



# F@RMLETTER

THE E-MAGAZINE OF THE WORLD'S FARMERS

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**Akira Banzai**

President of JA Zenchu,  
Japan

## Japan 2013

The WFO 2nd General Assembly successfully took place in Rome in June. The General Assembly decided to hold the next one in Japan in 2012. It is a great honor for us to host the WFO 3rd General Assembly as an Asian country.

With a population of over 4 billion, approximately 60% of world population, Asia has remarkably strong potential for future development. Meanwhile, it is challenged by diverse problems such as a sizable number of people suffering from starvation and frequent natural disasters.

Japan is no exception. In fact, the Great East Japan Earthquake and the following huge tsunami inflicted heavy damage to agriculture and coupled with the nuclear accident and spread of harmful reports on agricultural products. But despite the adverse circumstances, agriculture in Japan has gradually recovered and has been reconstructed through the tireless efforts by Japanese farmers and our supporters to ensure safety and security of food.

Since those efforts are being encouraged by the kind assistance from the entire world, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your thoughtful support.

Taking the above into consideration, we expect to share the experience of Asian countries and actively discuss how to address the challenges such as hunger and food security in emergency situa-

tions at the 3rd General Assembly in Japan.

Besides, JA Zenchu has continuously discussed various issues regarding agriculture with many Asian agricultural organizations and cooperatives.

As the host country of the next General Assembly, we will do our best to ensure participation from farmers' organizations from all over the world, as well as various International Organizations.

In cooperation with Mr. Carlson, President of WFO, and the other board members, we will organize the next General Assembly with a focus on solving various challenges in the field of food / agriculture such as food security, hunger, climate change, and also contribute to the further development of WFO. We will welcome you in collaboration with the other WFO members in Japan, namely National Chamber of Agriculture and National Council of Farm Policy Organizations.

We sincerely look forward to meeting you in Japan!



# WORLD'S FARMERS' ORGANISATION

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# Rome 2012

**Marco Marzano de Marinis,**  
Executive Director, WFO

From June 6 to 9, 2012 the World Farmers Organisation hosted in Rome its General Assembly.

Some three hundred participants attended the annual get together: representing 60 international delegations including Farmers Organisations, International Organisations such as FAO, WFP, IFAD, WMO, ICTSD; as well as Ministers, policy makers and representatives of Universities and Research Centers.

and partnership among WFO's members and agriculture related organizations; building an Interactive platform for sharing experiences and strengthening cooperation.

During the GA, delegates adopted policies on a variety of issues critical to agriculture such as food chain; food Security and climate change. The substance of these policies may be summarized as follows:

in dietary habits and decreasing availability of arable land and water. To continue to feed the world a substantial increase in investments into agriculture is imperative and the income of farmers need to be secured.

### Climate change

Climate change is today among the world's greatest challenges. According to the UN,



The meeting was opened by the President of the Italian Republic, H.E. Giorgio Napolitano who reiterated the relevance of Agriculture and especially farmers as critical players in the fight to end hunger, malnutrition and for assuring food security. The Leaders of the Rome UN based Agencies (FAO, IFAD and WFP) also attended the opening reaffirming the role of farmers as crucial partners for the success of their activities and projects.

The objective of the meeting was to provide an opportunity to discuss WFO's statutory issues; as well as offer the possibility to farmers associations to discuss and share experiences in key agriculture related issues (trade, food security, climate change and education); sharing experiences on awareness raising programs, outreach activities, special programs, services, products; collecting best practices and case studies; stimulating cooperation

### Food chain

Farmers face substantial constraints in the food chain as few large firms dominate both the purchase and the distribution of food products. This has led to the reduction of opportunities and the creation of economic dependencies for the farmers thereby generating market distortions. Farmers are not obtaining their rightful share of the added value generated by the food and agricultural system. It is critical for the sustainability of the agricultural system that the food chain be organized in a more fair and balanced way for farmers.

### Food security

More than 1 billion people in the world live in poverty. A great majority of these people live in rural areas and most of them are farmers. The future of the world food supply is under pressure, due, among other factors, to a growing population, changes

the average global temperature increased approximately 0,74 degrees Celsius during the last century. Global warming increased the frequency and severity of climate events, i.e. droughts and floods, across the globe.

The agricultural sector is called upon to provide the growing world population with enough food and energy while protecting the environment at the same time..

Farmers are in the front line of the climate change agenda. They are directly affected by its impact, and they are also vital to implementing many of the solutions the world needs to adapt and mitigate it.

### Cooperatives

In the International Year of Cooperatives promoted by the United Nations, WFO has adopted a declaration on the relevance of agricultural cooperatives and the importance of creating an enabling framework





**Mr. Robert Carlson, WFO President with H.E. Mr. Giorgio Napolitano, President of Italian Republic**

that would allow this important player to prosper.

At the GA, the International Secretariat presented some of the projects which WFO will work in the near future which would pave the way for WFO to become a truly world class organization.

