



# *The Farmers Digest*

*A compilation of news from EAFF Family*

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## **EAFF HOSTS REGIONAL DAIRY AND POTATO SECTOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP**



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*A section of participants taking notes during the Workshop*

**N**aivasha, Kenya – The Eastern Africa Farmers' Federation (EAFF) hosted a five-day Regional Dairy and Potato Sector Knowledge Management Workshop from January 13 to 17, 2025. The event brought together key stakeholders from Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda to foster knowledge exchange, discuss policy reforms, and enhance business linkages within the dairy and potato sectors.

The workshop was held under the Farmer Organizations for African, Caribbean, and Pacific Countries (FO4ACP) program and the AIRTEA project, which aims to improve farmers' incomes and food security. The AIRTEA project, funded by the EU-ACP Innovation Fund, focuses on inclusive agricultural innovation to boost rural livelihoods and agrarian transformation.

“Speaking at the event, EAFF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Stephen Muchiri emphasized the acute shortage of essential feed ingredients, such as soybean, maize, and wheat bran, which are primarily imported, making livestock feeds unaffordable for many farmers.

He highlighted EAFF's efforts in supporting farmers to form cooperatives, enabling them to locally produce raw materials for animal feeds. He also pointed to alternative sources of livestock protein, such as black soldier fly farming and the establishment of feed reserves.

Muchiri noted that despite the immense potential of the sector, agricultural funding remains insufficient, as regional governments have failed to meet their commitments to increase investments in the industry. The lack of affordable and quality feeds has significantly impacted dairy production, while poor market access continues to challenge farmers, leaving them vulnerable to middlemen and post-harvest losses.





*Hon. Leonard Bor, Nakuru County Executive Committee Member (CECM) for Agriculture, addresses the media during the workshop*

On his part, Hon. Leonard Bor, Nakuru County Executive Committee Member (CECM) for Agriculture, highlighted the county's commitment to improving the dairy value chain. He stressed the importance of farmer cooperatives in enhancing market access and training on best feed storage practices. He also acknowledged progress in value addition, citing the production of milk powder and ultra-high-temperature (UHT) treated milk, though challenges in market access persist.

Katali Benda from Uganda's National Animal Genetic Resource Centre (NAGRC) shared Uganda's initiatives in breeding and conserving indigenous dairy breeds such as the Ankole cow to increase milk production. Similarly, Prof. George M. Msalya of the Tanzania Dairy Board underscored the critical role of the dairy sector in Tanzania, which contributes 30% to the country's livestock GDP. However, he pointed out the country's heavy reliance on imported milk due to insufficient production from local dairy breeds. He called for increased investment in modern livestock practices to bridge the supply-demand gap.



*Dr. Katali Benda, Uganda's National Animal Genetic Resource Centre (NAGRC) addresses the media*



## Opportunities and Emerging Solutions

Despite challenges such as low productivity, inadequate feed and fodder, limited market access, and inconsistent policies affecting cross-border trade, stakeholders identified numerous opportunities to enhance the dairy industry. These include strengthening contract farming, increasing investments in fodder production and climate-resilient technologies, and adopting biogas digesters for sustainable dairy farming.

One of the key outcomes of the workshop was the announcement of a new partnership between Kenya's Mburugu Dairy Cooperative and Ugandan cooperatives. Facilitated by the Competition Authority of Kenya (CAK) and the National Alliance of Agricultural Cooperatives (NAAC), this partnership aims to improve raw material sourcing for animal feed production and strengthen regional collaboration.

## Potato Sector Focus

On the discussion of the potato sector, it was noted that Potatoes are a staple crop for millions of smallholder farmers in East Africa, playing a crucial role in rural livelihoods. In Kenya, potatoes rank as the second most important crop after maize, generating over KES 400 million annually. Uganda's potato sector contributes USD 55 million to the economy, while in Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania, potatoes serve as a key source of nutrition and income.

However, the sector continues to face significant challenges, including limited access to high-quality seeds, frequent pest outbreaks, climate-related vulnerabilities, and price volatility. To tackle these issues, governments, researchers, and private enterprises are implementing various initiatives, such as expanding certified seed production, training farmers in advanced techniques, and developing climate-resilient potato varieties. Mechanization is also on the rise, with programs like Hello Tractor's cooperative leasing model helping to reduce labor costs and improve efficiency. Additionally, innovative solutions, such as Seed Delight Farm's aeroponic technology in Nakuru, Kenya, are enhancing seed quality and optimizing yields.



Participants pose for a group photo during the potato sector session



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The participants visited two key institutions, Muki Dairy Cooperative and Seed Delight, for hands-on learning opportunities. At Nyandarua's Muki Dairy Cooperative, they observed how strong cooperative governance and financial diversification contribute to success. Meanwhile, Seed Delight's aeroponic systems showcased innovative and sustainable seed production methods.

EAFF emphasized the power of collaboration in overcoming sectoral challenges. The Federation advocated for stronger farmer networks, increased policy advocacy, and greater technology adoption to transform the dairy and potato industries into thriving economic pillars in East Africa. Stakeholders left the workshop with a renewed commitment to scaling innovations, enhancing market access, and fostering regional cooperation to build a more resilient agricultural sector. Farmers' capacities, boost cassava productivity, and tackle post-harvest challenges.





