



F@RMLETTER

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Editorial

Peter Kendall , President, NFU

The UK's leading Sunday newspaper The Sunday Times has just run yet another full page story on 'the era of cheap food coming to an end'. Cargill's Vice President Paul Conway was quoted explaining how the World is now facing its third agricultural price spike in the last five years.

It is therefore great news that farmers have come together through the formation of WFO to give 'production agriculture' both a forum to share and develop ideas but also a body to speak up when so many global single issue groups are out to derail our future.

The most recent FAO-OECD Agriculture Outlook projects that prices will remain on a higher plateau for the next decade, underpinned by firm demand but slowing growth in global production.

Output growth is forecast to slow to an average 1.7% per annum over the next 10 years, with much of that coming from developing countries. Science and technology has always been a central part of farming, for all sectors and for all types of production and the production challenges we face means that science matters more than ever before. We will need every single tool in our toolbox, and that will include biotechnology. In Europe, farmers are being denied science based solutions by weak policy frameworks and approval processes.

Agriculture policy makers in the EU and US are busy shaping their regulatory frameworks for agriculture for the coming years. Negotiations are taking place against the backdrop of continued economic uncertainty and Government austerity measures. The era of access to cheap public money is certainly finished and quite rightly so. I have always believed that agriculture should be market-orientated and that farmers should be in a position to compete on global markets. The dismantling of market intervention measures, will mean farmers facing more volatile market conditions. This is why fair and transparent supply chains are critical.

Dairy Farmers in the UK have once again found themselves at the hostile end of price cuts from processors, with prices squeezed ever tighter below the cost of production. I hope that one positive outcome from this latest price crisis will be the emergence of a voluntary code of contractual practice which establishes fair practices between retailers, processors and farmers.

The WFO international secretariat and Board members have done a fantastic job over the past 12 months. Not only have they secured membership from within every continent on Earth (at least all those where we have productive agriculture), but they have also identified and articulated the key issues that affect the livelihood of farmers across the world. The policy papers that were approved in Rome are great examples of the common aims and objectives we hold as farmers and are precisely the policies we want to see picked up by our global leaders. In the next 12 months, let's all help to encourage more organisations to join so that we can continue to build on the organisation's success.

In the meantime, I wish you all well with your farming endeavours and good luck for your athletes as they join us here in England for the 2012 Olympic Games!

WORLD'S FARMERS' ORGANISATION

VIA AURORA, 39 - 000187 ROMA PH.: +39 06 42 74 11 58 E-MAIL: info@wfo-oma.org

Lessons learned from the Purchase for Progress initiative

By Ken Davies
P4P Coordinator

With food prices remaining at high levels worldwide, smallholder farmers have the opportunity to profit from growing and selling basic crops. Theoretically. But in most cases, smallholders do not have the means to take advantage of this opportunity (limited or minimal access to financial services, high post-harvest losses and a lack of bargaining power are only some of the challenges smallholders face). Smallholders like Marie Therese Toé in Burkina Faso are working hard to overcome these challenges.



Marie Therese Toé, smallholder farmer from Burkina Faso
Copyright: WFP/P4P

Since her husband died five years ago, the 51-year old has been cultivating four hectares of land, growing sorghum, cowpeas, sesame and millet. She manages to plant three hectares on her own, and farms the remaining hectare collectively with 10 members of her female farmers' organisation "Claire's Friendship". When she and her fellow farmers sold 4,100 kg of sorghum to the World Food Programme (WFP) in 2011, part of their crops did not pass WFP's strict quality tests: "What I learned from this experience is the need for farmers' organisations to be well organized from grassroots to the provincial union level if we want to respect our commitments and the availability of good quality products.

It was not easy because the quality was not ensured by our usual way of storing. In this operation, I lost three bags due to poor grain quality after quality checks by WFP," says Marie Therese. Having a better qua-

-lity commodity to sell is essential for smallholders and their cooperatives if they want to sell their crops at a good price. Often, smallholders have only one buyer, a local middleman or trader who dictates the price and does not care about quality. But with high quality, other buyers can be attracted, as anecdotal evidence from pilot countries of WFP's Purchase for Progress (P4P) pilot initiative suggests.

Fortunately, achieving a better quality product is easily within reach of smallholder farmers and does not depend on previous experience or overall capacity.

After three years of P4P implementation, farmers' organisations, whether newly formed or highly experienced, have significantly improved the quality of their produce. Their members have learned how important it is to avoid aflatoxin, reduce the amount of foreign materials and keep off insects and rodents.

