

Africa's Green Revolution: consultations with farmers



In May 2008, FAC co-organised a high-level international conference: "[Towards an African Green Revolution](#)" in Salzburg, Austria. The conference presented a number of strategic recommendations to achieve a uniquely African "Green Revolution". As a follow up to that conference, FAC organised three national-level workshops with nearly 100 smallholder farmers in Kenya, Malawi and Ethiopia.

The recent workshops tested the strategies proposed for a uniquely African Green Revolution and included discussions on agriculture research to provide farmer input into the March 2010 [Global Conference on Agricultural Research for](#)

[Development](#) - in Montpellier, France.

The Kenya workshop took place at [KARI](#) (Kenya Agriculture Research Institute) in Kakamega and aimed to solicit farmer voices on issues of research and governance to lobby and advocate for improved policy outcomes at GCARD. It brought together about thirty representatives of producer associations, farmer marketing organisations, agricultural researchers, youth groups, etc. The priority areas identified for further strengthening and improved support included (i) agricultural production and marketing, (ii) improving research and extension services, (iii) developing innovations, and (iv) protecting property rights.



The October 24th Malawi workshop in Lilongwe drew more than 35 farmers and a special call for women and young farmers resulted in significant attendance from these groups. Participants came from farmer organisations and representative farmers in different crops. The workshops were facilitated by Ephraim Chirwa, Mirriam Matita and David Hughes.



The workshop in Ethiopia took place on November 4th in SNNPR following two days of community consultation with three major cooperatives. The workshop was attended by farmer cooperatives, cooperative union managers, regional Cooperative Promotion Officers and zone and agriculture development officers.

Reports from each of the three workshops will be available soon. Additional links to GCARD and the CGIAR change process are available on the [FAC](#)

[website](#).

ReSAKSS conference: *FAC at the Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge*

Support System's first conference

In Addis Ababa on November 23 and 24, FAC researchers John Omiti and Amdissa Teshome participated in discussions at ReSAKSS' first conference: "[Exploring New Opportunities and Strategic Alternatives to Inform African Agricultural Development, Planning, and Policy](#)".

The conference drew together close to 100 policymakers, researchers, and representatives from farmers' organisations, donors and development agencies, and the private sector. FAC participated and more than 700 FAC publications (policy briefs, working papers, etc.) were distributed to delegates. FAC also made good links with the Ethiopia ReSAKSS node in Addis.



Links to conference resources:

- [ReSAKSS 2009 Africa Wide Conference](#)
- [Day 1 Presentations](#)
- [Day 2 Presentations](#)



GCARD consultations: FAC in Accra for African face-to-face consultations

In 2008, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research ([CGIAR](#)) launched a change initiative to identify how best to address and help to meet anticipated global changes and challenges. The Initiative, in which GFAR is actively involved, has been implemented in different phases throughout 2009, building towards a new structure and renewed results-oriented research agenda. The consultation in Africa culminated in a face-to-face meeting in Accra between

5-7 October.

Sixty three participants met at [FARA](#)'s new secretariat in Accra to review GCARD consultation efforts in Africa. David Hughes, Communications and Networking Officer for the Future Agricultures Consortium, attended the meeting and posted comments on the FAC blog. Representatives from African Farmer Organisations presented a [statement](#) about agriculture, research and smallholder African farmers.

See also:

- [GCARD](#): The Global Conference website
- [Consultation](#): The FARA survey now shaping the agenda for GCARD
- [GFAR](#): The Global Forum for Agricultural Research web site
- [FARA](#): FARA's website
- [CGIAR](#): The various agriculture-related research agencies
- [GFAR Blog](#)



CAADP Africa Forum: *FAC engaged with agriculture policy makers*

The Bottom of the Pyramid: Agriculture Development for the Vulnerable

The [Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme \(CAADP\)](#) is the most ambitious and comprehensive agricultural reform effort ever undertaken in Africa. An initiative of the African Union (AU) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), it represents a fundamental shift toward development that is fully owned and led by African governments. It reflects African governments' recognition of agriculture as central for the alleviation of poverty and hunger and hence for reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



On November 30 in Nairobi, more than 160 delegates from across Africa met for the fourth CAADP Africa Forum, organised by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) from 30 November-4 December 2009. The Forum's theme was 'The Bottom of the Pyramid: Agricultural Development for the Vulnerable'.

