farming practices. Today, agribusiness encompasses a wide array of activities, including production, processing, distribution, and marketing. Understanding and navigating the complexities of agribusiness in today's age are crucial for farmers and entrepreneurs alike.

One key aspect of modern agribusiness is its integration with technology. From farm management software to supply chain analytics, technology plays a pivotal role in optimizing various processes within the agribusiness value chain. This not only enhances efficiency but also opens new avenues for reaching global markets and meeting the demands of an increasingly connected world.

Globalization has significantly impacted agribusiness, presenting both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, it allows for broader market access, enabling farmers and agribusinesses to reach consumers around the world. On the other hand, increased competition and the need to comply with international standards pose challenges that require strategic planning and adaptability.

The role of agribusiness in rural development cannot be overstated. By creating value-added products, agribusinesses contribute to job creation and economic growth in rural areas. The development of strong agribusiness networks also fosters collaboration among farmers, processors, and distributors, creating a more resilient and interconnected agricultural community.

In conclusion, agribusiness in today's age is a dynamic and ever-evolving field that requires a comprehensive understanding of market trends, technological advancements, and global dynamics. Embracing innovation and adopting a strategic approach are essential for navigating the opportunities and challenges that define the modern agribusiness landscape.



Zucchini

By Chelsea Nkuah

Origin

Zucchini, scientifically known as Cucurbita pepo, belongs to the gourd family and is believed to have originated in Central America. It is a warm-season vegetable that thrives in temperate climates. Over the centuries, zucchini has become a popular and versatile ingredient in various cuisines worldwide.

Description

Zucchini, also known as courgette in some regions, is a summer squash with a mild flavor and tender texture. The plant features large, dark green, and glossy leaves with long, cylindrical fruits that vary in color, including shades of green, yellow, and even orange. The skin is generally tender and edible, while the inner flesh is creamy white with small, edible seeds. Zucchini plants produce both male and female flowers, with the female flowers typically developing the fruit.

Health Benefits

1. Rich in Nutrients:

Zucchini is a low-calorie vegetable packed with essential nutrients, including vitamins A and C, potassium, folate, and fiber. These nutrients contribute to overall health and support various bodily functions, such as immune system function and heart health.

2. Weight Management:

With its high water content and dietary fiber, zucchini is an excellent choice for those aiming to manage or lose weight. The fiber content promotes a feeling of fullness, reducing overall calorie intake and aiding in weight management.

Incorporating zucchini into a balanced diet provides not only delicious flavors but also a range of health benefits. From supporting weight management to providing essential nutrients, this versatile vegetable adds nutritional value to a variety of dishes.

3. Antioxidant Properties:

Zucchini contains antioxidants, including carotenoids and lutein, which play a role in protecting the body from oxidative stress. These antioxidants contribute to eye health, skin health, and may help reduce the risk of chronic diseases.



Ghana gets backing from EU counterparts to boost economy

By Prince Opoku Dogbey

Ghana has secured support from its European Union (EU) counterparts to enhance the country's economic development through manufacturing expertise, technology, and trade.

The EU's collective decision to enhance and expand Ghana's economy came to light at the sixth International Trade Show and Conference in Accra, under the theme "Export Procedures and Opportunities in the European Union (EU) Market."

The event was aimed at building formidable relationships between Ghana and the EU through providing technological and manufacturing expertise on how to improve the Ghanaian economy in critical sectors like agriculture, food processing, goods manufacturing, and technology.

Speaking to the press, Ambassador of Italy to Ghana, Daniela d'Orlandi, highlighted the potential for Italian technology to transform Ghana's abundant natural resources and raw materials into value-added products for the export market.

She said Ghana has numerous natural resources but is not doing so well when it comes to manufacturing to transform its resources to add value to them for the export market.

"We believe that the economy could benefit from the Italian technology expertise to transform its natural resources and raw materials and create added value here, so we have Italian companies here that are leading in the sectors of manufacturing, equipment, and capital goods," she said.



The Ambassador, however, disclosed that some Ghanaian delegates have been sent to Italy as part of the international trade show to acquire practical skills from Italian companies in the manufacturing sector, including agroprocessing, plastic recycling, and product manufacturing.

She expressed optimism that the training in Italy would contribute to Ghana's economic growth, increase foreign earnings, and boost bilateral trade.

Touching on areas where she would like to see improvement in Ghana in the next few years, she mentioned agriculture, manufacturing, processing, technology, and trade in capital goods.

For Ghana, Chief Executive Officer of the Chamber of Agribusiness Ghana, Anthony Morrison, was optimistic that the support from the European Union will facilitate trade between Ghana and the EU market.

This marks a significant 5.6 percent increase compared to the previous year, according to data released on Monday.

Root and tuber crops took the lead in production, accounting for nearly 13 million tons, constituting over 52 percent of the overall output. Following closely were fruits, contributing around 6 million tons, trailed by cereals at approximately 3.2 million tons. Horticultural crops made up about 2 million tons, while leguminous and oilseed crops added roughly 622,000 tons to the impressive total.

Cereals covered a substantial 53 percent of Angola's total sown area of 5.97 million hectares, with maize standing out as the primary contributor, accounting for 97 percent of this category's production and yielding an impressive 1,185 kg per hectare. Root and tuber crops occupied about 22 percent of the total sown area, with cassava being the primary crop in this category.