In addition to improved prices and incomes that come from improved quality, farmers now eat high quality staple commodities at home, and understand that good quality is good for your health, as members from the western Kenyan farmers' organisation Loglorian put it.

Even low capacity organisations have been able to meet WFP quality standards relatively quickly with adequate training, equipment and improved wholesale prices for quality.

Valentin Alfaro from the El Salvadorian farmers' organisation ACALESE explains the changes he experienced since P4P trained him on quality:

We did not know about quality. We did not have machines that would help us to clean products, nor anyone that could teach us what to do to achieve a good quality product to sell. This is why the intermediaries could take advantage of us and we were losing money without knowing it. P4P has created new opportunities and new contacts so that we can compete fairly, both men and women, and in this way with better production we have a better future.

The combination of capacity building plus a contract has increased trust within farmers' organisations or communities, as one of Loglorian's leaders explained:

When the group was first expanded, it was difficult to gain the trust of the community, because people have different ideas.



Members of the Loglorian farmers organisation discuss their marketing activities. Copyright: R. Bymolt

People don't always like to socialize. It is difficult for leaders to sell their ideas when 90% of the community is illiterate. But farmers benefitted from the WFP contracts: each received according to what he had given. Now there are increased benefits and increased confidence. Many members have moved from doubting Thomases to trusting Peters.

P4P is also working with partners such as IFAD, FAO and banks to test different models in order to facilitate access to financial services for smallholders. In Central America, P4P has supported farmers' organisations, establishing revolving funds that enable members to access credit for inputs which is repaid at harvest time with a low interest rate.

It can also be used to pay farmers immediately upon the delivery of crops for future collective commercialization. Results so far are mixed, but it seems that organizations with a higher overall capacity and experience in managing credit are able to maintain high recovery rates and increase their capital over the years.

In Uganda, P4P has helped establish a warehouse receipt system, where farmers can deposit their produce after harvest and access credit with the receipt they received for their deposit. Another way to enable access to credit that has been tested in several countries is forward delivery contracts. Private banks accept these forward delivery contracts from WFP as guarantee that farmers will be able to sell their surplus at a good price and be able to pay back their loan.

Overall, these experiences and other evidence that the P4P pilot has generated to date are promising. Together with the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), we are currently setting up a knowledge management hub that will enable researchers, development practitioners and government experts to access all the data and the lessons generated by P4P.

P4P is only one small part of a larger tapestry of global efforts, but it will contribute towards increased agricultural productivity, reduced post-harvest losses and improved food security for smallholder farmers in the participating organisations.

For more information on P4P, please visit www.wfp.org/purchase-progress



Members of ACALESE preparing maize for sale to WFP. Copyright: WFP/Laura Melo.



Access to financial services is crucial for smallholder farmers. Copyright: WFP/Charlie Hatch-Barnwell.

2014: The YEAR FOR ALL MALE AND FEMALE FAMILY FARMERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

By JOSÉ A. OSABA
World Rural Forum

1. Rationale for IYFF 2014. Introduction and Background

In today's world there are over 3,000 million people living in the countryside. Most of these women and men are farmers in Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania who number about 2,500 million. More than 1,500 million work 404 million plots of land which are less than two acres in size and which, for the most part, are no larger than one hectare. The rural population involved in the industrial agricultural sector does not, on the other hand, exceed 20 million people.

Of the more than 925 million hungry people in the world, many are family farmers and fishers who own very little land, few resources and who benefit from no public support, infrastructures, technical assistance, access to credit, educational or health facilities, etc.

In this significant and dramatic context, the Executive Secretariat of Rural Forum made an intriguing proposal in late 2007:

Encourage the recognition and support of family farming through the United Nations by setting up an International Year of Family Farming (IYFF). The World Rural Forum (WRF) has always been of the opinion that the real stars and leaders of this whole process should be farmers' organizations, and that their role should be to co-ordinate and facilitate initiatives globally, bringing together as many initiatives as possible in order to ensure IYFF has the greatest possible impact.

Once the decision to launch such a campaign was taken, the perfect opportunity to make this decision known was the Second Farmers' Forum which took place in Rome in February 2008. This is a large gathering of farmers' organizations coming from all around the world which is organized on a regular basis by the Rome-based International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), to which WRF was invited as an observer. At the end of the Forum the first IYFF newsletter was launched.



2. Outstanding support of civil society and institutions

From that day onwards, over 350 farmers' and rural organizations, coming from 60 countries located in the 5 continents have given their official support to the WRF Campaign for the IYFF (see updated list of IYFF Web at www.familyfarmingcampaign.net).

