



Young People, Farming & Food: the Future of the Agrifood Sector in Africa

*An international conference to debate research findings and policy options
March 19-21, 2012, Accra, Ghana*

Competition for African Journalists/Media Specialists

Several Awards and Prizes to be won

GENERAL INFORMATION

Future Agricultures Consortium (FAC), in collaboration with the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) of the University of Ghana, is organising an international conference to debate research findings and policy options around the theme "**Young People, Farming & Food: the Future of the Agrifood Sector in Africa.**" The conference will take place 19-21 March 2012 in Accra, Ghana. See <http://www.future-agricultures.org/events/young-people-farming-a-food> for further information.

This competition aims to encourage young and early career journalists and media specialists (**between ages 18-40**) to investigate the **challenges and opportunities associated with young people's engagement in agriculture**, to showcase success stories and best practices that can be replicated, and to raise awareness on the important role of young people in agriculture and rural development.

The competition is open to all media and communication professionals (either print, broadcast or electronic) **who are nationals of African states** and are from established media houses, private and public sector organisations (e.g. government ministries), and non-governmental organisations including farmer organisations.

Entries should be original pieces and demonstrate realities on the ground. The piece should be based on case studies/information from the country or region in which the journalist/media specialist operates. Applicants must submit their entry in **English only** by email. Entries should be submitted to post@wrenmedia.co.uk and copied to info@future-agricultures.org

Your **journalistic piece** must reach the organisers by no later than **Friday, 17th February** to be considered for inclusion in the competition.

COMPETITION THEMES

In Africa, policy interest in the linking young people to agriculture focuses almost exclusively on the challenge of keeping young people in rural areas and engaged in farming. This approach ignores important drivers, trends and developments that are impacting on both young people's aspirations and the structure of the agrifood sector.

In the coming years the agrifood sector in Africa will undergo significant transformation that will result in both challenges and opportunities for young people, depending on who and where they are. Perhaps most importantly, the agrifood sector will become an increasingly important source of formal employment for young people, with a significant expansion of employment opportunities in food marketing, processing, retail, catering, research, input sales etc. These jobs will generally require higher levels of education and different skills, and many will be located in or near urban areas.

Your journalistic piece should correspond to one or more of the three main cross-cutting themes of the Conference:

- 1. Education and training:** Investment in human resource development is crucial for the growth of a modern, dynamic agrifood sector. Agriculture has had a place in rural primary and secondary school curricula for many years, and throughout Africa there are university departments covering all aspects of agriculture and food science. Are these education and training activities presently delivering the **kind and quality** of teaching and learning that will transform the agrifood sector? What is the evidence that they are **motivating young people** and **preparing them for careers** in the agrifood sector? Are there examples of particularly **innovative approaches** to curriculum development and delivery? What are the **good/best practices** or **failures** in practice or policy? What are the **knowledge gaps** and what research is needed to fill them?
- 2. Micro-enterprise development:** Under- and unemployment of rural youth in sub-Saharan Africa is high and carries significant personal, social and economic costs. One common response on the part of policy makers and development organisations is to promote job creation through micro-enterprise development within the agrifood sector. What is the evidence that the training and micro-credit associated with these programmes results in **sustainable employment**? How important is **access to markets and other infrastructure** for the success of these projects? Which young people are **best placed to benefit** from these programmes? What are the **success stories** or **failures** in practice or policy? What are the **knowledge gaps** and what research is needed to fill them?
- 3. The youth bulge - the salvation of African agriculture?** The 'youth bulge' - that is, the high proportions of young people in the African population - can be seen as an opportunity as much as a threat. In particular, young people are sometimes seen as the salvation of the agricultural sector which, across the continent, is the primary source of employment, food and income. Do rural policies coincide with the aspirations of young people? What aspects of the **agrifood industry** broadly (from on-farm activity to off-farm businesses) are young people interested in? For those young people already involved in the agrifood sector - **as entrepreneurs, as employees** - what do they hope to gain from their involvement in the sector? How does the propensity for young people to **migrate and/or move back and forth** between urban and rural spaces affect the way agriculture features in their lives?

ENTRY CONDITIONS

Each candidate will submit **only one print (in word doc or docx format) or audio piece (in mp3 format)** from any African country. Any accompanying photos for print articles should be sent as jpegs. The title and the name of the author should be clearly written on the cover page to the piece, or details included in email with audio piece. The **deadline for receipt of submissions is 17 February, 2012**.

Note: if you have difficulty submitting your audio piece by email, you can use YouSendit (www.yousendit.com) or a similar free internet service.

All applications should submit a **short biographical note** including name and full contact details; **email address, telephone number(s)**, postal address, town, country, and a **scanned photocopy of the applicant's identification card or passport** (as proof of age). Entries received after 17 February will not be considered. Notification of approved **selections will be announced on Monday 5th March, 2012**.

SELECTION PROCESS

A panel of judges from Future Agriculture Youth theme and Communication Co-ordinator, WRENmedia, and the media will review entries and make their recommendations to the International Steering Committee for the Conference.

The pieces should demonstrate that the author(s) understand the issues as well as the potential of young people in agricultural and rural development.

The main selection criteria for the pieces are:

- Originality and quality of analysis;
- Creativity;
- Relevance and responsiveness to development challenges;
- Quality of language (engaging writing style, good spelling and grammar, etc.);
- Presence of bibliography and/or other relevant references;
- Respect of the prescribed format:
 - ◆ Number of words/duration - Print: **max 1,200 words**. Audio pieces should **not exceed 5 minutes**.
 - ◆ Print format:
 - Font : Arial size 11 - Line spacing: 1.5
- **NB:** Additional points will be awarded to journalist/media specialists whose pieces are published or broadcasted in national, regional or international news outlets before the deadline for submission. **The date of publication must be included on the submission as only original pieces that have been prepared after the announcement of this call will be considered.**

AWARDS AND PRIZES

The best print and best audio journalistic piece will be selected using established criteria. The top two finalists will be announced on **March 5, 2012** by email or phone. These two finalists will be **fully supported** to attend the international conference on Young People, Farming & Food at the University of Ghana, Accra. They will also each be awarded with a certificate of recognition during the conference. In addition, they will be invited to report on sessions during the conference.

Besides the winning entries, the top ten selected pieces will be published and promoted regionally, internationally and on the FAC website.

ADDITIONAL RULES

FAC reserves the right to disqualify any entry if it does not meet the contest criteria and present regulations;

- ◆ By entering, participants warrant that their print/audio materials are original and do not infringe on any third party's rights;
- ◆ Entry to the contest constitutes an agreement to allow FAC to make articles/audio pieces, name, occupation and state of residence of applicants, public.
- ◆ In addition it constitutes an agreement to allow FAC to use the material in its publications and in the framework of promotional activities. Applicants will retain ownership and all other rights to future use of their texts;
- ◆ FAC will not be able to return submitted articles / audio to their authors;
- ◆ If, for any reason, the competition is not completed as planned, FAC reserves the right at its sole discretion to cancel, terminate, modify or suspend it;
- ◆ The decisions made by the panel of judges are final and beyond dispute;
- ◆ All participants in this competition implicitly accept the rules presented in this document.

Beatrice Ouma
Future Agricultures Communication
and Networking Co-ordinator

Susanna Thorp
Director, WRENmedia