The Minister of Agriculture and Forests in Angola addressed the media in a press conference held in the capital, Luanda, on Monday. The minister announced that the agricultural sector's contribution to Angola's gross domestic product saw a notable rise to 6.29 percent in 2022, marking an increase of 0.09 percentage points from the previous year.

However, concerns were raised about the need for sustained growth, with the ministry stating, "If we do not achieve a minimum annual growth of 6 percent, attaining food security will be unfeasible," considering Angola's average population growth rate of 3.1 percent per year.



Angola's Agric Production Reaches 24.8 million tons in 2022

By Prince Opoku Dogbey

Angola's Ministry of Agriculture and Forests has reported a notable surge in the country's agricultural production for the year 2022, reaching approximately 24.8 million tons.



Highlighting the economic aspect, it was revealed that between 2018 and 2022, Angola spent a substantial total of 11.94 trillion U.S. dollars on food imports.

The ministry emphasized the significance of family farming in Angola's agricultural landscape, revealing that it represents 91.5 percent of the total sown area and 82.5 percent of the country's overall production. On average, each family cultivates 2.17 hectares, primarily utilizing manual methods without animal traction or machinery. However, the ministry noted that only a small proportion of family cultivators use fertilizers and pesticides in their agricultural practices.

CHINA'S FARM PRODUCE WHOLESALE PRICES SHOW MIXED TRENDS

By Prince Opoku Dogbey

Wholesale prices of major farm produce in China experienced varied trends during the week from November 10 to 16, as reported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

The wholesale price index of China's major agricultural products registered at 115.94, marking an increase of 0.73 points from the previous week but reflecting a 10.3-point decrease compared to the same period last year, according to the ministry's data.

Notably, the average wholesale price for pork, a staple meat in China, saw a 1.1 percent weekly decline, settling at

20.31 yuan (2.84 U.S. dollars) per kilo. However, this still represented a significant drop of 41.8 percent year on year.

Similarly, the price for eggs experienced a 1.5 percent dip on a weekly basis, reaching 9.99 yuan per kilo. Compared to the previous year, this indicated a notable decline of 20 percent.

Contrastingly, the average wholesale price of 19 vegetables tracked by the government witnessed an 8.9 percent year-on-year decrease, settling at 3.5 yuan per kilo. In contrast, the price for six key fruits climbed by 4 percent, reaching 6.81 yuan per kilo.

These fluctuations in wholesale prices suggest a complex market dynamic, with some products experiencing declines while others see increases. Understanding these trends is crucial for stakeholders in the agricultural sector to navigate market conditions effectively.





Climate-Smart Approaches: Navigating Agriculture's Resilience Path

By Prince Kudowor

In the face of climate change, adopting climate-smart approaches in agriculture has become imperative for fostering resilience and ensuring sustainable food production. This proactive strategy involves implementing practices that not only mitigate the impact of climate change but also enhance agricultural productivity and environmental conservation.

One key aspect of climate-smart agriculture is the development and cultivation of drought-resistant and climate-resilient crops. These crops are specifically bred or engineered to withstand changing climatic conditions, ensuring a more stable yield even in the face of water scarcity. By incorporating such crops into farming practices, farmers can mitigate the risks associated with unpredictable precipitation patterns.

Precision agriculture technologies also play a crucial role in climate-smart approaches. By utilizing data-driven insights, farmers can optimize resource use, including water and fertilizers. This not only increases the efficiency of farming operations but also minimizes environmental impact, contributing to the overall sustainability of agriculture in the context of a changing climate.

Agroforestry is another climate-smart approach gaining prominence. Integrating trees into agricultural landscapes provides multiple benefits, including carbon sequestration, improved soil health, and enhanced biodiversity. Agroforestry practices contribute to climate change mitigation while simultaneously providing additional sources of income for farmers through timber, fruit, or nut production.

Furthermore, sustainable water management practices are integral to climate-smart agriculture. This involves efficient irrigation methods, rainwater harvesting, and water recycling, ensuring that agriculture remains resilient in the face of water scarcity or erratic precipitation patterns.

In conclusion, climate-smart approaches in agriculture are vital for building resilience against the impacts of climate change. By embracing practices such as cultivating resilient crops, adopting precision agriculture technologies, integrating agroforestry, and implementing sustainable water management, farmers can navigate the challenges posed by a changing climate while contributing to the long-term sustainability of agriculture.



Smart Irrigation Systems: Precision and Efficiency

By Nana Ama Oforiwaa Antwi

In the face of growing global concerns about water scarcity and the need for sustainable agricultural practices, smart irrigation systems have emerged as a transformative solution, revolutionizing the way crops are watered. These systems, driven by cutting-edge technology, bring precision and efficiency to irrigation, ensuring that water resources are utilized optimally while enhancing crop yields and minimizing environmental impact.

At the core of smart irrigation systems is the integration of sensors, data analytics, and automation. These systems leverage soil moisture sensors and weather data to precisely determine when and how much water crops need. By continuously monitoring the moisture levels in the soil, farmers can avoid both over-irrigation, which can lead to water wastage and nutrient runoff, and under-irrigation, which risks compromising crop health and yields.

One of the key advantages of smart irrigation is its ability to adapt to dynamic environmental conditions. Advanced weather forecasting and real-time data analysis allow these systems to automatically adjust irrigation schedules based on factors such as temperature, humidity, and precipitation forecasts. This level of adaptability ensures that crops receive the right amount of water at the right time, even in the face of changing weather patterns.