### The working platform, WFO's memberships:

One of the most critical issues for WFO is to be an Organization truly representative

of world farmers. Through the work of the WFO's Board, the International Secretariat and Members, WFO's membership grew 30% in the last few months, showing once more that multilateralism is the only viable and sustainable means for resolving issues of common interest, the importance of this Organisation; as a moderate and reliable voice of farmers and its uniqueness in representing the interests of farmers

The new WFO members are Albania KASH, Sociedad Rural Argentina, Argentina; National Farmers' Federation, Aus-

tralia; Organisation pour la Promotion des Initiatives Communaires des Bases en Afrique OPICA, Congo; Croatian Chamber of Agriculture, Croatia, Chambres d'Agriculteurs Francaises, France, Protected Agriculture Union, Jordan, Coalition no Farmers Ghana, Ghana, Federated Farmers of NZ, New Zealand.

### Partnership for growth

Establishing an extended and reliable network of partners to work and interact with is crucial for proving the value of the Organization. Partnership creation, project development and policy engagement make an Organisation a strong focal point for its members.

To achieve this, WFO has embarked on a series of discussions with international players, FAO; WMO; OIE, Regional Organizations and private bodies, civil society groups, aimed at consolidating the position of WFO in the international agricultural arena and in so doing to better serve the needs of farmers.

### Equal job and equal opportunities

Planting a seed in a developing country may not be the same as planting a seed in a developed country. Developing and least developed countries given some of the structural, economic and political challenges they face may require greater effort, sensitivity and support than other countries. WFO, mindful of these difficulties, is promoting the idea of "Equal Job and Equal Opportunities" which means to offer the same possibility of learning, working and researching to farmers' Organizations in developing countries.

A concrete action towards this objective was the support offered to the representatives of FOs from developing countries to attend the 2012 WFO's GA in Rome.

### Communication strategy

To inform the agricultural community and its members about the most recent development and projects WFO has developed an innovative communication strategy aimed at generating:

- A-new internet domain which is easy to read, easy to remember and easy to access; with a-new suffix more representative of the international role WFO WWW. WFO-OMA.ORG;
- A-new website, assuring easy access to information; easy to read and easy to understand content, forming a true hub for agriculture information;



**His Excellency Mr. Giorgio Napolitano, President of Italian Republic, entering CNEL together with Dr. Marco Marzano de Marinis, WFO Executive Director and Prof. Antonio Marzano, CNEL President.**



• A new e-magazine, F@RMLETTER which allow users to remain up to date with recent developments and information in the field of agriculture.

And many other issues, activities, publications, events aimed at keeping our members constantly up-to-date and aware of new trends and developments in the agricultural world

### Theme in the spotlight

Some issues require a deeper discussion than others. As such, theme in the spotlight directly calls farmers' organisations to actively participate and involve themselves in the life of WFO.

It is an idea aimed to create discussion fora and committees on specific subjects and geared to specific multilateral processes (i.e. Trade, Commodities; Women, Youth, Entrepreneurship). The adopted common position would serve as a basis for advocacy in international fora.

The GA served also as a platform for discussing amongst members the current and future challenges that agriculture and especially farmers are facing. The discussions focused in particular on financial speculation on food commodities; trade and the importance of adopting clear and effective rules concerning international exchanges of goods; the role of women and young farmers generations; access to innovation, the role of education and its importance for assuring the competitiveness of farmers.

The Rome 2012 General Assembly proved to be a good exercise. However, being aware that nothing is perfect and looking constantly for improvements "The path to perfection is never too long" we are interested in the candid feedback from all participants on what to improve and maintain. For this purpose a feedback form will be circulated in the coming days. At the same time we are also very happy to inform you that a Rome 2012 GA dedicated webpage has been created <http://www.wfo-oma.org/GeneralAssembly2012.aspx>. You may find in this web page the WFO's adopted policies, all documents related to the GA, including Power Points presentations and Conference pictures.

Looking forward to meeting you in Japan, for the WFO 2013 next General Assembly.



**Meeting with H.E. Mr. Giorgio Napolitano, President of Italian Republic**



**Participants photo**



**WFO President, Mr. Robert Carlson together with Dr. Kanayo Nwanze, IFAD President, Dr. Marco Marzano de Marinis, WFO Executive Director and Dr. Graziano Da Silva, FAO Director General**

# Rio+20: World Farmers Organisation Focus on Outcomes

**Robynne Anderson,**  
Consultant

Getting agriculture into Rio+20 and reflecting the needs of farmers was the culmination of a two year process. As WFO members can see from the excerpts, the final text of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development has drawn attention to agriculture and the importance of farming. As the World Farmers Organisation board member, Ron Bonnett, said, "It is important to recognize that agriculture has come a long way within this process." From a zero draft in January 2012 which failed to recognize the important linkages between farmers, poverty and hunger; the adopted text now firmly establishes the primacy of poverty and hunger (in clause 2) and the recognition that farmers can make important contributions to sustainable development and enhance the livelihood of the poor (clause 52).