The forum opened with addresses from Kenya's Minister of Agriculture, Hon. William Ruto and Kenya's Permanent Secretary for agriculture, Hon. Romano Kiome.

FAC also participated and provided policy briefs, occasional papers and FAC researcher contact details to CAADP and NEPAD policy makers and stakeholders.

See also:

- [Conference](#)
- [FAC blog posts](#)

How to Feed the World in 2050: *FAC's Steve Wiggins invited to participate*

On October 11 and 12, FAO brought together more than 400 participants from across the world in a High Level Expert Forum on 'How to Feed the World in 2050' - a preparatory exercise for the World Food Summit of November; the event built on a technical meeting in June 2009.



FAC researcher Steve Wiggins contributed a paper to the Forum entitled "[Can the Smallholder Model Deliver Poverty Reduction and Food Security for a Rapidly Growing Population in Africa?](#)" and this FAC "[HOT TOPIC](#)" that summarized the forum from an FAC perspective.

See also:

- [FAO Forum Site](#): Farming must change to feed the world
- [Guardian](#): High level forum opens in Rome to discuss food security over the next 40 years
- [IRIN](#): GLOBAL: The food benefits of a command economy
- [BBC](#): Global hunger worsening, warns UN

Ethiopia Coordination: *Consultations on Extension*

Agricultural/Pastoral Extension Systems in Ethiopia: Opportunities, Challenges and Future prospects

The Ethiopian extension system has a long history relative to many African countries and has been delivered

through a variety of approaches and models. Despite this history, the system is still in its infancy in terms of coverage, communication and institutional pluralism.

Recently, the extension system has come under the spotlight and government debates and external reviews (FAO and IFPRI) are putting additional scrutiny on the system.

Future Agriculture Ethiopia is also interested in contributing to this analysis and together with the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development (MoARD) has organised and facilitated four regional consultations on the extension system in Amhara, Tigray, Oromiya and SNNPR. For FAC Ethiopia, work continues on the extension system and consultation and workshop reports will form a basis for an FAC Policy Brief on agricultural and pastoral extension systems in Ethiopia available soon.



Kenya Coordination: *FAC Kenya continues to engage policy makers*

John Omiti, the FAC Country Coordinator, liaised with all country team members to facilitate (i) closer linkages among different themes, (ii) share research findings and plan media briefings, (iii) hold joint round-table meetings / workshops. Co-ordination activities included:

1. Two major meetings involved discussions on the food security situation in Kenya with Ministry of Agriculture officials and others engaged in humanitarian food relief supplies. Kenya experienced one of the worst droughts in fifty years that has exposed as high as 30 percent of the population to hunger. The food security situation in the country was described as alarming.
2. Policy intelligence and preparedness in the Country to explore avenues through which policies are triggered, discussed and implemented at the country level. Discussions are continuing on this exciting interaction.
3. The conference paper from Kenya on "[seasonality and time use](#)" has been presented to a high-level Government entity (the National Economic and Social Council - NESCC). The NESCC report is one of the "unemployment interventions in Kenya". It was well received given that it revealed the seasonality in unemployment by education and the issue of missing gender data on time use was taken up by the ILO during the meeting.

Malawi Coordination: *FACM working with CSOs*

On 24 October 2009, the FACM team held a planning meeting on a FACM Communication Strategy with David Hughes - the FAC Communications Specialist. The Malawi team of Ephraim Chirwa and Blessings Chinsinga emphasised the importance of working with civil society organisations in its engagement with policy makers.

FACM hosted a Policy Brief drafting meeting in Zomba on 12 December 2009 on "Lessons from the Implementation of the Agricultural Input Subsidy Programme in Malawi". This is a collaboration of FACM and civil society and farmer organisations in agriculture. The participants to the Policy Brief drafting meeting were drawn from Centre for Agricultural Research and Development (CARD) of Bunda College and CSOs in agriculture - Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM), Civil Society Agricultural Network (CISANET), and National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM). This is a follow-up meeting between CSOs in agriculture and FACM held in May 2009.

