



FARM AND ENVIRONMENT MAGAZINE

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www.ecoagrimedia.rw



femrwanda@gmail.com



+250781979374



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Turning Coffee Waste into Beauty and Opportunity: The Story of Umubyeyi Grace

Welcome to Farm and Environment Magazine your trusted source for insightful stories shaping Rwanda's agriculture and environmental landscape. Management, EcoAgri Media.

WCA2025 Concludes in Kigali With Calls to Make Agroforestry Central to Global Development

The 6th World Congress on Agroforestry (WCA2025) concluded in Kigali, Rwanda, after taking place from Monday, October 20, to Friday, October 24, 2025. The international event brought together diverse stakeholders in agroforestry to exchange knowledge on advances in research and practices related to agroforestry systems, natural resource management, and climate change adaptation and mitigation for sustainable and resilient agro-ecosystems. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Rwanda's Minister of Environment, Dr. Arakwiye Bernadette, emphasized that agroforestry goes beyond being a technical solution.

"Agroforestry is not just a technical solution. It is a shared endeavour that brings together people, disciplines, and landscapes around a common purpose: to live well with and from our land."

Prof. Peter Worms, President of the International Union of Agroforestry (IUAf), noted that while the congress has traveled around the world, it has now returned to its roots.

"Agroforestry as a modern science was born in Africa. As a practice, it's still most prevalent here. While agroforestry as a congress has travelled around the world, it's now coming home, and I am glad it is doing so."

He added:

"One of the reasons why agroforestry is not spreading more rapidly is not just because trees take time to grow, but because we don't have the right words to give that picture of hope to the people who depend on farming for their livelihoods."

CIFOR-ICRAF CEO Eliane Ubalijoro officially opened the Congress, highlighting the central role of people in advancing agroforestry.

"Agroforestry begins and ends with people. From farmers to consumers whose choices sustain us, it thrives through partnership when science, policy, business, and community work as equals toward a shared goal. The world urgently needs what agroforestry offers: a pathway that restores balance between people and nature, between what we take and what we give back." and ends with people." Planet: "Trees anchor our landscapes, sustaining balance."



Prosperity: "For agroforestry to grow, it must make economic sense."

The 6th World Congress on Agroforestry is exploring innovative approaches to utilizing trees to enhance the incomes of increasingly smallholder farmers, while also providing solutions to numerous ecological, social, and economic needs and challenges in agroforestry.

"Let us envision a future where landscapes combine productivity and biodiversity, where farmers benefit from trees on their land, and where every nation sees agroforestry as a pillar of its development strategy," said Dr. Arakwiye Bernadette, Rwanda's Minister of Environment, as she officially closed the #WCA2025.

Costa Rica will host the 7th World Congress on Agroforestry in 2028.



New president, Dr. Javed Rizvi, CIFOR-ICRAF Principal Advisor for Asia.



Honorable Minister Dr Arakwiye Bernadette



CIFOR-ICRAF CEO Eliane Ubalijoro

Imbuto Foundation Empowers Rwanda's Young Agripreneurs through the #ImaliAgriChallenge



Imbuto Foundation Deputy Director General Christa Umuhiza

Speaking to the participants at the #ImaliAgriChallenge award ceremony today, Imbuto Foundation Deputy Director General Christa Umuhiza explained the reasons why the Imbuto Foundation and its partners launched the Challenge. "Imali means wealth, but not only in the financial sense. For us, it represents the wealth of ideas, creativity, and purpose within our youth. It reflects what we believe Rwanda's young people are capable of creating solutions that uplift lives, strengthen communities, and drive national progress."

Unemployment among the youth doesn't only impacts livelihoods, it takes a toll on mental well-being too. This is why initiatives like the #ImaliAgriChallenge aim to empower youth with skills, hope, and purpose. Alexis Rutagarama from Imbuto Foundation, had a conversation with agripreneurs about how unemployment affects mental well-being, and why creating opportunities matters now more than ever.

Young agripreneurs have been named winners of the #ImaliAgriChallenge Phase 2, joining their peers from the Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum and other passionate innovators driving change in the agriculture sector.

10 brilliant young agripreneurs named winners of the ImaliAgriChallenge Phase 2 each receiving Rwf 10M in seed funding and 6 months of mentorship to accelerate their ventures. Their creativity and determination reflect the future of sustainable farming and youth-led transformation. Clémentine Mukeshima | David Tuyishime | Felice Karangwa | Lydia Murekatete | Yves Bernard Kabagamba | Shakira Uwineza | Grâce Niyonsaba | Trésor Gashonga Karimwabo | Hawa Niyigena | Valens Ruhorimbere.

Imbuto Foundation and partners introduced Imali Agribusiness Challenge initiative to engage and support youth entrepreneurs in agriculture, helping them scale their impact and empower young farmers. The initiative addresses barriers such as limited access to land, finance, markets, and knowledge, transforming agriculture from an alternative option into a career of choice for Rwanda's youth.



