



The Farmers Digest

A compilation of news from EAFF Family



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Mbabazi Francoix Xavier, Chief Executive Officer of the Ingabo Syndicate

The East African Farmers' Federation (EAFF) joined the Ingabo Farmers' Syndicate at the 7th Cassava Week in Muhanga, Rwanda, from October 23-25, 2024. Themed “Leveraging Available Opportunities to Enhance the Cassava Value Chain's Contribution to Sustainable Food Systems,” the event gathered farmers, government agencies, research institutions, private sector representatives, and financial institutions to strengthen the cassava sector.

Addressing the audience at the event, Mr. Norbert Tuyishime, EAFF's Program Officer, highlighted the close partnership between EAFF and the Ingabo Farmers' Syndicate. He commended the syndicate's efforts in advancing the cassava value chain and called for a united approach to improve cassava production and promote climate-smart agricultural practices. “Our organizations are part of the same family,” he stated, underscoring the shared mission to bolster agricultural resilience and economic growth in the region.

EAFF also received an award at the event in recognition of its exceptional contributions to the cassava value chain. Expressing gratitude, Mr. Tuyishime noted,

“This honour reinforces our commitment to sustainable agriculture and resilient food systems. Together with the Ingabo Farmers' Syndicate, we are shaping a stronger agricultural future for East Africa.”

Cassava is not just a staple, it is a lifeline for many farmers. To maximize its potential, we must collaborate across all levels farmers, researchers, government, and private sector. We must also adopt climate-smart agriculture practices to ensure resilience in the face of climate change,” Mr. Tuyishime said.

Mbabazi Francoix Xavier, CEO of the Ingabo Syndicate, welcomed the gathering and reflected on cassava's central role in Rwanda's food security strategy. He highlighted progress made since the last Cassava Week, including establishing cassava platforms in 10 districts, providing farmers with hubs of support and resources.

To further benefit farmers, Ingabo Syndicate has partnered with financial institutions like SPF INEZA and CLECAM, reducing loan interest rates from 24% to 18% and offering flexible repayment plans to boost farmers' financial security and production.



One of the cassava production shared by farmers working with Ingabo Syndicate

However, challenges remain. Farmers shared concerns over financial strains, access to quality seeds, and high-interest rates. Speciose Mujawamariya, a cooperative president, explained that poor financial management by a previous committee left them struggling with debts. Emmanuel Bashimiki, a cassava producer, voiced concerns that the 18% loan rate is still too high and advocated for a reduction to 8%.

Dr. Ndabamenye Telesphore, Director General of the Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB), acknowledged these concerns and reaffirmed RAB's support through the provision of fertilizers and high-quality seeds. He urged farmers to engage with financial institutions to leverage resources for post-harvest handling, production, and climate adaptation efforts. He also encouraged farmers to share their skills within their communities to expand training impact and foster resilience.

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Mr. Norbert Tuyishime, EAFF's Program Officer, gives his remarks



Dr. Ndabamenye Telesphore, Director General of the Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB) gives his remarks



A section of the participants at the Cassava Week field event

EAFF CALL FOR REMOVAL OF BARRIERS TO SMALLHOLDER ACCESS TO CLIMATE FINANCE AT COP29

123rf.com



EAFF CEO, Mr. Stephen Muchiri, shares his insights during a panel discussion on "Catalyzing Smallholder Farmer Adaptation through Climate Finance" at the Action on Food Hub side event at COP29.

From November 11 to 22, 2024, the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) took place in Baku, Azerbaijan, gathering global leaders, policymakers, organizations, and experts to tackle urgent climate issues. The Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) played a key role, advocating for equitable climate finance and sustainable transformation of Africa's food systems.

At the core of EAFF's message was the call to eliminate barriers preventing smallholder farmers from accessing climate finance, crucial for climate adaptation and enhancing agricultural resilience. During the Action on Food Hub event, EAFF CEO Stephen Muchiri emphasized the need for targeted investments to support African farmers and the vital role of farmer organizations in driving agricultural development and ensuring food security.