We are also encouraged by the text's strong focus on the development of appropriate food security strategies; specifically the reaffirmation of the commitment to present and future generations to enhance access to adequate, safe and nutritious food. Through extensive work on the part of World Farmers, it was possible to add sustainable agriculture to the text and ensure that agriculture was at the top of the priority issues in the final UN outcome and one that received some of the highest volume of attention.

The adopted text emphasizes a variety of issues that can help farmers address food security and hunger. These include:

- Increasing access to credit and other financial services; markets and secure land tenure;
- Focusing investment on sustainable agriculture practices, rural infrastructure, storage capacities and related technologies, cooperatives and value chains;
- Enhancing agricultural research extension services and training to improving agricultural productivity and sustainability;
- Empowering farmers, fishers and foresters to choose among diverse methods of achieving sustainable agricultural production;
- Significantly reducing post-harvest and other food losses and waste throughout



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the food supply chain;

- Enhancing resilience to climate change and natural disasters.

Bonnett sums it up, "For agriculture, Rio+20 represents a new starting point. It gives us an opportunity, and a path forward to revitalize the agricultural and rural development sectors throughout the world."

For WFO, it was also an important point. The organisation co-organised the Farmers Major Group and was intimately engaged in the process. On-site, a team of farmers from every continent represented World Farmers. The organisation co-organized 4 events focused on two key themes:

- a) The need to revitalize agricultural extension and knowledge systems
- b) The importance of focusing on the needs of women farmers

The team had a startling 33 speaking opportunities for members on-site. This included high profile roles for Ron Bonnett in the High Level Roundtable with leaders from over 50 countries, during which he was called upon early in the process to

offer his views about implementation of Rio+20. Dyborn Chibonga, head of NAS-FAM (Malawi) was one of the panel members for the plenary during the Agriculture and Rural Development Day, for which World Farmers Organisation was an organizing partner. Chibonga was also selected by the Brazilians to be part of the Dialogue Day on Water. Marco Marzano de Marinis, Executive Director of WFO was a member of a high profile panel during the Dialogue on Food and helped to focus the outcomes on the needs of women farmers and youth. Other speakers included Zeinab Al Moumani from Jordan, Rajeev Chauhan from India, Rose Akaki from Uganda, Generosa Silva from Brazil, and Matt Linnegar from Australia.

In addition to these farm leaders, there was also an excellent negotiating team which tracked the daily (and nightly) negotiations right to the finish line. Extraordinary efforts were made to establish working relationships with the EU negotiators, Australian, New Zealand, and the G77. Rio+20 culminated in the launch of the UN Secretary General's new Zero Hunger Challenge which caps a long effort to



get a focus on food and nutritional security. Ban Ki Moon said: “Zero hunger would boost economic growth, reduce poverty and safeguard the environment. It would foster peace and stability.”

The Zero Hunger Challenge has five main objectives: to achieve 100 per cent access to adequate food all year round; to end malnutrition in pregnancy and early childhood; to make all food systems sustainable; to increase growth in the productivity and income of smallholders, particularly women; and to achieve a zero rate of food waste.

As further evidence of the importance of Rio+20 outcomes, the UK government on-site announced GBP150 million in funding to 6 million smallholder farmers in Ethiopia and Niger, bringing value directly back to farmers. Combined with the work on new Sustainable Development Goals before 2015, food is certain to remain at the top of the agenda.

## Our Common Vision

1. We, the heads of State and Government and high level representatives, having met at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20-22 June 2012, with full participation of civil society, renew our commitment to sustainable development, and to ensure the promotion of economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for our planet and for present and future generations.

2. Eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. In this regard we are committed to free humanity from poverty and hunger as a matter of urgency.

52. We recognize that farmers, including small-scale farmers and fishers, pastoralists and foresters, can make important contributions to sustainable development through production activities that are environmentally sound, enhance food security and the livelihood of the poor, and invigorate production and sustained economic growth.

### Food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture

108. We reaffirm our commitments regarding the right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger. We acknowledge that food security and nutrition has be-



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come a pressing global challenge and, in this regard, we further reaffirm our commitment to enhancing food security and access to adequate, safe and nutritious food for present and future generations in line with the Rome Principles adopted in 2009, including children under two, and through, as appropriate, national, regional and global food security and nutrition strategies.

109. We recognize that a significant portion of the world's poor live in rural areas, and that rural communities play an important role in the economic development of many countries. We emphasize the need

to revitalize the agricultural and rural development sectors, notably in developing countries, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner. We recognize the importance to take the necessary actions to better address the needs of rural communities through, inter alia, enhancing access by agricultural producers, in particular small producers, women, indigenous peoples and people living in vulnerable situations, to credit and other financial services, markets, secure land tenure, health care and social services, education and training, knowledge, and appropriate and affordable



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technologies, including for efficient irrigation, reuse of treated waste water, water harvesting and storage. We reiterate the importance of empowering rural women as critical agents for enhancing agricultural and rural development and food security and nutrition. We also recognize the importance of traditional sustainable agricultural practices, including traditional seed supply systems, including for many indigenous peoples and local communities.