Group Photo



Turning Coffee Waste Into Beauty and Opportunity: The Story of Umubyeyi Grace



Grace umubyeyi /founder of Greece Fav Cycles

When many people are enjoying a cup of coffee, few think about what happens to the leftovers.

For Umubyeyi Grace, the founder of Greece Fav Cycles, those coffee residues were not waste they were an opportunity to change lives, protect the environment, and create something beautiful.

Grace remembers watching people drink coffee and throw away what remained. "I began to ask myself what happens to this residue? What damage does it cause? And could it actually be useful?" That simple curiosity soon grew into a mission that would reshape her life and her community.

After discovering that unmanaged coffee waste can harm the environment and farmland, she chose to transform this challenge into opportunity. From a small idea, she established a company that now creates eco-friendly products made from recycled spent coffee grounds, including bars of soap, body wash, liquid soap, hand wash, body scrub, Jerry skincare products, and lip gloss all proudly made in Rwanda.

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recycled spent coffee grounds, including bars of soap, body wash, liquid soap, hand wash, body scrub, Jerry skincare products, and lip gloss all proudly made in Rwanda.

The journey was far from easy. Starting with limited capital posed real challenges, and convincing people to believe in her idea was even harder. "Sometimes people couldn't imagine that soap or body wash could come from coffee waste," she shares with a smile. But Grace refused to be discouraged. She invested in quality production, manufacturing skills, and multiple trainings that strengthened her capacity and determination.

To Grace, agriculture is far more than farming. "Farming does not stop at the field," she explains. "It includes agro-processing, creativity, and finding value in everything nature gives us." Her slogan captures this mindset: desire to excel nourish your skin, soothe your soul.

Today, Umubyeyi Grace stands as powerful proof that what many call waste can become wealth. Through Greece Fav Cycles, she embodies Rwanda's forward-looking green economy where sustainability meets ingenuity, and where every discarded coffee grain carries the potential for hope, beauty, and opportunity.



Grace Umubyeyi's coffee-waste beauty products

Strengthening Media Capacity for Food Safety and Biosecurity Reporting in Rwanda



Dr. Mukantwali Christine delivering training to media professionals during a workshop on food safety and biosecurity.

From November 3–5, 2025, Muhanga District hosted a three-day training organized by FAO Rwanda, the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, and the Rwanda Standards Board. The workshop brought together Rwandan media professionals for practical learning focused on food safety and biosecurity reporting.

The training equipped journalists and media specialists with essential skills to effectively communicate food safety messages to the public. Food- and waterborne diseases remain a major public health concern in many countries, despite being largely preventable.

According to WHO (2024), food safety, nutrition, and food security are closely linked. An estimated 600 million people nearly one in ten globally fall ill each year after consuming contaminated food, and 42,000 lose their lives as a result.



Journalists who attended the training session

As part of the program, participants visited the Tuzamurane Byimana Poultry Model Farm in Ruhango District. The visit provided insights into how community-driven agribusiness initiatives contribute to the fight against malnutrition, particularly through providing eggs to children.

Empowered media professionals lead to informed citizens—and ultimately, to safer food systems for all.

In Rwanda in the year 2022 found significant contamination of locally produced foods, revealing that *E. coli* was found in 39%, *Salmonella* in 26.7%, and *Shigella* in 30.5% of samples (RBC, 2022).



Field visit at Ruhango District



Field visit at Ruhango District



Ingabire Doxia, representative of Tuzamurane Byimana, with some of the participating journalists.

TREPA Project Accelerates Landscape Restoration in Eastern Rwanda



At the 6th World Congress on Agroforestry (#WCA2025) in Kigali, IUCN Rwanda showcased progress from the TREPA Project, which applies an integrated landscape approach to boost restoration and strengthen climate-resilient livelihoods.

TREPA Project Coordinator Dr. Olivier Habimana reported that out of the targeted 40,000 hectares of farmland for restoration, 28,000–30,000 hectares have already been achieved. Pastureland restoration stands at 7,000 hectares, nearly 70% of the target. Survival rates of fodder tree species remain strong 85% for *Gliricidia sepium* and 75% for *Calliandra calothyrsus*.

Overall, 17.8 million seedlings have been planted and 289,339 fruit trees distributed to 72,334 households. More than 236,000 beneficiaries have adopted climate-resilient livelihood practices.

Community Impact

Beneficiaries say TREPA is transforming agriculture and livelihoods. Beekeeping cooperative leader Bagiraneza Josephine noted that new trees are boosting honey production, while mentorship and tools have strengthened beekeeping skills. In Nyagatare, dairy farmer Livingstone Abiyigoma said that fodder-growing techniques and trees like *Calliandra* have increased milk yields, even during drought periods.

People at the Center

IUCN Rwanda Country Representative Ms. Kaori Yasuda stressed that restoration succeeds when people and communities drive change. She called for scaling effective approaches, strengthening community enterprises, and ensuring transparency in implementation.

Expanding Partnerships

At the congress, Equity Bank Rwanda signed an MoU with TREPA. Managing Director Hannington Namara reaffirmed the bank's commitment

to channel 30% of lending into agriculture and support climate resilience efforts in Eastern Province.