"Let's reform financing architecture and pave the way for farmer-led climate adaptation," he urged.

“Our farmer organizations struggle with access to finance due to numerous challenges,” Muchiri said. “It’s time to document farmer-led cases that are scalable and demonstrate clear returns on investment. Climate finance discussions must lead to real action.”

Addressing Structural Gaps

Muchiri called for inclusive policies that enable farmer organizations to actively participate in global discussions like COP29. He advocated for reforms in financing structures, alongside technical assistance to strengthen local capacity.

“Let’s reform financing architecture and pave the way for farmer-led climate adaptation,” he urged.

EAFF Program Officer, Mr. Norbert Tuyishime, also emphasized the need for urgent measures to improve access to finance for farmer organizations, including technical support to enhance local capacity. He highlighted the importance of climate-smart practices such as conservation farming and agroforestry to boost soil health and empower farmers.

Showcasing Farmer-Led Solutions

During COP29’s Food, Agriculture, and Water Day, EAFF, in collaboration with the Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA) and partners, presented a report featuring ten farmer-led climate-smart agriculture (CSA) case studies from nine African countries.

These cases showcase innovative practices that combine traditional knowledge and scientific insights to build resilience against climate challenges.

The case studies emphasize the importance of partnerships among farmers, NGOs, and local communities in creating scalable, sustainable solutions.

A Call for Action

Through its advocacy, EAFF reinforced its leadership in the fight for sustainable agriculture in Africa. By pushing for practical solutions, equitable partnerships, and inclusive policies, EAFF ensures that African agriculture thrives in the face of climate change.

“Climate finance discussions must translate into meaningful action,” Muchiri said. “Supporting smallholder farmers is essential for achieving global climate goals and securing a sustainable future for food systems worldwide.”

As COP29 concludes, all eyes turn to Brazil, which will host COP30 in Belém from November 10-21, 2025.



EAFF Program Officer, Norbert Tuyishime, shares his insights during the panel discussion on Financing Resilient Futures for Smallholder Farmers at the Action on Food Hub side event at COP29.



EAFF Ltd Chairman, Mr. Philip Kiro, addressing participants during a field visit

Bomet County, Kenya recently played host to a two-day Aflatoxin Management Workshop organized by the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF). The event, which focused on equipping farmers and stakeholders with innovative solutions to combat aflatoxin contamination, brought together county agriculture officials, organizations in the maize value chain, researchers, and policymakers to discuss joint strategies for improving food safety and farmer welfare.

One of the standout innovations presented was the use of Black Soldier Fly larvae to detoxify maize contaminated with aflatoxins. This solution, along with other interventions, was shared by scientists as part of the broader efforts to enhance aflatoxin management.

The workshop also served as a platform to promote the *SolFood* project—*Ecological, Technological, and Capacity Building Strategies for a Sustainable Optimization of Local Maize-Based Food Systems and Climate-Change Resilient Food Production*. This initiative, jointly implemented by EAFF in collaboration with the Max Rubner Institute, Kenya Agricultural Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), University of Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and Julius Kühn Institute, aims to reduce food loss due to mycotoxin contamination. It focuses on improving maize production systems for smallholder farmers in Kenya through research and sustainable strategies.

Mr. Philip Kiri, EAFF Chairman, emphasized the significance of addressing aflatoxins, stating that they affect health, trade, and food security across the region. “The health and livelihoods of our farmers are at the core of EAFF's mission. Aflatoxins pose a serious threat to both, and it is crucial that farmers are equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to mitigate this risk,” said Mr. Kiri. He reaffirmed EAFF's commitment to fostering partnerships and mobilizing resources to empower farmers and enhance food safety.