## EAFF MEETS IGAD TO STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS FOR EASTERN AFRICA'S FARMERS

In a concerted effort to bolster agricultural development in Eastern Africa, the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) engaged in a high-level discussion with H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, the Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Secretariat. The meeting underscored the shared vision of both institutions in addressing pressing issues such as food security, climate resilience, and sustainable agriculture. By renewing their commitment to collaborative development, EAFF and IGAD aim to implement initiatives that are inclusive, farmer-centric, and adaptable to the evolving agricultural landscape.

One of the key resolutions of the meeting was the need to review and update the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that was originally signed in 2012. Given the dynamic changes in the agricultural sector over the past decade including climate change, shifting market demands, and the introduction of new technologies the revised MoU will better align with the current priorities of both organizations. This update will ensure that policies and programs remain relevant, effective, and beneficial to farmers across the region.

To complement the MoU review, both EAFF and IGAD have committed to developing a comprehensive joint action plan. This strategic plan will focus on core areas such as food security, climate resilience, policy advocacy, regional trade, and innovation in agriculture. By enhancing food security measures, the plan will promote increased agricultural productivity, improved market access, and reduced post-harvest losses. Additionally, efforts to combat climate change will involve the implementation of climate-smart agricultural practices, sustainable land and water management strategies, and farmer training programs aimed at building resilience to environmental challenges.

Policy advocacy remains a crucial pillar of the collaboration, as both institutions seek to influence key agricultural policies at the regional and national levels. By strengthening farmer organizations and promoting institutional capacity-building, EAFF and IGAD will ensure that smallholder farmers have a voice in policymaking processes that affect their livelihoods. Moreover, the partnership will emphasize regional trade integration by facilitating cross-border trade, harmonizing agricultural standards, and supporting agribusiness development to create an enabling environment for farmers to access new markets.



EAFF Team with H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, the Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Secretariat.





*H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of IGAD, and EAFF CEO, Mr. Stephen Muchiri, share a handshake in a moment of partnership and collaboration.*

Another significant aspect of the renewed partnership is the promotion of agricultural research, innovation, and knowledge sharing. Recognizing the transformative potential of digital technologies and modern farming techniques, EAFF and IGAD will work together to support the adoption of cutting-edge solutions that enhance productivity and sustainability. Investing in research and knowledge dissemination will equip farmers with the tools needed to navigate the complexities of modern agriculture while improving their competitiveness in regional and international markets.

As the partnership progresses, EAFF and IGAD are committed to engaging stakeholders across the agricultural value chain, including farmer organizations, policymakers, development partners, and private sector players. The next steps will involve detailed consultations, validation

workshops, and collaborative efforts to finalize the revised MoU and joint action plan. Through strategic planning and collective action, the two organizations are poised to make significant strides in strengthening Eastern Africa's agricultural sector.

By working together, EAFF and IGAD are setting the stage for a more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive agricultural future. Their renewed commitment to collaboration is a testament to the power of partnerships in driving positive change, ensuring that farmers across the region are equipped with the resources, policies, and support they need to thrive in an ever-changing global landscape. With a clear roadmap ahead, Eastern Africa is well-positioned to achieve greater food security, climate adaptability, and economic growth through agriculture.



Nairobi, February 27, 2025 – The Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) had the pleasure of hosting a delegation from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) at its headquarters. The visit was part of an ongoing mission to assess key areas of intervention under the upcoming Farmers' Organisations for the Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems (FO Hub) project.

The FO Hub, an initiative designed to strengthen the role of supranational farmers' organisations in shaping agricultural and food systems, is spearheaded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ. With a total budget of €7 million, the project will be operational from January 2025 to March 2029, fostering collaboration among farmers' organisations in Kenya, Zambia, the Philippines, and Nigeria.

## Project Objectives and Key Focus Areas

The FO Hub aims to empower farmers' organisations by enhancing their

participation in global policy discussions and improving knowledge management to drive agricultural transformation. Its core objectives include:

**Strengthening Political Influence:** Enabling farmers' organisations to effectively represent their members in regional and global decision-making processes.

**Knowledge Management:** Facilitating the collection, processing, and dissemination of best practices in social protection and climate-resilient agricultural practices.

**Gender Inclusion:** Promoting active participation of women, youth, and marginalized groups through the Gender Change Agents program.

**Policy Advocacy:** Supporting farmer organisations in contributing to policy formulation at national, regional, and international levels.



*During the meeting session*





EAFF officials pose with the GIZ team in a group photo.

## Implementation Strategy

The FO Hub East Africa will employ a structured cooperation approach to enhance the capabilities of participating farmers' organisations. The multi-tiered strategy includes:

**International Engagement:** Strengthening the presence of farmers' organisations in global policy platforms such as the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties (UNFCCC-COP), and the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP).

**Regional and National Collaboration:** Supporting organisations like EAFF and the Kenya National Farmers' Federation (KENAFF) in scaling up successful agricultural practices and advocating for policies that benefit smallholder farmers.