About TREPA

TREPA—Transforming the Eastern Province through Adaptation is a national project led by the Government of Rwanda with partners including IUCN, GCF, MoE, CIFOR-ICRAF, Cordaid, RFA, and World Vision. Running through 2027, the initiative aims to restore degraded landscapes and build resilient livelihoods across Kirehe, Ngoma, Bugesera, Rwamagana, Kayonza, Gatsibo, and Nyagatare districts.



TREPA Project Coordinator Dr. Olivier Habimana



IUCN Rwanda Country Representative Ms. Kaori Yasuda stressed that restoration succeeds when people and communities drive change.

How CDAT Support Helped Dancille Mukagashayija Build a Thriving Agribusiness in Rulindo



Mukagashayija Dancilla plans to build another piggyery to expand her growing herd

On the rolling hills of Rusiga Sector in Rulindo District, a powerful story of resilience and transformation is unfolding. Dancille Mukagashayija, once a small-scale pig farmer, has built one of the most inspiring agribusiness success stories proving how access to finance, training, and determination can change lives.

When she first ventured into pig farming, progress was slow. The local breed she raised offered little return, and the lack of proper facilities limited her growth. But Dancille held on to her vision. She believed agriculture could open doors to a better future for her family and community.

Her turning point came when she learned about the Commercialization and De-risking for Agricultural Transformation (CDAT) Matching Grant, a World Bank-funded project implemented by Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB) through its Single Project Implementation Unit (SPIU). She applied, her proposal was approved, and her project received 16 million RWF in support, matching her own contribution to make a total investment of 32 million RWF.

"I felt like a dream had come true," she recalls. "I knew I was taking the first step out of poverty."

With CDAT support, she constructed a modern piggyery shed and acquired five improved breeds. Her farm grew rapidly, reaching 60 pigs within a short period.

As her herd continues to expand, she is now preparing to build another piggyery shed to accommodate the growing numbers.

But Dancille didn't stop there. As her business took shape, she recognized a gap in the market. Consumers increasingly wanted not just pigs, but quality meat pork. Seizing the opportunity, she opened a butchery in Nyabugogo, Nyarugenge District, allowing her to process and sell pork directly to customers.

This move turned her venture into a vertically integrated agribusiness controlling production, processing, and sales.

Beyond her personal success, Dancille's story is one of empowerment. Her agribusiness now employs youth and women. Her farm serves as a learning ground and inspiration for emerging farmers in Rulindo district and beyond.

"CDAT gave us courage," she says. "Before, I didn't believe I could manage this kind of enterprise. But now I'm confident and I encourage other women and youth to step into farming and take it seriously." Via:RAB/SPIU



With CDAT support, Dancille Mukagashayija built a modern piggyery shed, enabling her to increase her herd to 60 pigs



Dancilla's butchery in Nyabugogo, Nyarugenge District, offers fresh pork to her customers /photo RAB/SPIU

Youth Voices Drive Agrifood Systems Transformation at CAADP and ADFNS 2025



The 21st CAADP Partnership Platform and the 16th Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS) took place in Kigali, Rwanda, from October 29–31, 2025, bringing together policymakers, private sector actors, youth, and women leaders to discuss the transformation of Africa’s agrifood systems.

Elevating Youth Leadership in Value Addition RYAF member Samuel Uwhanganye, Managing Director of Rainbow Health Food Ltd, joined a high-level panel on “Policy, Institutional and Operational Challenges Limiting Competitive Agri-Processing in Africa.”

Rainbow Health Food Ltd produces Monti Composite Flour, a nutritious porridge made from maize, sorghum, soybean, wheat, and millet sourced from smallholder farmers, as well as Monti 7in1 Bio-fortified High Iron Beans Porridge formulated to combat iron deficiency and malnutrition, especially among children and mothers.

In a separate session on “Unlocking Women’s Potential in Agrifood Systems Through the 3Ps: Proofs, Policies, and Partnerships,” Sakina Usengimana, Chairperson of RYAF and Youth Representative at the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF), called for action beyond dialogue.

She highlighted persistent barriers limiting women’s participation, particularly in accessing finance:

“Women are not asking for sympathy; they are asking for fair, structured opportunities to compete. We must go beyond annual conversations in meeting rooms and into the fields where women are producing every day.”

Usengimana also emphasized reshaping how young people perceive agriculture:

“We must radically change the image of agriculture. The youth cannot enter or stay in agriculture without profitability. We see agriculture as a sector that must be attractive, innovative, productive, and profitable.”

The launch of the CAADP Youth4Nutrition Rwanda Chapter marked a powerful moment for Africa’s youth—taking the lead not tomorrow, but today—driving nutrition security, innovation, and action. By mobilizing students, farmers, and young entrepreneurs, we are transforming food systems, advocating for policies that invest in our future, and making nutrition a household conversation.

This is our call to action: collaborate, innovate, and build a well-nourished Africa. Our time is now.”