Hon. Rosa Chepngetich, the County Executive Committee Member for Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Cooperatives in Bomet County, highlighted the health and economic risks posed by unsafe food, including aflatoxin contamination. She praised the workshop as an opportunity to strengthen food safety measures, citing initiatives in Bomet County such as the rollout of food safety guidelines, public sensitization programs, and the establishment of mini-labs for aflatoxin testing.

Aflatoxin, a deadly toxin produced by the fungus *Aspergillus flavus*, poses a significant threat to food safety and public health across Africa. Found in staple crops like maize and groundnuts, aflatoxin contamination is both invisible and tasteless, making it difficult to detect without specialized testing equipment. Despite its undetectable nature, high levels of aflatoxin can be lethal, emphasizing the need for robust prevention measures.

The fungus responsible for aflatoxin thrives in soil, with contamination often beginning in the field before harvest. Poor postharvest practices, such as improper drying and storage, can exacerbate the problem. Regulatory limits for aflatoxin vary globally, with the East African Community.

(EAC) capping maize contamination at 10 parts per billion (ppb), stricter than the 20 ppb limit in the United States.

Once aflatoxin contaminates grains, it cannot be removed. Prevention is the best defense, requiring a combination of good agricultural practices, proper harvesting, and optimal storage conditions to keep contamination at bay.

In response to the aflatoxin crisis, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and its partners have developed **Aflasafe**, an innovative biocontrol product that significantly reduces aflatoxin contamination by over 80%. Aflasafe works by leveraging native, non-toxic strains of *Aspergillus flavus* to outcompete their toxic counterparts in the field. The product, which is safe, natural, and environmentally friendly, is applied to fields a few weeks before crops flower, preventing contamination from the start.



A section of participants at the workshop

EASTERN AFRICA FARMERS FEDERATION HOSTS AFLATOXIN MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP TO BOOST FARMER KNOWLEDGE AND FOOD SAFETY

Aflasafe is tailored to specific countries using local strains, ensuring maximum effectiveness. In Tanzania, **Aflasafe TZ01** is now widely available, produced by A to Z Textiles Mills Limited in Arusha. Farmers in the region can protect their crops throughout the production cycle, from planting to storage.

In Uganda, efforts to introduce a country-specific Aflasafe product are underway. The IITA, in collaboration with the National Agriculture Research Organization (NARO) and funded by aBi Development Ltd, is testing and finalizing a local version of Aflasafe. Additionally, Kenya's registered Aflasafe product (Aflasafe KE01) has shown promise for use in Uganda and Burundi.

Addressing the aflatoxin challenge requires coordinated efforts across the region. The EAC is championing policies to harmonize safety standards, brand aflatoxin-free products, and incentivize the production of safe food. Strengthening these initiatives will be crucial in safeguarding public health and unlocking access to lucrative markets for farmers and traders.

By adopting innovative solutions like Aflasafe and strengthening regional collaboration, East Africa is taking significant strides toward combating aflatoxin and ensuring food safety for its communities.

The workshop was attended by agriculture executives from five counties Bomet, Trans-Nzoia, Busia, Tharaka Nithi, and Nakuru alongside 20 ward representatives, farmers, researchers, and industry stakeholders. This collective effort underscored a unified commitment to mitigating aflatoxin contamination and ensuring a safer and more resilient food system in Eastern Africa.

The workshop marked a significant step forward in enhancing knowledge, fostering partnerships, and laying the groundwork for sustainable solutions to aflatoxin contamination, ensuring safer food and better health for Eastern African communities.



EAFF Program Officer, Mr. Hillary Cheruiyot addresses participant during the workshop field study

In the fresh air of Kigali's hills, a group of 20 rural women leaders from 13 African countries and Germany gathered for a transformative journey. Their eyes reflected unwavering determination and resilience, as they joined forces from November 18 to 22, 2024, for the second session of the “Women Lead: Leadership for Rural Women” program. Organized by the Pan-African Farmers Organization (PAFO) in partnership with the Andreas Hermes Akademie (AHA) and the German Rural Women's Association (dlv), this event marked a significant step toward rural women's empowerment and sustainable agriculture.