110. Noting the diversity of agricultural conditions and systems, we resolve to increase sustainable agricultural produc-



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tion and productivity globally, including through improving the functioning of markets and trading systems and strengthening international cooperation, particularly for developing countries, by increasing public and private investment in sustainable agriculture, land management and rural development. Key areas for investment and support include: sustainable agricultural practices; rural infrastructure, storage capacities and related technologies; research and development on sustainable agricultural technologies; developing strong agricultural cooperatives and value chains; and strengthening ur-



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ban-rural linkages. We also recognize the need to significantly reduce post-harvest and other food losses and waste throughout the food supply chain.

111. We reaffirm the necessity to promote, enhance and support more sustainable agriculture, including crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, that improves food security, eradicates hunger, and is economically viable, while conserving land, water, plant and animal genetic resources, biodiversity and ecosystems, and enhancing resilience to climate change and natural disasters. We also recognize the need to maintain natural ecological processes that support food production systems.

112. We stress the need to enhance sustainable livestock production systems, including through improving pasture land and irrigation schemes in line with national policies, legislation, rules and regulations, enhanced sustainable water management systems, and efforts to eradicate and prevent the spread of animal diseases, recognizing that the livelihoods of farmers including pastoralists and the health of livestock are intertwined.

113. We also stress the crucial role of healthy marine ecosystems, sustainable fisheries, and sustainable aquaculture for food security and nutrition, and in providing for the livelihoods of millions of people.

114. We resolve to take action to enhance agricultural research, extension services, training and education to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability through the voluntary sharing of knowledge and good practices. We further resolve to improve access to information, technical knowledge and know-how, including through new information and communication technologies that empower farmers, fishers and foresters to choose among diverse methods of achieving sustainable agricultural production. We call for the strengthening of international cooperation on agricultural research for development.

115. We reaffirm the important work and inclusive nature of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), including through its role in facilitating country-initiated assessments on sustainable food production and food security, and we encourage countries to give due consideration to implementing the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security. We take note of the on-going discussions on responsible agricultural investment in the framework of the CFS,



as well as the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment (PRAI).

116. We stress the need to address the root causes of excessive food price volatility, including its structural causes, at all levels, and the need to manage the risks linked to high and excessively volatile prices in agriculture commodities and their consequences for global food security and nutrition, as well as for smallholder farmers and poor urban dwellers.

117. We underline the importance of timely, accurate and transparent information in helping to address excessive food price volatility, and in this regard takes note of the Agricultural Market Information System hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and urges the participating international organizations, private sector actors and Governments to ensure the public dissemination of timely and quality food market information products.

118. We reaffirm that a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system will promote agricultural and rural development in developing countries and contribute to world food security. We urge national, regional and international strategies to promote the participation of farmers, especially smallholder farmers, including women, in community, domestic, regional and international markets.

## Desertification, land degradation and drought

205. We recognize the economic and social significance of good land management, including soil, particularly its contribution to economic growth, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and food security, eradicating poverty, women's empowerment, addressing climate change and improving water availability. We stress that desertification, land degradation, and drought are challenges of a global dimension and continue to pose serious challenges to the sustainable development of all countries, in particular developing countries. We also stress the particular challenges this poses for Africa, and LDCs and LLDCs. In this regard, we express deep concern for the devastating consequences of cyclical drought and famine in Africa, in particular in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region, and call for urgent action through short-, medium- and long-term measures at all levels.

206. We recognize the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation. In

view of this we will strive to achieve a land degradation neutral world in the context of sustainable development. This should act to catalyze financial resources from a range of public and private sources.

207. We reaffirm our resolve under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to take coordinated action nationally, regionally and internationally, to monitor, globally, land degradation and restore degraded lands in arid, semi-arid and dry sub humid areas. We resolve to support and strengthen the implementation of the UNCCD and its 10-Year Strategic Plan and Framework (2008-2018), including through mobilizing adequate, predictable and timely financial resources. We note the importance of mitigating the effects of desertification, land degradation and drought, including by preserving and developing oases, restoring degraded lands, improving soil quality and improving water management, in order to contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication. In this regard, we encourage and recognize the importance of partnerships and initiatives for the safeguarding of land resources. We also encourage capacity building, extension training programmes, and scientific studies and initiatives aimed at deepening understanding and raising awareness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of sustainable land management policies and practices.

208. We stress the importance of the further development and implementation of scientifically based, sound and socially inclusive methods and indicators for monitoring and assessing the extent of desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as the importance of efforts underway to promote scientific research and strengthen the scientific base of activities to address desertification and drought under the UNCCD. In this respect, we take note of the decision of the COP10 of the UNCCD to establish an ad hoc Working Group, taking into account regional balance, to discuss specific options for the provision of scientific advice to its Parties.