Gloria Mutesi Hakizimana, Chapter Leader, Youth4Nutrition Rwanda Chapter



Sakina Usengimana, Chairperson of RYAF and Youth Representative at the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF),



Gloria Mutesi Hakizimana, Chapter Leader, Youth4Nutrition Rwanda Chapter

Rwanda Amplifies Climate Leadership at COP30 With New Biodiversity and Climate Action Initiatives



Rwanda made a strong impression at COP30 in Belém, unveiling new climate and biodiversity financing mechanisms and engaging global partners to accelerate climate-resilient development.

On 14 November, during the launch of the Green Fund Rwanda Biodiversity Window with UNDP, Minister of Environment Dr. Bernadette Arakwiye highlighted the country's renewed commitment to protecting nature through sustainable financing.

"We are proud to launch Rwanda's Biodiversity Window, a new financing mechanism at the Green Fund Rwanda that links policy vision to investment action."

She expressed appreciation for UNDP's longstanding partnership, noting:



Minister of Environment Dr. Bernadette Arakwiye

She expressed appreciation for UNDP's longstanding partnership, noting:

"I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to UNDP for its steadfast collaboration through the BIOFIN programme and its technical support in the design of this new window."

The following day, REMA Deputy Director General Faustin Munyazikwiye officially closed the launch, emphasizing the urgent need to integrate nature into daily business operations. He underscored the importance of aligning nature financing with science and strengthening partnerships with academic institutions to ensure policy decisions are grounded in evidence.

Rwanda also joined the Green Climate Fund (GCF) at COP30 to assess how climate finance can support resilient, low-emission agricultural systems. Discussions centered on strengthening food systems, protecting livelihoods, and scaling up climate-smart solutions for farmers.

In a series of high-level engagements, Minister Arakwiye and Ambassador Lawrence Manzi met with Brazil's Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Marina Silva, to deepen cooperation on climate action and explore opportunities in climate finance.

Strengthening international partnerships remained a key theme. At the Azerbaijan Pavilion, Minister Arakwiye met with the Azerbaijani delegation to discuss new possibilities for green investment, technology transfer, and collaboration aimed at advancing shared climate ambitions.

Rwanda's leadership was further showcased as Minister Arakwiye presented the country's enhanced Climate Action Plan (NDC3.0). The presentation highlighted Rwanda's focus on linking climate ambition with implementation and finance, positioning the country as a model for transparent, country-driven climate action on the African continent.



REMA Deputy Director General Faustin Munyazikwiye

Rwanda Fertilizer Company Launches Customised Blends to Boost Yields



A new milestone in Rwanda’s journey toward sustainable and data-driven agriculture has been reached. The Rwanda Fertilizer Company (RFC), in partnership with OCP Africa, the Agaciro Fund, and the Agro Processing Trust Corporation (APTC), has unveiled three new “Made in Rwanda” fertiliser blends – Twihaze, Ongera, and Ongera+ designed to improve soil health and crop productivity. Launched on November 10, this innovation represents the outcome of years of agronomic research conducted through the Rwanda Soil Information System (RwaSIS).



Leaders tour RFC as new locally made fertiliser blends are launched.

For the first time, Rwanda’s farmers will access fertilisers formulated to match specific crops and soil types across different agro-ecological zones. “We are celebrating years of research and collaboration. These new fertilisers are tailored for Rwandan soils and crops, unlike the previous one-size-fits-all approach,” said Anass Khanchoufi, Managing Director of RFC. The customised blends are expected to increase yields by over 20% and improve resource efficiency

by up to 40%, marking a significant step towards precision agriculture and sustainable productivity growth.

Each blend serves a unique purpose:

Twihaze corrects soil acidity while supporting rice, wheat, Irish potatoes, and maize.

Ongera delivers essential micronutrients for higher yields in Irish potatoes.

Ongera+ enhances soil fertility in diverse zones such as Birunga, Eastern Savanna, and Mayaga.

Produced at RFC’s state-of-the-art blending facility in the Bugesera Special Economic Zone, inaugurated in December 2023, the new fertilisers integrate science, innovation, and local knowledge to meet national and regional needs.

Dr Telesphore Ndabamenye who served as State Minister of Agriculture at the time

emphasized that collaboration between RFC, RAB, and other stakeholders will help triple agricultural output in Rwanda’s key food basket zones.

Farmers are already reporting tangible results. From Nyagatare to Kirehe, yields have risen from 15–18 tonnes per hectare to as high as 25 tonnes a clear sign of transformation driven by data, research, and partnership.

This launch positions Rwanda as a regional hub for agricultural innovation, demonstrating how public-private collaboration can drive food security, improve livelihoods, and promote resilience across Africa’s farming systems.



A stock of locally produced fertiliser ready for distribution to farmers.

Rwanda Officially Launches 2025–2026 National Tree and Forest Planting Season



The Minister of Environment, the Mayor of Kigali, and the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia join the community in planting a tree during Umuganda

Rwanda has officially kicked off its national tree and forest planting season for the year 2025-2026. The event brought together government officials, local leaders, and residents in a nationwide effort to restore ecosystems and enhance the country's green cover.

