

food

FIRST



FoodFirst
Floriade
Conferences

Utrecht / Venlo, 2012

Socires / Food First Coalition

FoodFirst Coalition

7 Conferences on food security, March till October 2012

- Recommendations and report -

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Preface

During spring and summer 2012, Socires and the FoodFirst Coalition organised 7 conferences on the global food problematic. In these conferences — one at the Rabobank Headoffice in Utrecht, the other 6 at the Floriade 2012 in Venlo — the following issues were discussed: the production of food, the value chain, and logistics; breaking the hunger cycle and the commercial opportunities in Africa; healthy food and sustainable production; the role of cooperatives; urban agriculture; cooperation in the golden quadrangle of government, civil society, business, and science.

Speakers and participants from The Netherlands and abroad contributed plenty and rich material which can all be found on www.foodfirst.eu. The main conclusions on development cooperation and food security are, first, to focus on food production by smallholders to enable them to produce for the booming markets in the city. Second, that close cooperation within the golden quadrangle is required, both within The Netherlands as well as in the developing countries. It is a 'double golden quadrangle', where local parties take the lead and are reinforced in their independence.

Jos van Gennip, President FoodFirst Coalition
Doeke Faber, President FoodFirst Steering Group

FoodFirst Policy Recommendations

The seven conferences in the FoodFirst-Floriade cycle have delivered numerous insights and recommendations. In connection with the four pillars of the Dutch Development Cooperation policy concerning food security—increase in sustainable food production, better access to quality food, better access to markets for farmers, and a better environment for entrepreneurs—two concrete recommendations can be formulated.

[A] Concentrate aid on food production by smallholders in the vicinity of big cities. Pursue two goals simultaneously: provide more and better food to the city, and develop smallholders to become efficient producers for the urban and national market.

The rapidly growing demand for quality food and fresh produce in the booming African cities offers a huge opportunity. What is important is to turn this into an incentive for the economic development of smallholders in the urban periphery, and to provide them with the tools and capabilities to make use of this chance. This is a huge challenge with many aspects: land rights, productivity, manufacturing, marketing, organisation and development of the value-chain, infrastructure and transport, as well as social-cultural and governance changes.

[B] Because of this complexity, Development Cooperation around food security requires the close cooperation of businesses, science, government, and NGOs—the Golden Quadrangle. This goes for The Netherlands and the developing country, so it is actually a double golden quadrangle. In this cooperation the local party is leading, and the cooperation should reinforce their organisational and institutional strength—the aim being that local businesses, research institutions, government agencies, and social organizations can function without requiring outside aid.

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FoodFirst summary

How can we produce enough food, of good quality, for a decent price, and with everyone's stomach filled? And what does international cooperation contribute? From March until October 2012 FoodFirst organized seven conferences, in which various aspects of these questions were discussed. Two issues recurred. One is that of the cooperation in the double 'Golden Quadrangle', i.e. business, science, government and NGOs working together, both at home and abroad. Technical solutions or new policies or investments are not effective when done in isolation. They need a context of concerted action, on both sides.

The second issue focuses on the position of smallholders in relation to the developing urban markets. Connecting the smallholders' increasing production to nearby urban markets is the most effective way of feeding the cities and of stimulating the economic development of the countryside.

Smallholders around the city should feed the city, especially with products with a competitive edge such as vegetables, fruit, dairy and meat.

A summary of the presentations in seven steps: First the developing food crisis is confronted with some realism about agricultural production (1), after which the problem of hunger is refocused on the role of the smallholder (2). Following a discussion on urban agriculture (3) and some critical remarks on traditional and modern agriculture (4) the role of the Golden Quadrangle (5) and the focus on the smallholder (6) is further elaborated. In (7) two recommendations for policy are formulated.

1 Food for 10 billion people

The currently accepted predictions state that by 2050 we will have to feed a total population of 9 billion. Does this pose a problem? In one way, we can answer this question with "No!" How does that work? At the moment, the earth has 6.5 billion inhabitants and we have enough produce available to feed these 6.5 billion people. But one-third of the total food production is lost in transport and storage for the markets and shops, and in preparation after it has been bought. Count the losses in, and actual production is enough to feed almost 10 billion people.