209. We reiterate the need for cooperation through the sharing of climate and weather information, and forecasting and early warning systems related to desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as to dust storms and sandstorms, at the global, regional and sub-regional levels. In this regard, we invite States and relevant organizations to cooperate in the sharing of related information, forecasting and early warning systems.

## Gender equality and women's empowerment

240. We are committed to women's equal rights and opportunities in political and economic decision-making and resource allocation and to remove any barriers that prevent women from being full participants in the economy. We resolve to undertake legislation and administrative reforms to give women equal rights with men to economic resources, including access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, credit, inheritance, natural resources and appropriate new technology.

244. We invite donors, international organizations including the UN System organizations, as well as international financial institutions, regional banks, major groups including the private sector, to integrate fully commitments and considerations on gender equality and women's empowerment and to ensure the participation of women and effective gender mainstreaming in their decision making and full programming cycle. We invite them to play a supportive role in developing countries' efforts to integrate fully commitments and considerations on gender equality and women's empowerment and ensure the participation of women and the effective gender mainstreaming in their decision making, programme planning, budgeting and implementation, in accordance with national legislation, priorities and capacities.

## Sustainable development goals

245. We underscore that the MDGs are a useful tool in focusing achievement of specific development gains as part of a broad development vision and framework for the development activities of the United Nations, for national priority setting and for mobilisation of stakeholders and resources towards common goals. We therefore remain firmly committed to their full and timely achievement.

246. We recognize that the development of goals could also be useful for pursuing focused and coherent action on sustainable development. We further recognize the importance and utility of a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs), which are based on Agenda 21 and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, fully respect all Rio Principles, taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and priorities, are consistent



with international law, build upon commitments already made, and contribute to the full implementation of the outcomes of all major Summits in the economic, social and environmental fields, including this outcome document. These goals should address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their inter-linkages. They should be coherent with and integrated in the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015, thus contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and serving as a driver for implementation and mainstreaming of sustainable development in the United Nations system as a whole. The development of these goals should not divert focus or effort from the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

247. We also underscore that SDGs should be action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. We also recognize that the goals should address and be focused on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development, being guided by this outcome document. Governments should drive implementation with the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, as appropriate.

248. We resolve to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on SDGs that is open to all stakeholders with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the United Nations General Assembly. An open working group shall be constituted no later than the opening of the 67th session of the UNGA and shall comprise of thirty representatives, nominated by Member States through the five UN regional groups with the aim of achieving fair, equitable and balanced geographic representation. At the outset, this open working group will decide on its method of work, including developing modalities, to ensure the full involvement of relevant stakeholders and expertise from civil society, the scientific community and the UN system in its work in order to provide a diversity of perspectives and experience. It will submit a report to the 68th session of the UNGA containing a proposal for sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action.

249. The process needs to be coordinated and coherent with the processes considering the post-2015 development agenda.



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The initial input to the work of the working group will be provided by the United Nations Secretary General in consultations with national governments. In order to provide technical support to this process and to the work of the working group, we request the UN Secretary-General to ensure all necessary input and support to this work from the UN system including through establishing an inter-agency technical support team and expert panels as needed, drawing on all relevant expert advice. Reports on the progress of work will be made regularly to the General Assembly.

250. We recognize that progress towards

the achievement of the goals needs to be assessed and accompanied by targets and indicators while taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and levels of development.

251. We recognize that there is a need for global, integrated and scientifically-based information on sustainable development. In this regard, we request the relevant bodies of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to support regional economic commissions to collect and compile national inputs in order to inform this global effort. We further commit to mobilizing financial resources and capacity building, particularly for developing countries, to achieve this endeavor.



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## CASE STUDIES AND BST PRACTICES

# Internet opportunities and challenges in the distribution of food products. The Naranjas Lola Case

Ángel Martínez Gutiérrez  
Adoración Mozas Moral  
Enrique Bernal Jurado

This article is an extract from a case study presented by the WFO, the complete version of which can be found on the website [www.wfo-oma.org](http://www.wfo-oma.org)



Although food products do not present novel features, the economic development of society in general and markets in particular have led to competition being based on the level of quality of such products. Correspondingly, it is noteworthy how there has also been an increase in consumer awareness about environmental degradation, which has affected not only purchasing and consumer habits during the past two decades, but has also, on the supply side, led to an exponential growth in organic food production that has made the organic food sector into what is currently one of the most dynamic sectors in the

agro-food business.

An unusual situation, however, is found in Spain, where, despite the fact that the amount of registered land dedicated to organic farming makes Spain the first country in the European rankings and the sixth worldwide, domestic consumer demand has led to these products having no more than a 0.7% market share.