Minister of Environment, Dr. Arakwiye Bernadette, together with the former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and Samuel Dusengimana, Mayor of the city of Kigali, joined residents for Umuganda, the country's monthly community work initiative.

Dr. Arakwiye emphasized that trees play a crucial role in restoring ecosystems, purifying the air, yielding fruits, and preventing soil erosion. She also noted that Rwanda had attained 30% forest cover and advocated for everyone to manage and protect every tree they plant.

The Mayor Dusengiyumva again affirmed that until the year 2029, the city will be engaged in tree planting with a target of 3 million trees and maintains that proper care of these trees is very crucial for the growth and sustainability of the environmental impact.

Former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn expressed his delight in joining Rwandans in ecosystem restoration efforts and pledged to personally follow up on the trees he planted to ensure they thrive.

Alone, 2000 trees were planted at the launch site. Trees in the urban environment help beautify the city, provide shade, mitigate noise, and serve as an important factor in mitigating climate change.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Dr. Justin Nsengiyumva has joined the citizens of Karongi District for Umuganda, reaffirming the Government of Rwanda's commitment to large-scale tree plantation. Dr. Nsengiyumva also called on Rwandans to maximize

the use of every available plot of land for cultivation and to apply fertilizers to help the country achieve its target of increasing agricultural productivity by 50%. At Muciro site in Rugabano Sector, over 5,000 trees were planted as part of the campaign.

IUCN Rwanda joined the Ministry of Environment, the City of Kigali, and locals in the monthly Umuganda to kick off the national Tree Planting season in Rwanda for 2025-2026. Under this initiative, IUCN has supported TREPA and COMBIO projects, which will enable tree planting in seven districts of the Eastern Province.

The theme of this year's national tree and forest planting season is: "Igiti cyanjye, umurage wanjye" ("My Tree, My Legacy").



Prime Minister Dr. Justin Nsengiyumva planting Tree



IUCN Rwanda Country Representative, Ms. Kaori Yasuda, with other partners during Umuganda

Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization Through Farmer Field Schools Launched in Bugesera

On 14 November 2025, Rwanda's key agriculture partners FAO (Rwanda), RICA, and the Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board officially launched the Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization through Farmer Field Schools (SAM-FFS) program at the RICA campus in Bugesera. This landmark initiative equips smallholder producers with practical skills in climate-smart, appropriately scaled mechanization and conservation agriculture.

Thirty FFS facilitators from Gatsibo, Bugesera, and Kirehe completed a two-week hands-on training at RICA. Through the Farmer Field School model, they gained essential skills in sustainable mechanization, basic machinery operation, conservation agriculture, and farmer-centered learning approaches. They were also guided on integrating these practices into locally adapted FFS curricula.

Institutional leaders emphasized the significance of this collaboration. FAO highlighted the commitment to climate-resilient mechanization that boosts productivity

Dr. Nomanthema Mhalanga, FAO Rwanda Representative (a.i), underscored the collective commitment to sustainable agricultural transformation and advancing support for smallholder farmers through Farmer Field Schools. while protecting natural resources. RICA underscored the alignment with its Conservation Agriculture approach, which improves soil health and yields. RICA's Interim Vice Chancellor, articulated the importance of the collaboration in enhancing farmer productivity. He noted that the partnership underscores RICA's mandate to equip farmers with specialized knowledge, thereby improving their production capabilities. He further emphasized that the initiative aligns with RICA's Conservation Agriculture approach, which cultivates better soil health and generates greater productivity. Highlighting the importance of community engagement for successful adoption, Dr. Solange UWITUZE, who served as RAB's Acting Director General at the time (Now she state Minister)



Group Photo

reaffirmed RAB's commitment to mobilizing smallholder producers across the target districts and providing them with continuous technical backstopping and post-training follow-up. She noted that active engagement with grassroots communities is critical to accelerating the adoption of sustainable agricultural mechanization and conservation agriculture. This approach enhances productivity and strengthens the resilience of farmers throughout Rwanda. It is expected that the project will contribute to the modernization of crop production within the Food Basket Site (FoBaSi) management model, as the project pilots are part of consolidated sites countrywide.



Rwanda Begins Construction of National Veterinary Reference Laboratory to Strengthen Health Security



Officials take part in the groundbreaking ceremony for Rwanda's National Veterinary Reference Laboratory, marking a major milestone in strengthening the country's One Health and pandemic preparedness systems.

Rwanda has taken a major step toward stronger national and regional health security with the launch of construction for the National Veterinary Reference Laboratory (NVRL). The groundbreaking event, held on November 18, 2025, marks a significant investment in the country's capacity to detect and respond to disease threats especially those that pass between animals and humans.

The new laboratory sits at the heart of Rwanda's One Health approach, which recognizes that the health of people, animals, and the environment are closely connected. In a world where many pandemics begin in animals before affecting humans, modern diagnostic capacity has become essential.

The facility will fill a critical gap by enabling rapid and accurate detection of zoonotic and transboundary animal diseases such as Mpox, Marburg, avian influenza, and Foot-and-Mouth Disease.

