

Summit to explore scaling up innovation in agriculture

The fourth Agri-Food Tech & Innovation Summit (AFTI EA 2020), hosted by the Africa Agri Council (AAC) is set to explore the upsurge in new thinking and the game-changing developments in agricultural practices and technology, and what is needed to scale these innovations to reach smallholder farmers and agribusinesses. "We have the technology and the innovations to make a difference, yet these innovations aren't reaching the smallholder farmers who need them most - they lack access to the right information at the right time," says Ben Leyka, AAC MD.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

The summit takes place between 25-26 March 2020 in Nigeria.

Michael Hailu, director, CTA states that "with the right policies, innovation and investment, the continent's agriculture could be transformed into a powerhouse not only to feed a growing population but to create decent employment for millions of young people."

Improving future generations' livelihoods

Delegates will hear from a number of entrepreneurs who are trying, and succeeding, in reaching these farmers, in building businesses that both create a profit and help farmers work their way out of poverty. Here, innovative firms, industry facilitators and leveraging of partnerships will get better tools into the hands of farmers, reduce the barriers between farmers and markets, and strengthen policies that help farming families become more a part of a functioning private-sector agricultural and food system.

For many of the 2.5 billion people living at the base of the pyramid and relying on agriculture for their livelihood, adopting these innovations could improve their lives and the lives of future generations.

A partnership example will be presented by speaker Neil Ashworth of social enterprise Natural Extracts Industries (NEI) working with nearly 5,000 farmers in Tanzania providing the technical guidance, inputs and best practices to grow premium vanilla crops.

AFTI EA 2020 will bring together a diversity of stakeholders and partners who all play an essential role in building thriving inclusive markets, including investors, foundations, aid agencies, policymakers, corporates, intermediaries, multilateral development agencies, impact investors, host governments and companies, exploring the following challenges of scaling:

- Why aren't more market-based solution models scaling?
- What barriers do they face?
- How to overcome lack of awareness of new products, and appreciation of their benefits?
- Where market-based solutions have achieved scale, how has this been achieved?
- What needs to happen to spur sustained adoption?

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