The general opinion is that the main factors that hinder the demand for organic food in Spain (as well as in other countries) are the price differential between organic foods and their conventional counterparts, poor distribution (consisting in the lack of

sales points and of variety in the supply of products), as well as, finally, the ignorance and confusion that consumers have vis-à-vis these types of foods.

Various responses have been adopted by the agro-food industry in order to deal with such factors, including the intensification of the supply of these products through non-conventional sales channels (such, as for example, direct sales over the Internet).

The Internet has, in fact, a special appeal as a sales channel for food products in general since - on the supply side - it responds to many of the problems that currently inhibit the growth of the organic food sector, such as the high price of the products, the scattered manner in which food products are supplied and the lack of consumer information.

As regards prices, Internet's potential to force down such prices has been demonstrated, mainly due to the fact that it makes it easier for consumers to choose between products, thus increasing global competition among businesses operating in the sector in question and reducing overall production costs.

As far as transaction costs are concerned, their reduction is particularly important in four areas: Firstly, the automation of transactions reduces costs before, during and after the sale of products by replacing traditional documentation with electronic documentation. Secondly, it gets rid of intermediaries in the sale of agro-food products so as to facilitate direct contact with final customers. Thirdly, it reduces entry costs for certain companies in given markets. Fourthly, it helps to manage quickly the flexible organization of food production,



permitting the continuous monitoring of the industrial manufacturing chain's external links. In response to the problem of the scattered manner in which the agro-food products are supplied, the Internet provides an opportunity to make economies of scale, improving the cooperation between businesses and opening new business channels that facilitate and even increase Internet penetration in local communities by increasing the density of cooperation networks in which agro-food businesses operate.

Finally, the possibility of offering information flows that circulate in both directions between business and consumers makes the Web a space that can be used as a public relations tool that builds up customer loyalty, as well as as a form of advertising for promoting the sales of individual businesses' products.

It is important to note, moreover, that one of the biggest benefits of the Internet as a channel for promoting goods is its low cost, which allows small and medium enterprises - who dominate agro-food sector - to be involved in domestic and international markets.

### A Spanish successful experience: [www.naranjaslola.com](http://www.naranjaslola.com)

In 1998, Federico Aparici and his wife Dolores Colomar decided to create the Naranjas Lola brand and stop selling their orange produce through intermediaries since the costs thereof made it very difficult for them to sell quality products. With the help of their two sons Federico and Juan, they decided to take a gamble on a new model of selling fruit, becoming the first Spanish business selling oranges and citrus fruits on-line.

Naranjas Lola oranges have been traditionally grown by the Aparicis on their family estate located in the Cullera municipality in Spain. The latter use a family know-how that dates back generations and avail themselves of traditional methods of production that do not use artificial conservation processes and that respect the environment. This has led to their products' flavor and quality being recognized by the specialized food press.

The Aparici family started its on-line business in 1999, setting up a rudimentary website and becoming the first Spanish

agricultural business dedicated to the on-line B2C sale of fruit (i.e. oranges and other citrus fruits such as mandarins, grapefruits and lemons). Orders are either received on-line through the virtual store of the Naranjas Lola website or over the phone and can be made without giving bank or card details (Naranjas Lola may, in fact, be paid only once the product has been tested).

The freshly picked oranges are then received by customers within 24 hours of the order having been made.

The idea of producers selling fruit directly to consumers has undoubtedly revolutionized the nature of the on-line agriculture business. Naranjas Lola have, in fact, become, in these last few years, a reference point both for the online agricultural business and for entrepreneurs in general, whilst the business run by the Aparicis has continued to maintain its status as a family business. This is the reason why Naranjas Lola have become a favorite not only of many Spanish families, but also of prestigious chefs, who use their oranges and citrus fruits as ingredients for their best dishes.



# Social Security for women and their status as assisting spouses

### Women are essentially the backbone of the agricultural sector

**The role of women within society has changed considerably across all the countries of the European Union. Several factors have contributed to the fact that women are increasingly able to shape their own future. These include a growing and more widespread rate of education, as well as the development of employment opportunities for women taking a more prominent position.**

Female entrepreneurship in agriculture has expanded, allowing women to take up positions of responsibility.

Recognition of their status, strengthening their position within the social and economic spectra and contributing to the evolution of the farm is what makes the profession of woman farmer attractive.

In light of the entrepreneurial nature of agricultural work, 43% of unpaid workers in agriculture are women, 26% of which are farm owners. In addition, the level of agricultural training in certain countries for women farmers remains relatively low as their education is often not agriculture-related. Indeed, they may not necessarily be from a farming family and many only enter the agricultural profession upon marriage to a farmer.

It is therefore vital that the legislator allows for true recognition of women farmers from a social and economic perspective. Seeing their work as voluntary

service, which is still the case in several Member States of the European Union, is something which must be redressed, in terms of social security. Without receiving social insurance, their state of invisibility will simply be prolonged, particularly for those that are not farm owners.