Furthermore, the implementation of smart irrigation contributes significantly to water conservation. By precisely tailoring irrigation to the specific needs of each crop and field, these systems reduce overall water consumption. This not only addresses the challenge of water scarcity but also aligns with sustainable farming practices, promoting responsible water management.

The automation aspect of smart irrigation systems adds a layer of convenience for farmers.

With the ability to remotely control and monitor irrigation through mobile applications or centralized platforms, farmers gain unprecedented control over their irrigation operations. This not only saves time but also allows for quick responses to emerging challenges, ensuring proactive management of water resources.

In conclusion, smart irrigation systems represent a pivotal advancement in modern agriculture, aligning the age-old practice of irrigation with the precision and efficiency demanded by contemporary challenges. As the global agricultural community strives to produce more with fewer resources, the adoption of smart irrigation stands as a beacon of sustainable and technologically-driven farming practices, ensuring a resilient and water-conscious future for agriculture.



The Essence of Organic Farming

By Keabena Baiden

Organic farming, a practice deeply rooted in the principles of sustainability and environmental stewardship, has gained widespread recognition for its holistic approach to agriculture. Going beyond the conventional methods that rely on synthetic inputs, organic farming prioritizes natural processes, biodiversity, and soil health to cultivate crops.



At the core of organic farming lies a commitment to eschew synthetic pesticides, herbicides, and genetically modified organisms. Instead, farmers harness the power of nature through crop rotation, companion planting, and the use of organic fertilizers. These practices not only nurture soil fertility but also foster a balanced ecosystem where beneficial insects and microorganisms thrive.

One hallmark of organic farming is the absence of synthetic chemicals, contributing to healthier produce and a reduced environmental impact. The emphasis on soil health, achieved through techniques like cover cropping and composting, enhances the soil's structure, water retention, and nutrient content.

Beyond the tangible benefits for the environment and consumers, organic farming also promotes fair and ethical practices. Many organic farms prioritize the well-being of farmworkers, community engagement, and the humane treatment of animals.

Consumers increasingly choose organic produce for its perceived health benefits and lower exposure to chemical residues. The demand for organically grown food has spurred a global movement towards sustainable agriculture, encouraging farmers to adopt methods that respect the intricate balance of nature.

While challenges exist, such as potential lower yields and the transition period to certified organic status, the organic farming movement continues to grow.

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Africa: Sustainable Methods in Agricultural Production

By Nana Ama Oforiwaa Antwi



Sustainability has become a focal point in modern agriculture, with a growing emphasis on practices that balance productivity with environmental stewardship. Sustainable methods in agricultural production prioritize long-term ecological health while meeting the demands of a growing global population. This article explores key aspects of sustainable agriculture and how these practices contribute to a more resilient and eco-friendly food system.

One fundamental element of sustainable agriculture is organic farming. By eschewing synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, organic farming promotes soil health and biodiversity. The emphasis on natural inputs not only reduces the environmental impact but also produces food that is free from chemical residues, meeting the increasing consumer demand for healthier and environmentally friendly options.

Agroecology, as another sustainable approach, emphasizes the integration of ecological principles into agricultural systems. This includes crop diversity, agroforestry, and natural pest control methods. Agroecological practices not only enhance resilience to pests and diseases but also contribute to the overall health of the agroecosystem.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a sustainable strategy that focuses on minimizing the use of chemical pesticides. IPM combines biological control methods, crop rotation, and targeted pesticide applications to manage pest populations effectively while reducing the negative impact on beneficial insects and the environment.

Cover cropping, a technique where specific crops are planted during non-growing seasons, helps prevent soil erosion, improves soil structure, and enhances fertility. This sustainable practice contributes to the overall health of the soil and reduces the need for synthetic inputs.

Furthermore, sustainable water management practices, such as drip irrigation and rainwater harvesting, play a crucial role in sustainable agriculture. Efficient water use not only conserves this precious resource but also ensures that crops receive adequate moisture, contributing to higher yields.

In conclusion, sustainable methods in agricultural production are integral to creating a resilient and environmentally conscious food system. By embracing organic farming, agroecology, integrated pest management, cover cropping, and efficient water management, farmers can cultivate a more sustainable future for agriculture, meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.





While many might consider strawberries to be berries, they don't meet the botanical definition of a berry. True berries, according to botanists, are fruits produced from a single ovary, and bananas fit this criteria.



FRUIT SALAD

Fruit salad is rich in essential vitamins such as vitamin C, potassium, and folate, as well as antioxidants that contribute to overall health.

The Agricultural Bounty of Ghana's Eastern Region

By Prince Opoku Dogbey

In the heartland of Ghana, the Eastern Region stands as a verdant testament to the nation's agricultural prowess. Blessed with vast arable lands and a rich tapestry of natural resources, this region has emerged as a powerhouse in the production of a diverse array of crops, playing a pivotal role in shaping the nation's food security and economic landscape.

Ghana, often hailed as the "breadbasket of West Africa," owes a considerable debt to the fertile lands of the Eastern Region. Encompassing districts such as Akwapim North, West Akim, and Kwahu South, this region has become the backbone of the nation's food production, cultivating a substantial portion of the crops that grace the tables of households across the country.