Equipped with modern molecular testing technologies and advanced biosafety systems, the NVRL will help Rwanda identify outbreaks early and prevent them from spreading.

Speaking at the launch, Dr. Mark Cyubahiro Bagabe who served as Minister of Agriculture at the time emphasized the national importance of the laboratory: "Pandemics often begin in animals before spilling over to humans.

This laboratory gives Rwanda the scientific capability to detect threats early protecting our people, our livestock, and our economy."

The laboratory will also contribute to economic resilience.

Faster and more reliable diagnostics will reduce livestock losses, strengthen veterinary services, support safe animal movement, and enhance Rwanda's compliance with international animal health standards. This, in turn, protects household incomes, boosts trade, and safeguards the livestock sector.

Priya Basu, Executive Head of the Pandemic Fund, praised Rwanda's commitment to building a strong scientific foundation for pandemic prevention.

"By enhancing disease detection and response, Rwanda is setting a new benchmark for health security in the region. The Pandemic Fund is proud to support this milestone project."

The NVRL is a flagship component of the Strengthening Pandemic Prevention and Response Through One Health Approach in Rwanda (SPPROHRW) project, supported by the Pandemic Fund and implemented by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, RBC, RAB, and development partners. Construction is expected to be completed within 24 months.

With this major investment, Rwanda continues to demonstrate leadership in building resilient health systems capable of protecting communities, livestock, and the national economy from future disease threats.



Group Photo

From Extreme Poverty to Prosperity: How One Pig Changed Murekatete's Life



Murekatete Alphonsine feeding her pig in her PRISM-supported pigsty. Photo credit /RAB/SPIU

Murekatete Alphonsine, a mother of three from Murambo Village in Kayenzi Cell, Bushoki Sector of Rulindo District, is among the beneficiaries of the PRISM project implemented by the Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB) with funding from IFAD. Before livestock distribution, selected families undergo training on animal management, proper care, identifying diseases, and taking appropriate action. Murekatete was chosen during a village meeting because of her extreme poverty. She joined 30 participants who received the training and later formed a Self-Help Group (SHG), saving 250 Frw per week.



One of Murekatete's pigs inside the PRISM-supported pigsty

Soon after, they were informed that pigs would be distributed. To prepare, households collected sand and wood to build shelters, while PRISM provided three bags of cement, two iron sheets, and nails. This enabled her to construct a solid pigsty with a feeding trough. Her life began to change after she received a pig on July 8, 2022. The pig, which came vaccinated and with 200 kilograms of feed, gave birth to 11 piglets once.....

it matured. She passed on two piglets to other poor families as required and sold the remaining nine for 270,000 Frw. With this income, she improved her home, borrowing an additional 40,000 Frw from her SHG to buy cement and pave her once muddy compound.

Later that same year, the pig gave birth to nine more piglets. She kept one and sold the others, earning 300,000 Frw, which she used to buy farmland. On this land, she now grows crops, applies manure, and enjoys improved harvests. She also planted a kitchen garden that has helped her family overcome malnutrition.

The pig delivered for the third time, producing 10 piglets. She sold three and saved the money in Umurenge SACCO. Using her farmland as collateral, she secured a 300,000 Frw loan, which she invested in building two new pigsties worth about 75,000 Frw each. The loan has since been repaid.

A fourth birth brought eight piglets. She sold two, gave two to a neighbor under a profit-sharing arrangement, and kept two. Income from piglet sales enabled her to pay school fees, buy school materials, and cover Mutuelle de Santé for her family.

She has also renovated her previously dilapidated house, even purchasing a new 90,000 Frw door using earnings from piglet sales and cassava harvests. Today, her home has electricity—something she attributes to the support received through PRISM. She also received a 1,000-liter rainwater harvesting tank, which helps provide water for her pigs, although she says it is still not enough and that feed remains costly.

Despite remaining challenges, Murekatete expresses deep gratitude: she believes that with affordable feed and reliable water access, she could raise up to 50 pigs given her available land.



Via:RAB/SPIU

Rwanda Marks World Food Day with Renewed Commitment to Food Security



Participants plant fruit trees in Nyamagabe as part of Rwanda's World Food Day 2025 activities./photo credit FAORwanda

Rwanda joined the global community in celebrating World Food Day on October 24, 2025, with a colorful event held in Nyamagabe District, Southern Province, under the theme “Hand in Hand for Better Foods and a Better Future.”

The celebration brought together government officials, development partners, and local communities in a united call to strengthen food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture across the country.

Organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), the event featured impactful community activities such as planting fruit trees, distributing cows to vulnerable families, supporting resource-poor households with small livestock, and officially launching Fortified Whole Grain Maize Flour for the national school feeding programme.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Mark Cyubahiro Bagabe, Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, stressed that World Food Day is a reminder for everyone to play an active role in ensuring national food security. He noted that choosing Nyamagabe as the host district reflects the Government's commitment to tackling poverty and malnutrition, as recent national statistics show the area faces some of the highest poverty levels in Rwanda.