The Farm Structure Survey (FSS) provides some insights about the role of women in the agricultural sector and, more specifically, on farm. Even if household work is explicitly excluded from the survey, many women engaged in farming do so within a household production unit and their activities are not easily separable from those of the household as a whole. Secondly, according to FSS, the legal person representing the holding (the "farm holder") can only be one person; thus, if a couple has shared responsibility of the farm, this is not evident, as only one person – more often the husband – is surveyed as farm holder<sup>1</sup>.

For cultural reasons, preference for farm ownership is often given to the young males of the family.

Indeed, one of the obstacles for young women entering the profession is their access to the family property. Where they have a recognised status, women farmers have the possibility to invest and be granted a loan in the same way as the

farmer owner.

At European level, the status of assisting spouse should allow women farmers to obtain social cover and access to cover against accidents in the workplace. These should be granted in proportion to the contribution made by the assisting spouse, in the same way as to the farmer, often her husband.

Within this framework a EU directive-2010/41/EU- has been issued to develop an adequate social cover for women in agriculture. In this respect all Member States should facilitate and improve access to social services and credit for women, encourage the establishment of women in rural areas as actors in the agricultural sector with reference to country-specific property-law and tax-law situations.

To support the implementation of the Directive 2010/41/EU means moving away from the concept of "family support", recognising the work of spouses and partners and acknowledging that they jointly manage the farm and therefore face risks and investment together. For example two European Member State are currently trying to give visibility to the work of women on family farms are:

- Belgium: "Loi-programme" 24th December 2002 on the women status as co-workers/assisting spouses.

- Spain: law 35/2011 of 4th October 2011 on "joint farm ownership".

The focus is on increasingly strengthening the presence of women in the agricultural sector, to the benefit of rural areas, whilst stemming emigration as well as the ageing and masculinisation of the population, as barriers to the constant and sustainable development of our rural areas.

**Only 64% of the EU-27 female population aged 15 to 64 years was either working or actively looking for a job in 2010, compared to more than 78% of the male population of the same age. Women represent slightly less than 50% of the total working age population in the rural areas of the EU, but only 44% of the total economically active population.**

**In the European Union, the role of women in farming takes various forms: farm-owners, assisting spouses, employees**

**Among the different categories of farm labour, most women are classified as the holder's spouse (4.9 million), corresponding to 80.1% of all spouses.**

**The analysis of gender roles in the distribution of agricultural work responsibilities needs sex disaggregated data which are often missing.**

<sup>1</sup> Source: FSS- The Farm Structure Survey (FSS) is the only harmonized source for a wide range of structural data of EU farms. FSS is carried out in the form of a sample survey every 2 or 3 years, and as a census every 10 years. The most recent data available stem from the FSS 2007, while the final results for the Agricultural Census 2009/2010 are foreseen to be



# Yes, agriculture offers great career opportunities! YPARD community can prove it!

Marina Cherbonnier, Courtney Paisley  
YPARD



While agriculture is a vital sector, to get the youth interested and committed in this field is still a challenge.

“Old fashioned”, “dirty”, “exhausting”, condemning farmers to remain “poor” and isolated in “boring” rural areas... are some of the feelings expressed on agriculture. YPARD, the international platform of Young Professionals for Agricultural Research for Development ([www.ypard.net](http://www.ypard.net)) is raising an army of “young agriculture-lover warriors”, to fight the negative cliché that agriculture suffers and restore its prestige.

These young professionals come from different regions of the world, with different background related to agriculture and agricultural research. They are young men and women with personal success stories to tell. They have beliefs, knowledge and visions! Most importantly they think that

sharing information, experience and opinions is crucial to build a sustainable livelihood together without depleting our environment.

We believe that personal stories speak more than long rhetorical speeches to express that: “yes, agriculture offers great career opportunities!”

Let us showcase a number of Young Professionals’ testimonials to build our case and discuss the environment that will enable the youth to be successful in agriculture.

## 1 - Yes, there are farmers’ success stories!

*Arthur Chinsman Williams*, from Sierra Leone tells us about his success story as a farming organization, which employs several young people. The secret of his suc-

cess is “entrepreneurship”:

“In January 2010, we decided to invest our seed money in a 30 acre oil palm plantation in Port Loko District, Northern Province of Sierra Leone. Rice, cassava, vegetables and fruit trees like mangoes, oranges, and plums were also planted. The revenues obtained from these products were used for expansion of the business and as support for our post graduate studies. We managed to keep our operating cost very low through the adoption of Youth Support Strategy (YSS).”

## 2 - Agriculture is more than farming

There is a range of diverse jobs related to agriculture. Researchers, policy makers, CSOs representatives work all together in agricultural development. Youth, with in-



novative and new approaches need to be present at all stages.

*Nawhseen Hosenally*, Mauritius, is an extension/agricultural advisory services professional. She has been working as consultant for several organizations in order to conduct case studies and facilitate discussions on specific issues in Mauritius.