Abundant Harvests, Fertile Lands

The Eastern Region's agricultural canvas is painted with the vibrant hues of maize, cassava, yam, plantain, and a myriad of other crops. Its fertile soils and favorable climate create an ideal environment for the cultivation of a diverse range of staples, making it a crucial contributor to the nation's self-sufficiency in food production.

Maize, standing tall in the golden fields, is a staple crop that not only feeds local communities but also serves as a key ingredient in Ghana's traditional dishes. Cassava, yam, and plantain follow suit, their roots and fruits grounding the region's culinary identity and providing sustenance to a growing population.

Human Capital: The Driving Force Behind Agricultural Success:

The success story of the Eastern Region's agriculture sector is intricately woven with the dedication and hard work of its farmers. With a deep connection to the land and a profound understanding of traditional farming practices, these agricultural custodians form the backbone of the region's prosperity. Their unwavering commitment to sustainable and community-centric farming practices sets a commendable example for the entire nation.

Investment Opportunities: Tapping into the Agricultural Potential:

As the Eastern Region continues to play a pivotal role in Ghana's food production, it beckons to investors seeking opportunities in the agricultural sector. The region's agricultural potential is a gold mine waiting to be explored. From modernizing farming practices to introducing innovative technologies, there exists a vast spectrum of possibilities for those willing to invest in the future of Ghana's agriculture.

The Eastern Region's agricultural sector is not merely promising; it is a dynamic force with the capacity to drive economic growth, foster employment opportunities, and contribute significantly to the nation's GDP. For investors with a vision for sustainable agriculture and a commitment to community development, this region presents an ideal landscape for fruitful partnerships.





Hajia Habiba Yussif

Eastern Regional Director of Agriculture

Challenges and Opportunities: Navigating the Path Ahead

While the Eastern Region's agricultural sector flourishes, it is not without its challenges. Issues such as limited access to modern farming technologies, post-harvest losses, and the need for infrastructure development pose hurdles that, when addressed, can unlock even greater potential.

Investors, in collaboration with local communities and government initiatives, have the opportunity to transform challenges into opportunities. Introducing modern irrigation systems, implementing efficient storage and transportation solutions, and supporting agricultural education can propel the Eastern Region towards a future where its agricultural sector is not only productive but also sustainable and resilient.

In conclusion, the Eastern Region of Ghana stands as a beacon of agricultural abundance, where fertile lands and dedicated farmers converge to shape the nation's agricultural destiny. As the nation looks towards achieving food security and sustainable economic growth, the Eastern Region's agricultural sector beckons investors to join hands in cultivating prosperity that extends far beyond its lush fields—a prosperity that nourishes communities, fosters innovation, and paves the way for a vibrant and sustainable future.

Zucchini Salad

By Nana Ama Oforiwaa Antwi

Zucchini salad offers a delightful way to embrace the freshness of summer vegetables.

Ingredients

- 2 medium-sized zucchinis
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup feta cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 cup fresh basil leaves, torn
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste

Procedure

1. Wash the zucchinis thoroughly and trim the ends. Using a vegetable peeler or a mandoline, slice the zucchinis into thin ribbons.
2. In a large salad bowl, arrange the zucchini ribbons as the base. Add the halved cherry tomatoes and thinly sliced red onion.
3. Sprinkle the crumbled feta cheese over the salad for a creamy and savory touch. Tear fresh basil leaves and scatter them across the salad to infuse a burst of herbal aroma.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together the extra-virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Using salad tongs or your hands, gently toss the ingredients to combine. Be careful not to bruise the zucchini ribbons; a delicate touch ensures the salad retains its crispness.
5. For optimal flavor, refrigerate the zucchini salad for at least 30 minutes before serving.



Identifying Agribusiness Prospects in Agriculture

By Nana Ama Oforiwaa Antwi

Identifying and capitalizing on agribusiness opportunities is a pivotal aspect of sustainable agricultural development. This involves a strategic analysis of market trends, consumer demands, and emerging technologies. Farmers and entrepreneurs who can recognize and harness these opportunities contribute not only to their own success but also to the overall growth and resilience of the agricultural sector.

One significant avenue for agribusiness growth is the increasing demand for sustainable and locally sourced products. Consumers are becoming more conscious of their food choices, seeking products with transparent supply chains and environmentally friendly practices. Agribusinesses that align with these values and emphasize sustainability are well-positioned to meet this growing market demand.

Diversification of products is another key strategy for agribusiness success. Exploring value-added products, such as processed foods, niche crops, or specialty goods, can open new revenue streams and differentiate businesses in competitive markets. Agribusiness entrepreneurs must stay



attuned to consumer preferences and emerging trends to identify the most promising areas for diversification.

The integration of e-commerce and digital platforms presents unprecedented opportunities for agribusinesses to reach wider audiences. Online marketplaces and direct-to-consumer sales models empower farmers and producers to connect directly with consumers, reducing reliance on traditional distribution channels and increasing profit margins.

Collaboration and partnerships are essential in identifying and pursuing agribusiness opportunities. Networking with other businesses, industry experts, and research institutions can provide valuable insights and open doors to new ventures. Successful agribusiness leaders understand the importance of building a robust network to stay informed about industry developments and potential collaborations.