A highlight of the program was the field visit on November 20 to the INGABO Syndicate, nestled in Rwanda's lush countryside. Here, participants explored practical, community-driven initiatives. The week concluded with a moving certificate ceremony, recognizing the women's commitment to advancing sustainable and equitable agriculture in Africa. For these leaders, the certificate was more than an achievement; it was a symbol of their collective vision for a future where rural women transition from spectators to key actors in agricultural development.

Full Article : <https://shorturl.at/kDJgO>





**“If the rain spoils our
picnic but saves a
farmer’s crop, who are we
to say it shouldn’t rain?”
— Tom Barrett**

At [COP29 in Baku](#), Azerbaijan, [PAFO](#) played a key role in advocating for equitable climate finance and sustainable transformation of Africa's food systems. Through its involvement in several key strategic events, PAFO highlighted the vital role of farmers' organizations in adapting to climate change, ensuring food security and driving agricultural development. The organisation made it clear that the core issue at this year's COP was one of finance, calling for targeted investment to support African farmers and increase the resilience of agriculture across the continent.

One of PAFO's key messages, on '[PAFOs Call To Action](#)', at COP29 in its Call to Action was to underline the urgency of fair climate finance for African farmers, especially family farmers. PAFO called for greater financial mobilisation to support these key food producers, who are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, but who play a central role in global food security. The inclusion of family farmers in climate finance processes and their integration into public policies is essential to ensure the sustainability of agriculture in Africa.

Link for article on PAFO Website: <https://shorturl.at/UBlAd>



A new report titled "Farmer-Led Adaptation: Best Practice Case Studies" highlights innovative strategies employed by farmers across Africa to combat climate challenges and build resilience. This initiative, a collaboration between the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) and Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA), compiles impactful examples of locally driven solutions addressing pressing environmental, economic, and social issues in agriculture.

The report emphasizes the importance of placing farmers at the center of adaptation efforts, blending traditional knowledge with modern science to create context-specific solutions. It documents 10 diverse case studies spanning the continent, showcasing successes in areas such as climate-smart agriculture, integrated water management, and circular economy practices.

With contributors from across regions, the compendium is not only a resource for learning but also a call to action for policymakers and stakeholders to invest in scaling these solutions.

For detailed insights and to access the full report, click here https://aiccra.cgiar.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/AICCRA-and-EAFF_FarmerLed-Adaptation-Best-Practice-Case-Studies.pdf





Dr. Andrew Karanja, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture and Livestock, officially inaugurates the report by cutting the ribbon.

The dairy industry in Kenya plays a crucial role in the nation's economy, providing essential contributions to income, employment, and food security. With an annual milk production of 5.2 billion liters, Kenya accounts for 10% of Africa's total milk production and 35% of the East African Community's supply.

On November 20, 2024, Dr. Andrew Karanja, Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture and Livestock, officially launched the 2024 Study Report on Milk Production Costs and Profitability at the Kenya Dairy Board headquarters. This report, which has been published annually for the past four years, offers valuable insights into dairy farming productivity, costs, and overall sustainability.

This report serves as a critical tool for making informed decisions and driving the sustainable growth of Kenya's dairy industry. The dairy sector in Kenya remains a cornerstone of the economy, contributing 14% of agricultural GDP and 4% of the national GDP. Cow milk dominates, accounting for 75% of annual milk production, with smallholder farmers producing 80%. However, a significant yield gap 39-49% of attainable production limits sector growth.

Key Findings from the Study

1. Production Insights:

- o Average herd size per typical dairy farm: 7 cattle, with 75% lactating cows producing an average of 9 liters/day.
- o Milk yields were highest in zero-grazing systems (12.3 liters/day), followed by semi-zero (8.4 liters/day) and open grazing (7.2 liters/day).