'As a youth in agriculture, YPARD has given me the opportunity to share my ideas on issues related to youth and agriculture on their platform through articles and discussion forums. I have been able to connect with other youths from different countries and backgrounds who have same objective as me, and together, we have been able to voice our opinions on subjects that matter to us to Policy makers at International Conferences.'

### 3 - Agriculture can be trendy

*Machteld Schoolenberg* Holland gives us a revolutionary example on how latest technologies can support agricultural development, in a sustainable manner.

A lack of communication between smallholders and district level policy makers were preventing the adjustment and implementation of land conservation policies in response to land degradation issues, in the Usambara Mountains of Tanzania. Machteld took up the task to develop a computer game, which could be used in a workshop with policy makers to enhance discussions on policy, practices and farmers' livelihoods.

ICTs are one of the key elements that give a fresher look to the agricultural sector while effectively contributing to its development.

### 4- The youth need visibility to make their mark!

The youth need visibility in order to integrate fully agricultural activities.

*Olawale Ojo* is a young Nigerian who became familiar with farming practices thanks to his experience with Songhai, a training centre in the field of agriculture.

Olawale and a friend decided to learn more about the activities of the All Farmers' Association of Nigeria (AFAN) Ondo State Chapter. They wanted to associate with other farmers and see how the association can come up to sensitize the youth more about agriculture. It was agreed at the end of the meeting with AFAN that Olawale would get the chance to speak in favour of the youth in their radio program and that a capacity building program would be planned for young people in the state.

### 5- The youth need recognition

As agriculture suffers from an image problem, extra effort should be made in rewarding youth in agriculture, as a mean to promote agricultural activities. The recognition of youth's work and success is fundamental for maintaining motivation.

'*Michael Kwabena Osei* is a young scientist from Ghana. His work has been recognized through the 1st Ghana Science Congress Awards in August 2011 where he won a Bronze award (Cash prize, lap top and Citation) as the National Best Young Scientist, initiated by the government of Ghana through the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (MEST).

(...)

Michael expressed that he was very honoured by this recognition, but still sees it as the beginning only, of a great adventure.

«This will motivate me and spur me on to greater heights », he said."»

### 6- The youth need raw models

Youth need to be inspired. They need success stories to nurture their own perspectives. We need raw models for the youth, for them to be able to innovate, create initiative and apply models which could work when tailored on their own context. That's what portraits such as the ones presented above can generate to young generations: give hope in agriculture as a career path, give food for thoughts for decisions and actions, with strong evidence of what exists.

*If you want to tell and share your story as a Young Professional in ARD, write to [info@ypard.net](mailto:info@ypard.net).*

*Read more on YPs' portraits on YPARD Showcase: <http://ypard.net/showcase>*





## NEWS&EVENTS



### European Award of Cooperative Innovation, 2012

2012 is the UN International Year of Cooperatives and on 20th June 2012, at the European Parliament in Brussels, Cogeca (European agri-cooperatives) presented the "European Award for cooperative innovation", 2012.

The objective of this Award is to promote innovation and show how creative and innovative European agricultural cooperatives are. It also aims to encourage other cooperatives to improve their competitiveness and positioning in the food chain and to create more innovative products.

In the category "Food processing", the winner was the Danish dairy cooperative NATURMAELK. In the category "Sustainability and resource efficiency", the winner was the French cooperative TERRENA. Finally, in the category "Cooperative entrepreneurship/member service", the winner was the German cooperative ZG RAIF-EISEN.

<http://eaci.copa-cogeca.eu/main.aspx?>

### Partnership on the environmental benchmarking of livestock supply chains

The technical seminar on Collaboration in the comparative environmental asses-

sment of livestock supply chains was held jointly by FAO and its Partners on July 4 last in Rome. Several topics concerning the environmental impact and the emission of greenhouse gases from the livestock sector were addressed during the course of the day, which focused on how the real challenge is to reduce methane emissions from cattle through strategies that do not involve significant costs for producers and that use available technologies. The seminar was attended by prominent speakers from various international organizations specialized in the aforementioned topics.



<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/150555/icode/>

### Copa-Cogeca Congress of European Farmers 2012 in Budapest on October 1-3

World Farmers Organisation President Robert Carlson will participate in Copa-Cogecas' Congress of European Farmers 2012 at Hotel Intercontinental in Budapest on October 1-3 2012. The theme of the Congress 2012 is "The Future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP): How European Farmers can ensure Food Security Innovatively and Profitably".

Many high-level speakers will be there for this three day event, including EU Commissioner Dacian Ciolos. Thematic Workshops will take place on the first day, focusing on forestry, the food chain, innovation and productivity and the role of women farmers. The main plenary of the Congress will take place on October2-3.

The main focus of the day on October 2 will be on ensuring a productive, profitable European agriculture sector that must be organised sustainably within the framework of the CAP and its ongoing reform. Wednesday 3 October will be for international aspects, with participation of Mr Carlson and a second FAO/Hungarian event in the afternoon, focusing on agri-cooperatives.