In many cases contacts have been maintained with FAO and IFAD (since the latter are international organizations specializing in agriculture), when various forums have been held in Rome, during which the opportunity has been taken to explain everything about the IYFF Campaign.

The Report on the 2010 Farmers' Forum proceedings includes the following statement:

We recognize the significant worldwide role played by family farming and give our support to the campaign in favor of the UN establishing an International Year of Family Farming.

Img 1 - Africa: family farmers at work
Img 2 - A family farmers in USA



This support was a great encouragement and recognition for the campaign we had conducted on behalf of all farmers' organizations.

In June 2010 a message was received from the Director General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf, giving valuable advice and support to the Campaign.

In July 2010 IFAD gave its support through its President, Mr. Kanayo F. Nwanze. The main objectives of the 2014 IYFF are to:

- Promote, at all levels, active policies for the sustainable development of family farming and fishing, as well as pressing for the adoption by governments and international institutions of specific operational strategies and measures aimed specifically at developing family farming, devising and implementing appropriate policies and making the necessary budgetary allocations therefor.

- Strengthen the legitimacy of farmers' and fishermen's associations, so as to represent the interests of family farmers, ensuring that their proposals and demands be included in agricultural policies.

- Increase the awareness of civil society and all the stakeholders on the crucial role of family farming in sustainable food production and the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity.

- Ensure that the role of women in family farming is recognized and ensure that they exercise their rights in relation thereto.

The IYFF received vital support when the 37th FAO Conference adopted unanimously on July 2, 2011 a resolution asking the UN Secretary General to include in the agenda of the General Assembly a declaration that 2014 should be the International Year of Family Farming. On December 22, 2011, the General Assembly also adopted unanimously a statement that 2014 would be the IYFF.

The 2014 IYFF welcomes the diversity of situations existing in every continent, with specific reference to families that own and directly work their own plot of land (which is often of a small or medium size), with which the family in question has had ties for generations.

The preparations currently being made (2012-2013) for the 2014 IYFF consist in promoting the coordination of agricultural and rural organizations at a continental level in terms of what their priorities and aspirations are (which will then also have to be clarified at national level).

At international level, the highest level of coordination and consensus will be sought

in order to ensure that the worldwide family of Family Farmers defines its common demands vis-à-vis the international community, regional public organizations and individual governments.

Together we can make the 2014 IYFF become a turning point in the support of millions of women and men farmers who feed the world and take care of the planet.



CASE STUDIES & BEST PRACTICES

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES. UNIVERSITIES AS TOOLS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

by **Ángel Martínez Gutiérrez**

Professor of Commercial Law. University of Jaén.



The financial and economic crisis that has been plaguing the world economy for several years is creating the need for addressing not only changes in the existing economic models in industrialized countries but also the legislation governing the framework within which stakeholders operate in any given business sector (e.g. the well-known legislative reforms that have been undertaken, for example, in Spain in order to overcome the effects of a critical

economic situation). Co-operatives in general and those, in particular, operating in the Andalusian olive sector are well aware of this situation. They are, in fact, part and parcel thereof and suffer, in their respective business sectors, the consequences of this unprecedented economic crisis.

The effects thereof are compounded, moreover, by other endogenous and

exogenous circumstances which are having ruinous consequences for many farmers.

Consider, in this sense, the lack of managerial skills of many of those running cooperatives in the olive oil sector, the low sales prices applied when products are initially sold, the constant increase in production costs and the increasingly scarce availability of subsidies for the olive oil market.

It is in this bleak landscape that an attempt has been made to overcome the present difficulties by introducing in this field specific changes to company law which are important not only in bringing these cooperatives closer to a market-based way of thinking (cfr, for example, the introduction of multiple voting), but also in becoming more competitive in foreign markets (cfr, in relation thereto, Law 14 of December 23 2011 on Andalusian Cooperatives: Official Bulletin of the Andalusian Region no. 255 dated December 31, 2011).

We do not believe, however, that this in itself is sufficient to change the aforementioned situation. On the contrary, we believe that regulatory changes should also be accompanied by a change of attitude of all those involved in the olive oil sector. This is because know-how and training are the best tools for allowing businesses to gain critical mass in the business sectors in which they operate so as to change the internal and external dynamics of the way in which they operate. It is, therefore, in this context that we should emphasize the importance of Universities who have to contribute strongly to the professionalization of the agro-food sector. This is because, in addition to being the pinnacle of a country's the educational

system, they employ teaching and research staff who can potentially be integrated in the production processes of such economic sector. In addition to teaching and research activities, universities are called, moreover, to transfer their know-how to those involved in productive activities, thus, benefiting all the parties involved therein. It must be pointed out that, while companies obtain expert advice on how to improve their activities and processes in the markets at a reasonable cost-oriented price, Universities perform a different role in those commercial ventures in which they take part, obtaining a new source of funding for their institutional activities.