2. Economic Metrics:

- o Average gross value of milk per liter: KES 46.1.
- o Average production cost per liter: KES 36.2, highest in zero-grazing farms (KES 39.5)



and lowest in open grazing farms (KES 24.5).

- o Profitability: Open grazing was the most cost-efficient system, earning KES 4.3 for every shilling spent on variable costs, compared to KES 1.2 in zero-grazing.

3. Cost Drivers:

- o Feeds accounted for 43-73% of production costs across systems, with labor as the second-largest contributor.

4. Challenges:

- o High feed costs, inconsistent feed quality, and low adoption of feed preservation techniques hinder production.
- o Limited access to reliable livestock health services and artificial insemination (AI).
- o Volatile milk prices and low transparency in payment structures.

The full report is an essential resource for understanding the dynamics of Kenya's dairy sector and formulating actionable strategies for sustainability and growth. Access the complete document through the Kenya Dairy Board. Read the full report here: <https://www.kdb.go.ke/index.php/download-category/technical-reports/>

1. Farmers now urged to shift to agroecology for food security

<https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/star-farmer/2024-11-12-farmers-now-urged-to-shift-to-agroecology-for-food-security>

2. How a novel type of insurance is helping Uganda's banana farmers avoid catastrophe

<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/how-novel-type-insurance-helping-ugandas-banana-farmers-avoid-catastrophe>

3. Ugandan banana farmers boost resilience to climate change with innovative insurance

<https://www.freshplaza.com/latin-america/article/9674354/ugandan-banana-farmers-boost-resilience-to-climate-change-with-innovative-insurance/>

4. Experts push contract farming to boost Africa food systems, farmers' income

<https://www.voanews.com/a/experts-push-contract-farming-to-boost-africa-food-systems-farmers-income/7862748.html>

5. CS: Contract farming key to transforming agriculture in Africa

<https://nation.africa/africa/news/cs-contract-farming-key-to-transforming-agriculture-in-africa-4821434>

6. How African seeds can solve tomorrow's hunger games

<https://www.theafricareport.com/368689/scientists-hope-african-seeds-can-solve-tomorrows-hunger-games/>

7. COP29: New climate finance goal must empower small-scale farmers to help feed the world

<https://www.ifad.org/en/w/news/cop29-new-climate-finance-goal-must-empower-small-scale-farmers-to-help-feed-the-world>

8. Rwanda aims to boost cassava maize-and-potato-production-through-tolerant-genetically-engineered-varieties

<https://farmersreviewafrica.com/rwanda-aims-to-boost-cassava-maize-and-potato-production-through-tolerant-genetically-engineered-varieties/>

9. Rwanda Targets Boosting Food Security Through Agri-biotech

<https://www.isaaa.org/kc/cropbiotechupdate/article/default.asp?ID=21054>

10. Tanzania's agricultural transformation: Leading the way in climate resilience and sustainable farming

<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/partner-content/tanzania-s-agricultural-transformation-4788136>

11. Apples: The next big farming opportunity in Tanzania and beyond?

<https://www.howwemadeitinafrica.com/apples-the-next-big-farming-opportunity-in-tanzania-and-beyond/177799/>

12. Perception of smallholder farmers about climate change and its impacts on crop production across agroecological zones of the Gassera District, Southeastern Ethiopia