In conclusion, identifying agribusiness opportunities requires a proactive and strategic approach. By staying abreast of market trends, embracing sustainability, diversifying products, leveraging digital platforms, and fostering collaborations, farmers and entrepreneurs can position themselves to thrive in a rapidly evolving agricultural landscape.

In the Fields of Green

In the fields of green where crops sway,
A symphony of growth begins to play.
A dance of seasons, a timeless art,
Nature's canvas, a masterpiece from the start.

Beneath the sun's warm, golden embrace,
Seeds awaken in the sacred space.
Tender shoots reach for the sky,
A promise of harvest, oh, how time flies.

The farmer, a steward, in toil and sweat,
Tending the land, a duty met.
With calloused hands and hopeful eyes,
A connection to earth that never lies.

Rows of green, a quilted land,
Planted with purpose, by a caring hand.
From sunrise to dusk, a tireless chore,
Nurturing life, forevermore.

The raindrops fall, a rhythmic song,
Nature's lullaby all season long.
Each drop a kiss, a blessing sweet,
On fields where tireless labors meet.

— Poem by Prince Opoku Dogbey



Technology's Role in Revolutionizing Agriculture

By Nana Ama Oforiwaa Antwi

In the ever-evolving landscape of agriculture, technology stands out as a driving force, ushering in a new era of efficiency, precision, and sustainability. Farmers across the globe are embracing a suite of innovative tools and technologies that are reshaping traditional farming practices.

Precision agriculture is a prime example of technology's transformative impact. This approach utilizes GPS, sensors, and data analytics to optimize various aspects of farming, from planting and irrigation to pest control. Farmers can now precisely tailor inputs such as water, fertilizers, and pesticides, minimizing waste and maximizing yields. The result is not only increased productivity but also resource conservation and cost-effectiveness.

Automated machinery is another technological advancement streamlining agricultural processes. Tractors equipped with GPS-guided systems can perform tasks with remarkable accuracy, reducing overlap and minimizing fuel consumption. Drones, with their aerial capabilities, provide real-time data on crop health and field conditions, enabling farmers to make informed decisions swiftly.

Data-driven decision-making is at the core of technology's influence on agriculture. Farmers can analyze vast amounts of information, ranging from weather patterns to soil health, to make strategic choices that optimize their operations. This data-centric approach not only enhances productivity but also contributes to sustainability by minimizing environmental impact.

As technology continues to advance, the Internet of Things (IoT) is becoming increasingly integrated into agriculture. Smart sensors and devices monitor conditions in real-time, allowing for proactive management of resources. This connectivity enhances efficiency, reduces waste, and contributes to more sustainable farming practices.

In conclusion, technology is revolutionizing agriculture, offering solutions to age-old challenges and paving the way for a more sustainable and productive future. Embracing these innovations is not merely an option but a necessity as agriculture strives to meet the demands of a growing global population while minimizing its environmental footprint.



Cover Cropping

By Kwabena Baiden

Cover cropping is a sustainable agricultural technique that has gained significant traction in recent years due to its positive impact on soil health and overall sustainability. This practice involves strategically planting cover crops during periods when the main cash crop is not actively growing. The cover crops, typically legumes or grasses, serve as a protective blanket for the soil, offering a range of benefits.

One primary advantage of cover cropping is erosion control. By covering the soil surface, these crops shield it from the impact of heavy rainfall, reducing the risk of soil erosion. Additionally, the roots of cover crops help bind the soil together, enhancing its structure and stability. This contributes to improved water retention and prevents nutrient runoff, ultimately benefiting the health of nearby water bodies.

Another crucial aspect of cover cropping is its positive impact on soil fertility. Certain cover crops, like legumes, have the ability to fix nitrogen from the atmosphere into the soil. This natural process enriches the soil with essential nutrients, promoting the growth of subsequent cash crops. In turn, farmers can potentially reduce their reliance on synthetic fertilizers, leading to cost savings and decreased environmental impact.

Furthermore, cover cropping enhances biodiversity on the farm. The diverse plant species attract a variety of beneficial insects and microorganisms, creating a more balanced and resilient ecosystem. This can contribute to natural pest control and reduce the need for chemical interventions.

In conclusion, cover cropping is a multifaceted approach that goes beyond protecting the soil. It nurtures soil health, mitigates environmental impact, and fosters sustainable agriculture. As farmers increasingly recognize these advantages, the adoption of cover cropping is expected to continue growing, promoting a more resilient and sustainable future for agriculture.

Mulching for Sustainable Agriculture

By Enock Asune

Mulching stands out as a versatile and sustainable technique that offers a myriad of benefits to farmers. By covering the soil with a protective layer of organic or inorganic materials, such as straw, wood chips, or plastic, farmers can create a range of positive effects on their crops and overall agricultural practices.

Mulching acts as a natural insulator, regulating soil temperature and protecting plant roots from extreme heat or cold. This temperature control helps optimize conditions for plant growth throughout the seasons.

Moreover, the protective barrier created by mulch helps suppress weed growth by blocking sunlight and inhibiting weed germination. This not only reduces the competition for nutrients but also lessens the need for herbicides.

In addition to weed suppression, mulching retains soil moisture by minimizing water evaporation. Conserving moisture in the soil is particularly crucial during dry periods, aiding in drought resilience and promoting water efficiency.

Furthermore, as organic mulches decompose, they contribute organic matter to the soil, enhancing its structure, fertility, and microbial activity. This boost in soil health translates to improved nutrient availability for plants.