By way of example, we can cite the involvement of the University of Jaén in this type of economic activity (in particular in relation to the production, extraction and marketing of olive oil, which is of the utmost importance to the Andalusia Region). This commitment has led, from an institutional standpoint, to the appointment - within its Research, Technological Development and Innovation Vice-Rectorate - of a Commission within the Center for Advanced Studies on Olives and Olive Oil which groups together Researchers focused on developing knowledge transfer strategies that boost innovation and develop the

Region's economy.

The recent establishment of the Commission has been of real and decisive support to the large group of academic staff and researchers who - in a manner which has been influenced by their academic backgrounds - have been providing all kinds of services to the agricultural production sector (such as, for example, the organization of training activities aimed at studying each phase of the production process, the provision of legal and economic advice and assistance in the form of opinions and reports and the development of scientific and technological research projects on specific aspects).

The effort being made is, in fact, that of making the University into a Research and Development and Innovation Department of those businesses who have agreed to acquire its specialized services. To this effect, one of the most important achievements made recently by the provincial olive sector in its ongoing collaboration with the University of Jaen has been the modification of the olive oil market structure, with olive oil sales being made by a single company that is leading to a marked improvement in the prices of this precious vegetable fat.



FARMATORY

"Why have I chosen agriculture when I could get a stable job?"

by **Nawsheen Hosenally, Mauritius**
YPARD's "YP (Young Professionals) showcase



The answer is that **I have a passion for it**. There was no specific reason when I decided to enroll for an agriculture course at the University of Mauritius. I was a very confused student in high school; in my mind I just knew that I wanted to do **something that will keep me close to nature**.

My parents encouraged me to go forward with it, even if a lot of people told me that there were no job prospects for graduates in agriculture. Fortunately, I did not listen to anyone and did what I wanted.

From land preparation to harvesting, every day we used to go to the farm before our classes to irrigate the crops and Saturdays were kept for weeding after classes.

Like me, there were several students who had never cultivated the land or even held a hoe in their hands. We all had a small plot (5m by 10m), where we had to cultivate crops (beans, cucumber, eggplant, coriander, carrot). It was very tiring to till the soil, demarcate the plot, dig furrows, and weeding but when the day for harvest came, the satisfaction that we get cannot be described.

Simply awesome feeling!

Gradually I started to like this new environment and I was also doing well in my studies. After my first year at university, I was on training in Agricultural Extension at the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit

(AREU). I was assisting extension officers in the field and office and met many planters and breeders.

When University resumed, I started volunteering in the Agricultural Society in organizing the **World Food Day** and other events on campus, and after this experience I joined AIESEC, where I got the **opportunity to lead teams and work on social issues other than agriculture**. This experience has helped me develop my leadership & management skills and take initiatives.

I started to grab all opportunities that I came across and tried to contribute by sharing my experience in agriculture. I found the "Agriculture, Rural Development and Youth in the Information Society" (ARDYIS) contest by Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) and I wrote an essay on Agriculture and ICTs in Mauritius.

To my biggest surprise, I was selected as one of the best participants in the East Africa region and was [trained on web 2.0 for development by CTA in Accra, Ghana \(March 2011\)](#). After this training, I started to share information on agriculture on my profile on social media networks and [started to blog about agriculture](#).

Through these initiatives, I got other opportunities in agriculture: [Attending the Regional Dialogue of FANRPAN in Swaziland \(September 2011\)](#) and being appointed as [consultant for a case study on agriculture and youth policies in Mauritius](#); my selection as Agricultural Innovation Facilitator and training by PAEPARD in Uganda (November 2011).

Agriculture was my starting point, but without web 2.0 tools and leadership skills, I would not have been able to grab opportunities and contribute in sustainable development. Nowadays, **I work, I volunteer, I blog, I network with people over the world, I share information on agriculture and encourage the use of ICTs in agriculture. I love what I do, and highly encourage youths to do things which they are passionate about.**

A common goal: Enhancing rural women's status through cooperative efforts

The 2012 World Development Report on *Gender Equality and Development* highlighted the fact that giving women a voice and empowering them as economic, political, and social actors is an essential stepping stone to driving change in policy choices and in making institutions more representative of a range of voices.