Agricultural Growth and Social Protection: *FAC continues to analyse*

Malawi's input subsidy programme

There has been significant progress in FAC Malawi's work on agricultural growth and social protection.

1. With the continued involvement of FACM members in the Malawi Agricultural Input Support Programme (MAISP) evaluation, Andrew Dorward and Ephraim Chirwa completed the first draft of core sections of the evaluation of the Malawi Agricultural Input Subsidy for 2007/8 and 2008/09.
2. Ephraim Chirwa and Mirriam Matita began analysis of MAISP data on 'access to and use of input subsidies in Malawi'.
3. Ephraim Chirwa and CSOs in agriculture prepared the framework for the joint FACM-CSO Policy Brief on lessons learnt from research on agricultural input subsidies in Malawi.

Science, technology and innovation: *New projects underway including FAC in West Africa*

The Political Economy of Seed Systems Project



Three of the five country studies (Kenya, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe) were completed and draft reports are under review. Ghana and Malawi are expected to be completed in early 2010.

A one-day workshop to present the research findings and review policy implications will be held in March, before to the main FAC Annual Review and Planning Meeting.

Dr Rob Tripp, a specialist on African seed systems, is assisting with the review and forward planning process.

Discussions with the coordinators of a pair of FAO-Global Partnership Initiative for Plant Breeding Capacity Building (GIPB) studies on 'Investing in Plant Breeding System Capacity' and 'Small-Scale Seed Enterprises for OPVs' were initiated and opportunities for information sharing and collaboration are being explored.

Pastoral Innovation Systems

The new *Pastoralist Innovation Systems* team is now formed, including:

- Hussein Abdullahi Mahmoud, Lecturer, Department of Geography, Egerton University
- Abdirizak Arale Nunow, Lecturer, Department of Environmental Studies, Moi University
- Abdi Abdullahi Hussein - Pastoralist Forum of Ethiopia (<http://www.pfe-ethiopia.org/index.html>)
- Boku Tache Dida - Independent consultant, Addis, formerly PhD student at Noragric, Norway
- Patta Scott-Villiers, PCI, Nairobi
- Jeremy Lind, Fellow, IDS
- Ian Scoones, IDS



The proposed research has the following elements:

- Documentation of (differentiated) pastoral innovation systems in a number of sites
- Analysis of the key characteristics of pastoral innovation systems - commonalities and differences

- Linking pastoral innovation systems with formal innovation systems, public and private.
- We hope that FAC Kenya representative will attend the Feb meeting, including Hannington Odamo and John Omiti, as well as representatives from the ILRI innovations cluster, including Seife Ayele.
- At the meeting, we will develop a proposal for the next FAC annual conference with a focus on pastoralism which will be tabled at the FAC Annual Meeting in March.

A two-day meeting is scheduled for early February 2010 in Nairobi to plan research and policy engagement activities in Ethiopia and Kenya for the coming year.

Agricultural Commercialisations

In Malawi, activities focused on implementation of field research work on the link between food security and commercialisation. These activities include: 1. Implementation of the food security and commercialisation smallholder survey in collaboration with NASFAM. This activity was led by Mirriam Matita and Ephraim Chirwa. Data was collected in October - November 2009 through a household questionnaire administered to 300 households, and Focus Group Discussions in six communities. The survey was conducted in areas where the NASFAM associations had experienced natural growth in the previous season. The target households were members of NASFAM that had one year experience with the organisation and non-members in Ntchisi and Nkhotakota districts in Central Malawi. The survey areas cover different crops promoted by NASFAM including groundnuts, rice, chillies and paprika. 2. Data entry for the food security and commercialisation survey was completed towards the end of December 2009.