**Local-Level Impact:** Ensuring that knowledge and policy interventions result in tangible benefits for smallholder farmers at the grassroots level.

## Key Project Components

The project will be executed through the following outputs:

**1. Enhanced Cooperation:** Strengthening collaboration among supranational farmers' organisations for more effective representation at global forums.

**2. Gender Inclusion:** Bolstering gender-inclusive policy advocacy and leadership within farmers' organisations.

**3. Improved Knowledge Management:** Establishing systems to share lessons on social protection and sustainable agricultural practices.

The FO Hub East Africa is set to play a pivotal role in transforming agricultural and food systems through enhanced collaboration, policy advocacy, and knowledge-sharing. By strengthening farmers' organisations in decision-making processes, the initiative aims to foster sustainable agricultural development, improve rural livelihoods, and enhance resilience against climate and economic challenges.

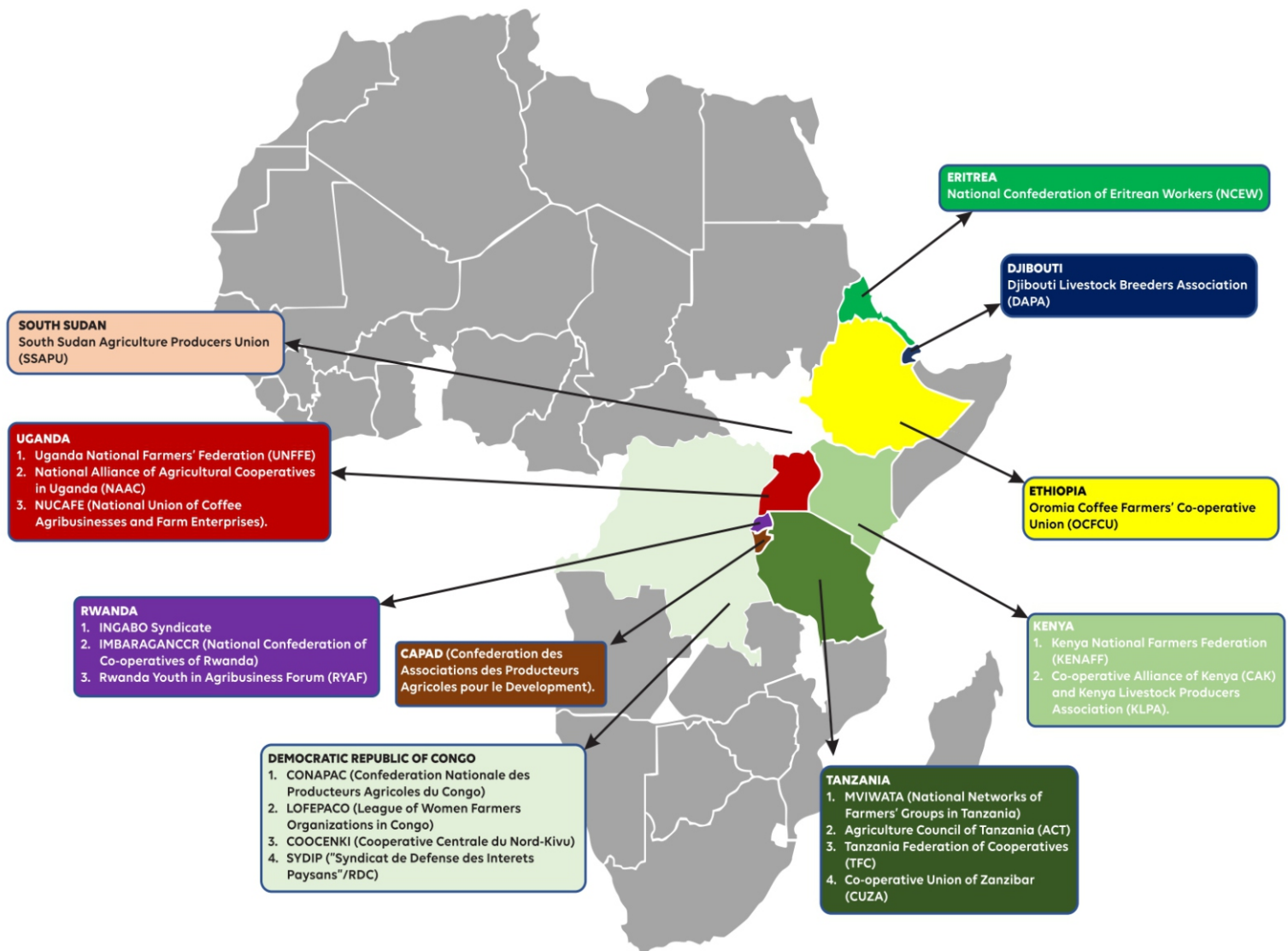






## EAFF MEMBERSHIP

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**We believe that farmers are the backbone of Africa's economy and that empowering them is key to food security, economic growth, and sustainable development. At the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF), we are committed to championing the rights, interests, and prosperity of farmers by advocating for policies that support inclusive agricultural transformation, access to markets, and value addition.**





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