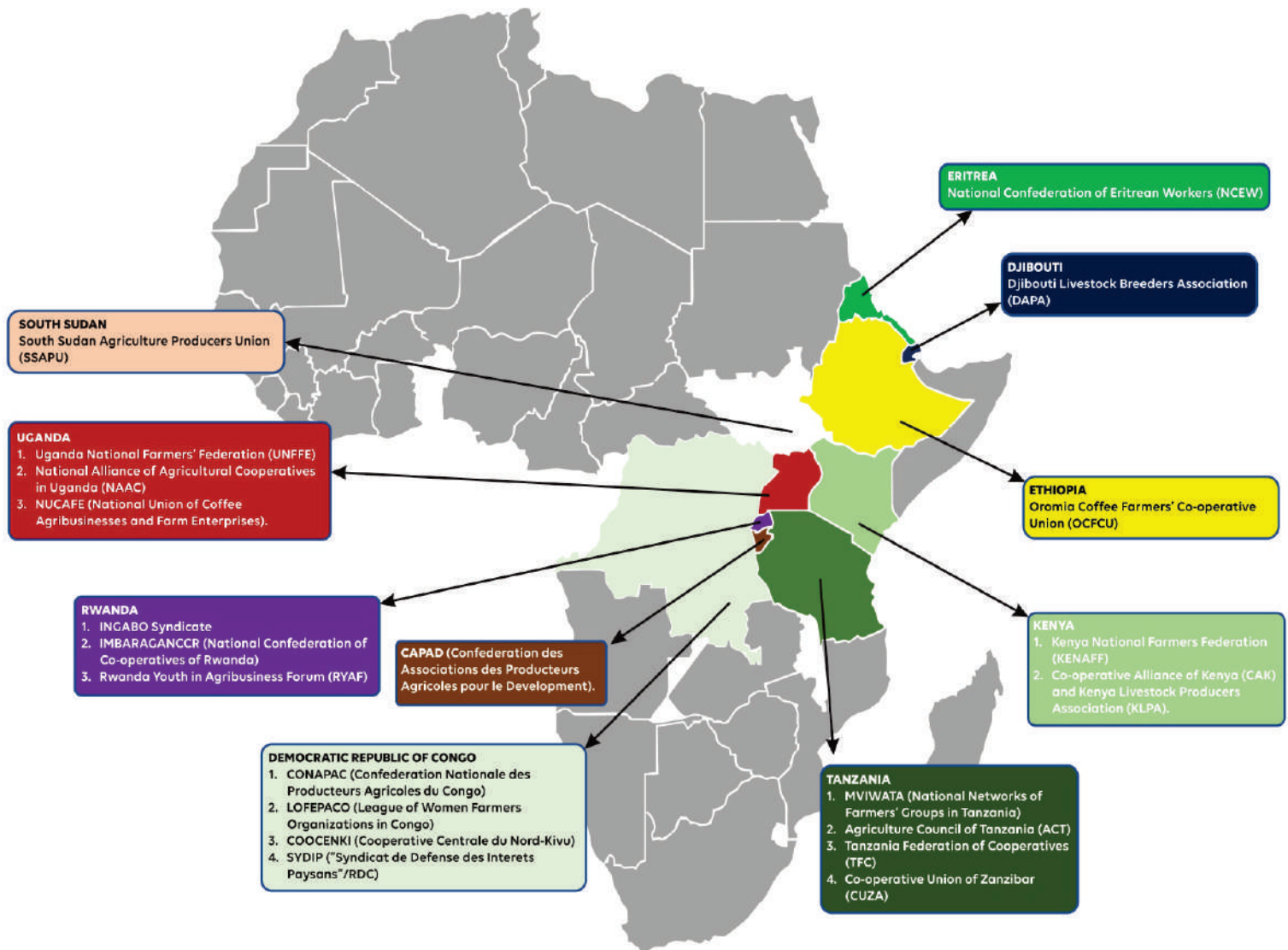
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-024-75778-3>

13. Agricultural cooperative membership and welfare of maize farmers in Ethiopia: Insights from panel data analysis

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/apce.12481>

How improved seeds empower women farmers in South Kordofan

<https://www.cimmyt.org/blogs/how-improved-seeds-empower-women-farmers-in-south-kordofan/>



We believe in empowering farmers as the cornerstone of sustainable agriculture. Through collaboration, innovation, and advocacy, we work to ensure that every farmer has the tools, knowledge, and support needed to thrive, build resilient communities, and secure a prosperous future for the region.



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