In Ethiopia, data compilation and analysis of survey data collected in the preceding quarter from 160 farmers in Lume District was led by Samuel Gebreselassie. To complement data from one-to-one interviews, additional information was gathered through discussion of different group of farmers. The discussion intended to collect farmers' views and opinions on: factors encouraging market engagement by farmers of different kinds; which farmers are profiting from markets; prices received before and after the intervention; types of traders involved in buying from farmers; problems experienced and responses; perceived opportunities and risks in farming, ways of coping; and support needed.

In Kenya, a baseline survey was conducted in two areas where a cellphone-based farmer helpline is being promoted, under the leadership of Gem Argwings-Kodhek. Data collection and entry are complete and data are being cleaned.

Finally, a literature review is underway and will be ready in time for a workshop planned for the first week in March to look at the early results from the above field studies. It is proposed to include in this meeting colleagues from Sokoine University in Tanzania who are working on very similar issues, carrying out surveys in four villages on the edge of the Southern Highlands where onions are grown under irrigation. At this meeting, plans for subsequent work – where several intriguing possibilities present themselves – will be discussed.

Policy Processes

During the quarter, the activities concentrated on dissemination of the survey results on the Ministry of Agriculture services from all the three study districts. The following activities were completed: 1. Blessings Chinsinga organised a National Workshop on 23 October 2009 to disseminate and discuss findings on the MoAFS district level study on management of extension services. The workshop was held in one of the districts (Dedza) and drew participants from the other two districts in the study: Thyolo and Rumphu. The MoAFS was represented by officials from the study districts and the MoAFS headquarters. 2. Preparation of the Case Study report on extension services in Rumphu district (Blessings Chinsinga).

Future Farmers: *In Search of Africa's Future Farmers*
FAC introduces a new research theme

The economic, social and cultural contexts of agriculture are changing fast, as evidenced by significant shifts in the patterns of food production and consumption. An increasingly globalised world also means that there is now greater access to fast-evolving communication and media technology, which improves information flows and adds to the feeling that the world is getting smaller. However, development and growth processes still move at different speeds in different locations, even within countries. These inequalities are increasingly visible to people living in remote rural areas, often characterised by under-investment and slow growth.



Against this backdrop, we also have the largest population ever of young people in the developing world. In all, there are roughly 1.5 billion people aged 12-24 worldwide, 1.3 billion of whom live in developing countries. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to over 200 million young people, three quarters residing in rural areas. Growth in the population of African youth is not projected to peak for another 20 years.

Ironically, while there are more young people in the African population, across the continent the ageing of the farming population is causing concern. Young people are choosing not to pursue livelihoods in the agriculture sector, especially as farmers.

Recent policy dialogues on the future of food and farming facilitated by the Future Agricultures Consortium's Ethiopia team point to the fact that it is not just the youth who have an aversion to farming. Their parents often hold the same view, preferring their children to move away from rural areas entirely because they associate rural life with poverty... [Read More](#)

"The Role of Agriculture in Growth Revisited for Africa":

An FAC Commentary

What is the role of agriculture in Africa's economic growth? An opinion article by Stefan Dercon and Kareen El Beyrouty critiques arguments for "agriculture first" programmes. Michigan State University Food Security Group provides comment and stresses the importance of re-investing in agriculture.

Please visit the FAC [page](#) dedicated to this issue and read FAC Researcher Steve Wiggins' [rebuttal](#).

FAC soon to launch new website

FAC is soon to launch a new website with new features and improved usability. The site is undergoing final adjustments and edits but we invite you to visit the site and trust you will find it a useful resource for agriculture policy research in Africa.

<http://projecttesting.future-agricultures.org>. We also appreciate feedback so please do contact us at: info@future-agricultures.org

The website features:

- Our full collection of [policy briefs](#), working papers, occasional papers, etc.
- [RSS feeds](#) from ELDIS, R4D, GFAR, IFPRI and others
- An [events calendar](#) of key African agriculture policy moments
- The collection of FAC [e-debates](#)
- A new FAC [blog](#)



- A new user comment system for articles, stories, publications, etc.
- A robust Search tool
- An RSS feeder to keep you up-to-date on new FAC materials

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