The Minister highlighted that the celebration aligns with Nutrition Month, observed from October 16 to November 15. Throughout this period, MINAGRI and its partners carry out activities aimed at boosting productivity and improving household nutrition, including fruit tree planting, livestock promotion, and intensified efforts to support the current planting season.

Dr. Bagabe also emphasized the importance of nutrition quality, not just food availability. He underscored the introduction of the fortified whole grain maize flour in schools, explaining that the new formula is richer in essential nutrients and supports better physical and cognitive development. The initiative, he said, is a homegrown solution designed to promote local production while improving children's well-being. According to the EICV7 survey, Nyamagabe remains Rwanda's poorest district, with a poverty rate of 51.4%. Holding World Food Day in the district symbolizes strengthened national efforts to address poverty and build a healthier, more food-secure future for all Rwandans.

World Food Day, observed globally every year, aims to raise awareness and inspire collective action toward ending hunger and promoting access to nutritious, sustainable diets.



Dr. Mark Cyubahiro Bagabe who served as Minister of Agriculture at the time/Photo Credit FAORwanda



FAORwanda joined with ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources and partners in Nyamagabe District to mark #WorldFoodDay under the theme “Hand in Hand for better foods and a better future.”

Rwanda Launches Youth FAST Forum to Accelerate Youth-Led Agrifood Transformation



Group Photo

The Government of Rwanda, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), officially launched the Rwanda Youth Forward for Agrifood Systems Transformation Forum (Youth FAST Forum), held from 24–25 November 2025 in Kigali. Organized under the theme “Catalyzing Investments for Transformational Impact under PSTA5,” the two-day forum has been established as a national platform to accelerate youth-led transformation in Rwanda’s agrifood systems.

The inaugural edition aligned with national priorities under NST2 and PSTA5, positioning young people as central actors in driving innovation, competitiveness, and resilience across the agrifood sector.

Dr. Mark Cyubahiro Bagabe who served as Minister of Agriculture at the time urged youth to remain ambitious, innovative, and committed to professionalism. He emphasized that young people are not simply beneficiaries but key drivers shaping the future of Rwanda’s agrifood systems.

More than 416 young members of the Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF) from all 30 districts gathered for discussions on job creation, value addition, innovation, and market access. The forum also served as a space to present national programmes targeting youth and to catalyze investment partnerships for sustainable growth.

A major highlight was the unveiling of the National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agrifood Systems (NS-YEAS) 2025/26–2029/30, which targets an average of 170,000 new jobs annually, representing 68% of Rwanda’s employment goals under NST2. The strategy aims to ensure dignified, profitable, and future-ready opportunities for youth across all value chains.

Officials noted that Rwanda’s demographic outlook with more than 60% of the population under 30 and youth representing one-third of farmers

a strong advantage, despite persistent challenges such as unemployment and underutilized labour. NS-YEAS seeks to address these through targeted investments, skills development, stronger youth organizations, increased productivity, and improved market linkages. Approximately Rwf 173 billion will finance the strategy over the next five years. Young agripreneur Mico Mariette shared her journey, noting that agriculture became the gateway to the opportunities she had long sought. RYAF Chairperson Sakina Usengimana encouraged youth to embrace technology-driven agriculture and remain persistent, reminding them that growth often begins unseen.

Government and partners reaffirmed their commitment, with new anchor projects in mechanisation, horticulture, poultry, piggery, and fodder production announced to equip youth with practical skills and reduce business risks. With NS-YEAS underway, Rwanda anticipates a new generation of skilled young professionals driving a resilient, competitive, and inclusive agrifood system.



Dr. Mark Cyubahiro Bagabe who served as Minister of Agriculture at the time



RYAF Chairperson Sakina Usengimana

Drought-Resistant Cassava Brings New Hope to Farmers in Nyawera



Empowering Farmers Through Climate-Smart Cassava Production in Nyawera.

In the drought-affected hills of Kayonza, farmers in Nyawera are witnessing real change through the Kayonza Irrigation and Integrated Watershed Management Project Phase II (KIIWP2). Supported by IFAD and implemented by RAB, the project promotes climate-smart agriculture to help rural families adapt to climate change, boost food production, and increase income.

A 17-hectare cassava multiplication site in Nyawera is now producing four drought-resistant varieties—Buryohe, Tebuka, Nsizebashonje, and NAM130. These varieties are tested by RAB researchers, and the best planting materials are distributed to households. The site is expected to yield 26 tonnes of high-quality cassava cuttings, strengthening food security across Mwiri and surrounding sectors.



Women and youth are at the center of this transformation. Alphonsine Mukamugema, a mother of school-aged children, is one of many beneficiaries whose life has improved through paid work at the site. With income from cassava harvesting,

she now supports her family, pays school fees, and has started building assets including four goats and a plan to one day buy a cow.

The project also creates jobs for the wider community, with farmers earning 10 RWF per kilogram harvested up to 5,000 RWF per day during peak periods.

With productivity reaching 25.91 tonnes per hectare, Nyawera's field is a strong example of how drought-resistant crops and climate-smart practices can build long-term resilience. As KIIWP2 expands across Kayonza, thousands of families are gaining the tools they need to face climate challenges with confidence and dignity.