Embracing mulching as a farming practice aligns with sustainable agriculture principles, offering a holistic approach that benefits both crops and the environment. Whether through water conservation, weed suppression, or soil enrichment, mulching stands as an accessible and effective tool for modern farmers seeking resilient and eco-friendly farming solutions.



La Numérisation de l'Agriculture à Madagascar : Airtel Dévoile la Plateforme Avaya pour une Transformation Digitale Agricole

Par Yosua Domedjui

Sous la direction de Heritiana Randrianarison, directeur général par intérim d'Airtel Madagascar, l'équipe est actuellement à Toamasina pour présenter la plateforme aux participants et présenter le projet de "numérisation de l'agriculture via la plateforme Avaya" aux propriétaires d'entreprises locales.

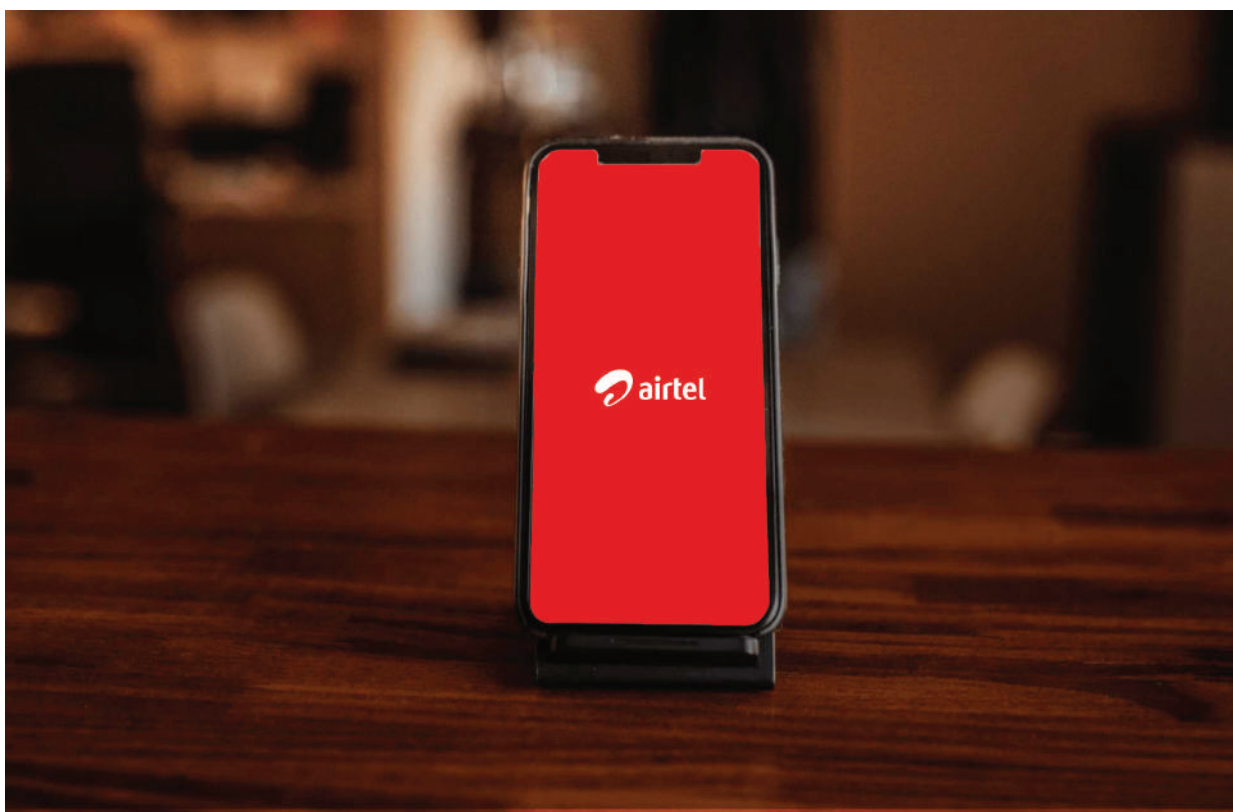
« Afin d'accroître l'efficacité, la productivité et la durabilité, ce programme s'appuie sur l'intégration des technologies de l'information et de la communication (TIC) dans le secteur agricole. Selon Heritiana Randrianarison, "cette transformation numérique offre de nombreuses opportunités pour relever les défis croissants auxquels l'agriculture est confrontée, optimiser les processus et moderniser les pratiques agricoles. »

Plus précisément, Airtel Madagascar fournira au projet un accès à la plateforme numérique d'Avaya. Il s'agit d'un instrument essentiel pour permettre aux différentes parties prenantes de partager des ressources, des conseils et des informations entre elles.

Santatriniana Randriamanana, directeur des comptes d'entreprise, a dé-

claré : « Il s'agit d'une plateforme de collaboration en ligne grâce à laquelle les agriculteurs et les acheteurs pourront être informés en temps réel des perspectives de récolte et certifier que la production est biologique et répond aux critères requis. »

Sous l'égide du ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage (Minae), un accord a été signé le 28 octobre par Airtel Madagascar, l'ONG Adid, la Chambre de commerce et d'industrie d'Antananarivo (CCIA) et Fivmpama.