All over the world, cooperatives are emerging as an important form of economic and social organization, which can give vulnerable people a space to express their views and, most importantly, the necessary tools to help lift them out of poverty.

rural women lack education and live in isolated areas where access to information is highly constrained.

As a result, their ability to influence decisions that could help grow their income-generating activities and be more productive, are severely limited - both at the household level and within their wider community.

By responding to their needs, effective cooperatives can help rural women to increase their incomes and meet the rising demand for food in local, national and international markets.

They can provide a range of services, such as

unions can play a crucial role in negotiating fairer and safer conditions of employment, as well as channeling productive resources that can assist farmers to overcome market barriers, negotiate fairer commercial relations and even influence policy-making.

Supporting rural women's participation in agricultural cooperatives is, therefore, an effective way of providing more opportunities, greater empowerment and political representation. Some challenges still need to be overcome, however, particularly in order to ensure women's participation in higher-level leadership roles within these organizations.



This is particularly true for agricultural cooperatives which, when effective, can help small and marginal farmers to have a stronger collective voice, greater bargaining power and better access to decision-making and leadership positions.

According to figures from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the vast majority of the world's farms are small, with 85 percent covering less than two hectares of land. In Africa, for instance, 80 percent of farmed land is cultivated by small producers, the majority of whom are women. In many cases,

training and education - or help them to access technologies, information and financial services.

Moreover, although rural women are increasingly managing their own enterprises, these tend to operate in less lucrative sectors and are concentrated on informal or micro-size activities. Across the developing world, women are also more likely than men to work as unpaid family laborers, have less access to agricultural inputs and manage plots that are smaller and less profitable. In these contexts, rural producer organizations and workers'

WFO also believes that a common goal should be to promote gender sensitivity among cooperative members and leaders, and to focus on building women's skills and knowledge so that they can participate fully and successfully within rural cooperatives.

Finally, it is critical that policy-makers and other stakeholders take measures to build an environment that truly facilitates rural women's inclusion in mixed cooperatives and supports the establishment of women-only cooperatives.

NEWS&EVENTS



World Water Week, Stockholm 26th to 31st of August, 2012:

The "World Water Week", organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), will be held in Stockholm between the 26th and the 31st of August focusing on the theme of water and food security.

Water is indeed crucial in connection to agriculture as it is the main source of irrigation of crops and food security is essential within this context and is obviously seen as a focal point within global debate. The overall meeting, composed by various workshops and seminars, is specifically designed to develop long term perspectives on broad and significant issues on, as has been said, water and development.

For more information about the event: cfr. www.worldwaterweek.org/registration.

EU China Cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Rural Development

Given the crucial role played by agriculture and rural development in the economy and in social development, the EU and China have agreed to start negotiations for cooperation in this field, addressing the issues of food security, food safety, climate change and rural development, which are areas in which both parties face big challenges.

Moreover, China and the EU will establish strong relationship in the above mentioned fields at the bilateral and international level. In particular, negotiations will start within



the sector of food biological products, as agreed between the EU Commissioner Dacian Cioloş and the Chinese Minister for the Administration of Quality, Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, Zhi Shuping. This cooperation is going to be similar to the agreement signed by the EU and the U.S.A. aimed at advancing economic cooperation between these two countries.

South-South partnership point way for food security and poverty reduction

Rural poverty and food insecurity are serious challenges that need to be overcome, especially in developing countries. In order to do so south-south cooperation is essential to advance development. It is believed that, based on the experiences of IFAD (International Food for Agricultural Development), this can be achieved through knowledge transfer between middle income and least developed countries.

In particular, it is necessary that successful technologies and practices be transferred in order to assist smallholder farmers to build agricultural businesses that will lead to food security and rural development. As a matter of fact, in this area middle income countries can assist developing countries with adequate technology transfer. Finally it can be stated that this knowledge transfer has the power to transform the lives of the poorest.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2012/jul/19/south-partnerships-food-security-poverty>

Tanzanian farmers from climate impacts

Changing weather patterns have forced farmers in the Muheza district in Tanzania to move away from growing traditional crops and switch to cassava. As a matter of fact, agriculture in this area was dependent on seasonal rainfalls.

However, due to drought, farmers in this area have to find a solution since their lives were adversely affected. Though the growth of cassava, the economy of the district - as well as that of 11 other affected regions - has recovered rapidly. It can be said that this has lifted communities out of poverty.

Through production farmers could sell cassava as well as use it for domestic needs.

Through training, farmers were also instructed to avoid the crop infection. This has been a brilliant idea that certainly avoided the problems caused by drought.

<http://africa.ypard.net/news/cassava-cushions-tanzanian-farmers-climate-impacts>