Via:RAB/SPIU



Packing and transporting high-yield cassava harvested through the KIIWP2 climate-smart project



Farmers sorting and packaging freshly harvested cassava under the bright rural sunshine, showcasing the hard work and resilience that drives our agriculture

Photo credits:RAB/SPIU

MINAGRI and UNICEF Rwanda Convene High-Level Roundtable on Food Systems Transformation



Group Photo

December 2, 2025 – Kigali, Rwanda: The Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) in collaboration with UNICEF Rwanda convened a high-level roundtable discussion under the theme: “Food Systems Transformation with Focus on Improving the Nutrition and Well-Being of Children and Mothers in Rwanda.”

UNICEF Rwanda’s Representative emphasized the significance of the initiative, stating, “Transforming food systems is not just a policy choice; it is an investment in Rwanda’s future. When we nourish children and mothers, we strengthen the nation.”

In his remarks, Hon Minister Dr Telesphore Ndabamenye called for accelerated collective efforts to end all forms of malnutrition, particularly by combating child stunting and anaemia among women. He also highlighted the importance of building an inclusive food system capable of delivering healthy diets to every household.

“Transforming food systems is not just a policy choice; it is an investment in Rwanda’s future. When we nourish children and mothers, we strengthen the nation.” Ms. Lieke van de Wiel UNICEF Rwanda Representative

During the closing session, Minister of State Dr.Solange Uwituze underlined that transforming food systems to improve the nutrition and well-being of children and mothers is a shared national responsibility. She stressed that achieving this goal requires persistence, innovation, and collaborative action.



Ms. Lieke van de Wiel UNICEF Rwanda Representative



Hon Minister Dr. Telesphore Ndabamenye



Minister of State Dr. Solange Uwituze

From Smallholder to Agribusiness Leader Gatete's SAIP-Backed Transformation Story



Gatete John Bosco at his watermelon farm/Photo by RAB SPIU

In the rolling hills of Rwabicuma Sector in Nyanza District, Southern Province, the story of farmer Gatete John Bosco is inspiring many other farmers. Only a few years ago, Gatete was a typical smallholder practicing subsistence farming growing just enough to feed his family hardly with little surplus for the market. Today, he has transformed into a thriving commercial horticulture farmer and a powerful example of what can be achieved when smallholders receive the right skills, resources, and business mindset.

Gatete now manages a 9-hectare farm, of which 8.5 hectares are dedicated to high-value fruits including watermelon, passion fruits, raspberries (locally known as gaperi), citrus, and tree tomatoes.



Gatete is busy selling his watermelon harvest to customers /Photo by RAB /SPIU

His remarkable transformation was made possible through the Sustainable Agricultural Intensification and Food Security Project (SAIP), which strengthened his capacity, enhanced his production techniques, and introduced him to market-oriented...

agriculture. In Nyanza, he is now widely known as "the passion fruit farmer." SAIP's support became a turning point in Gatete's farming journey. The project enabled him to expand and improve his watermelon and passion fruit production, providing him with high-quality seeds, compost, and technical guidance that significantly boosted his yields.

Today, Gatete is celebrating an impressive watermelon harvest, projecting a net income of between RWF 20 million and RWF 25 million from just two hectares this season. His innovative marketing approach selling watermelons by piece at RWF 4,000, while also offering buyers the option to purchase entire plots for self-harvesting —has expanded his customer base and diversified his revenue streams. Gatete's success has not only increased his household income but has also created employment within his community. His farm currently provides permanent jobs to 10 local workers, enabling them to earn a stable income and improve their livelihoods. Through his agribusiness, he is contributing to rural economic growth and demonstrating that agriculture is a viable and profitable profession.

Looking ahead, Gatete's vision extends beyond primary production. To reduce post-harvest losses and boost profitability, SAIP is supporting him to establish a fruit processing unit for producing juice from passion fruit, raspberries, and sugarcane. The processing plant, valued at RWF 175 million, will enable value addition and open access to more lucrative markets. Gatete is personally investing RWF 65 million in this initiative. Gatete's journey proves that with the right support, smallholder farmers can transition into successful agripreneurs, create jobs, and drive community transformation. His story continues to inspire farmers across Rwanda to embrace modern agriculture and view farming as a respectable and rewarding business. He strongly advocates for "agriculture that pays," a vision that SAIP is helping thousands of farmers nationwide to achieve.



Gatete John Bosco is well known in his district for his high-yield passion fruit farming

**THANK YOU
FOR 2025
SEE YOU IN 2026**

As we conclude the year 2025, we express our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support and engagement. Your trust motivates us to continue delivering credible and impactful stories that shape Rwanda's agriculture and environmental sectors.

We wish you a Merry Christmas filled with peace and joy, and a Happy New Year 2026 full of new opportunities, prosperity, and progress.

Jean Bernard MUKUNDENTE, Editor and Founder of
EcoAgri Media
Publisher of Farm & Environment Magazine (FEM)