Signature d'un Accord Historique de 2 Milliards de Dollars en faveur de la production agricole

Par Yosua Domedjui

L'agriculture représente plus de 25 % du PIB de l'Afrique. Le secteur offre plus de chances que tout autre segment de l'économie d'accroître les échanges dans le cadre de la zone de libre-échange continentale.

Les gouvernements du Tchad, du Malawi, du Zimbabwe et de l'Égypte, ainsi que l'opérateur du parc industriel panafricain Arise Integrated Industrial Platforms (Arise IIP), ont signé un accord de financement avec la Banque africaine d'import-export (Afreximbank) le 14 novembre au Caire. L'accord a été signé en marge de la Foire commerciale intra-africaine (IATF 2023), qui s'est tenu du 9 au 15 novembre.

L'accord comprend un soutien financier au programme Export Agriculture for Food Security (EXAFS) de 2 milliards de dollars. L'objectif de ce projet est d'augmenter la production et la transformation des produits agricoles, ainsi que le commerce intra-africain.

Avec 281 millions de personnes, soit plus de 20 % de la population africaine, qui devraient être sous-alimentées en 2022, l'EXAFS cherche à lutter contre l'insécurité alimentaire en contribuant à accroître la disponibilité des aliments de base et à augmenter les revenus des agriculteurs.

Pour atteindre cet objectif, le programme prévoit la création de centres de transformation agricole (CTA) gérés par des partenariats public-privé. Ces centres disposeront d'installations pour la collecte, la classification, le stockage, le transport, la transformation et la distribution des produits agricoles. En outre, ils offriront des services liés à l'agriculture tels que l'entreposage frigorifique, la formation, la vulgarisation et la microfinance.

« Afreximbank joue le rôle de financier, de conseiller et de facilitateur. Les gouvernements des pays cibles fourniront les cadres stratégiques et l'environnement

favorable aux CTA, qui attireront un large éventail d'investisseurs, des sociétés de semences aux institutions financières et aux grandes exploitations agricoles commerciales », selon un communiqué de presse. Elle sera le fer de lance de la mise en œuvre des activités de partenariat.

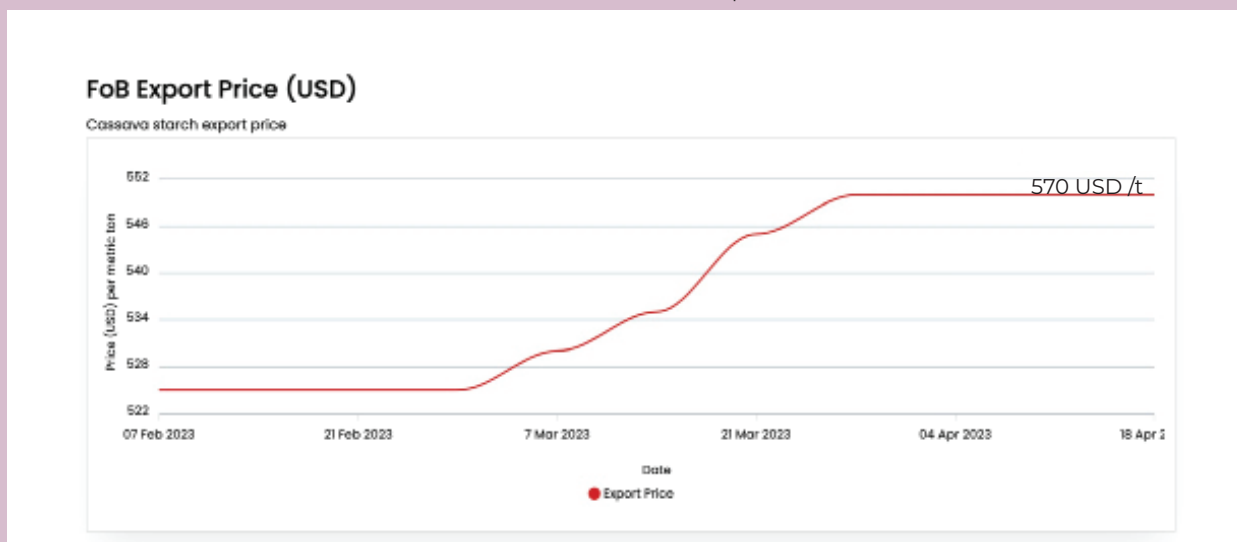
Quelques jours seulement se sont écoulés depuis qu'Afreximbank a fait une autre déclaration importante en faveur de l'industrie agricole africaine. En novembre, à Marrakech, au Maroc, lors des Journées des marchés du Forum africain de l'investissement (FAI), la BAD a annoncé que 3 milliards de dollars seraient investis pour améliorer la production alimentaire en Afrique par le biais de sa nouvelle Alliance pour les zones spéciales de transformation agro-industrielle.



Market Analysis of Cassava Starch In Thailand

The market prices of cassava starch have reduced slightly over the last month. The price ranges from 500-550 US dollars/ton (3,627.80 yuan /ton). This week, the market price of cassava starch in Thailand's tapioca starch quotation is FOB (Bangkok) 495 US dollars/ton (3,788.46 yuan/ton). The starch prices in the domestic cassava starch market are stable. In Thailand, the raw material supply of fresh cassava is stable. The average starch leavening of cassava starch is between 24-28 percent. Thailand is relatively stable, the open factories remain high, and the starch output continues to increase. The speed of cassava starch clearance is still low, and the quotations of traders are slightly confused.

● Thailand Cassava Starch price



Price Factors

Quality of cassava root: Factory owners demand cassava with high starch content for production. Higher starch content would receive a higher price than the lower one. The price WWW offered by the collector is dependent on the quality of the cassava root, specifically, the starch content.

Cost of Labour: Total labour cost including farm labour for the cultivation and harvesting of cassava. The cost of labour during the harvesting period is high as compared to cultivation therefore the cost of harvesting directly affects pricing.

Harvest Yield: There is a high correlation between harvest yield and the price of cassava. The price of cassava is lower when there is a low yield. The lowest prices in June and July can be explained in a similar way but the opposite end. It is noted that the abundance of cassava roots drives the prices down.

Handling and Logistics: The storage and shipping costs from producing areas to importing countries are great determinants of cassava prices. When the shipping and transportation cost of cassava to consumers and industries are high, it affects the retail price of cassava. Cassava farmers bring their harvest to the collectors, where they are responsible for absorbing the cost of transportation from farm to collecting fields.

Harvesting time: The harvesting period is a great determinant for the price of cassava. The abundance and scarcity of cassava affect the price. The prices of fresh cassava roots often rise in November and December of every year as cassava is easily harvested during the rainy season. During the harvesting season, the prices are relatively high due to the limited supply.



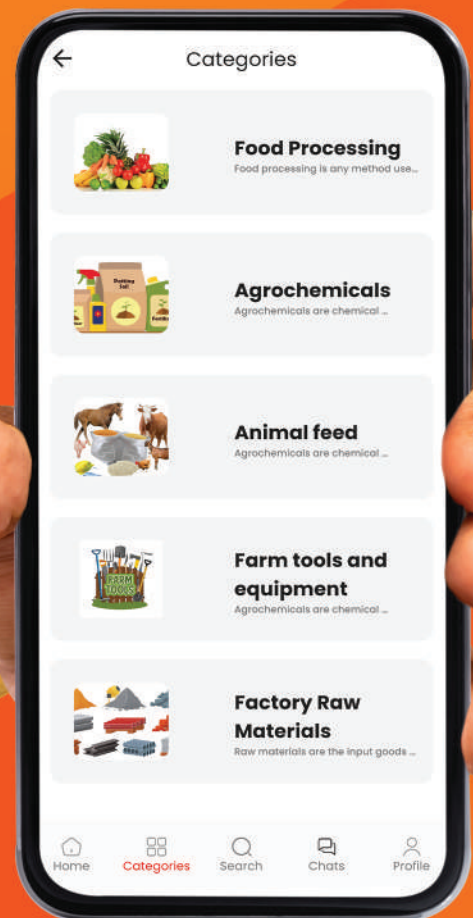
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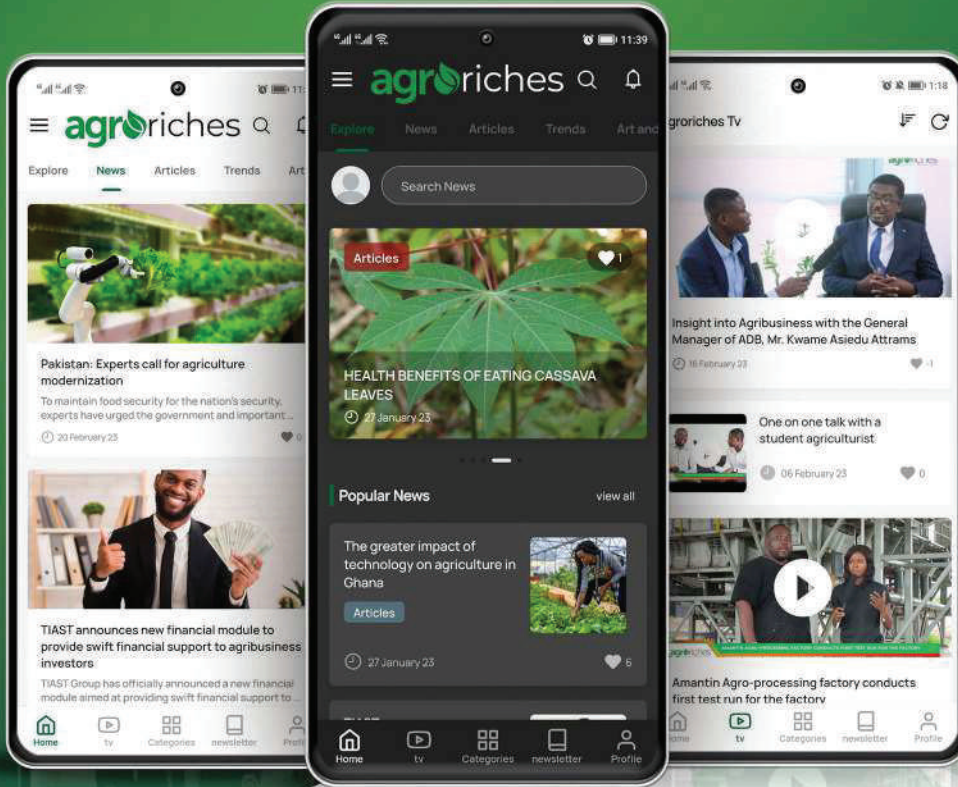
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