The expectation is that in 2050 we have only half the agricultural area available for growing our crops, but doubling agricultural production might very well be possible. The FAO expects that much of the production needed in 2050 will be realized in Africa. And though it is a question how much more we can improve on the technology behind a green revolution, the large continent of Africa has not developed its potential because a green revolution has not yet been rolled out there. That leads to the contradiction that Africa is the most food insecure continent, and has the largest potential for food production due to its land area. And it makes Africa also a good business opportunity.

Ton Dietz and Rudy Rabbinge showed that the potential of Africa for food production is being realised: in many African countries food production is growing faster than the population. And there is more evidence that we can produce twice the food, with less available land and fewer farmers who can do the job. Water is the primary requirement for agriculture. Janneke Hadders showed how with an irrigation management system available, water can be used much more efficiently by applying the right amount at the right time—for maximum yields, plants need specific amounts of water at specific stages during growth; irrigating at the wrong time means wasting your scarce water. Experiments by Prem Bindraban showed that adding nutrition spectacularly increases yields even when the quantity of water is not increased. Relatively simple good farming practices make a huge difference.

Some realism about what to grow is also welcome. With the growth of the urban population, and thus with the growth of an urban middle class, dietary requirements will change: the demand for dairy products and meat will increase. Meat and dairy products are considered not to be a very efficient way of using agricultural land. When measured in 'grain equivalents', producing meat consumes four times the amount of grain compared to a vegetarian diet, which is why many

promote a vegetarian diet. However, Prem Bindraban added, this is true for omnivores such as pigs and grain-fed chicken. The food we grow for these animals we could eat ourselves. But nobody eats grass, and ruminants such as cows and sheep eat grass. There is already enough grassland available which is not otherwise suitable for major food crops, so there is no need to take valuable land that could grow other crops, or clear-cut forests to make pastures—so do enjoy your steak! with the compliments of Prem Bindraban.

2 Where does it go wrong?

Food security is not a technical problem, but a political problem. The food crisis is a political and governance problem, according to Paul Engel; there is enough land and technology to feed the people of the earth, now and in the future. The problem is what, where, by whom, and for whom, food is produced, and the political and institutional framework around food production.

Taken at face value, land, water, fertilizers, and farmers each have a proven potential to sufficiently increase food production. Reality shows that despite this potential and despite the available technology, hunger is a reality for 870 million people, and most of those belong to the rural and urban poor. Political problems and climate factors also play a role. At the same time, obesity is a growing problem around the world, partly due to malnutrition, partly due to overeating. Where does it go wrong then? If knowledge and technique are available, why do farmers not profit from it? And how is it that one person has too much food, and another too little?

First, who are the farmers? Minister Henk Bleker stated that the increase in production has to be realized by about 2 billion farmers, the majority of which are women. Vincent Lokin specified this further: a vast majority of farmers worldwide are smallholders, 85% has less than two hectares of land, 97% less than ten ha. These farmers have to seize the opportunity as the demand for food and agricultural products increases.

For Africa, statistics show that the export of food is growing, mainly in the segment of luxury foods (green beans), food for livestock, and basic foods. The import of basic foods has grown as well, but at prices even higher than those during the peak of 2007. As a result, most countries have more food per person available. The problem is access to food, both equal access and minimum access. And whereas urban food demand is growing enormously, the rural and urban poor have less to eat, as Ton Dietz showed. Those who produce the food are themselves also in danger of not having enough and cannot take advantage of the rise in demand for food in the cities.

3 Urban Agriculture

The rate of growth of urban populations is higher than that of the total population. Everywhere on the planet, people are moving away from the countryside towards the cities. Most of the 9 billion people in 2050 will be consumers of food, not producers. Within the cities, an urban middle class develops, and this middle class eats meat and dairy products and buys its food in supermarkets. The cities of the developing world are ill-prepared for the explosion of urban living, said Jan Hak referring to an FAO report from 2009. Food production has to face up to the urban explosion. Smallholders have to find their way to the (urban) market so that urban and rural people have sufficient access to food.

Urban agriculture, farming done within the city borders, can mean a reconnection between urban and rural poor that improves the food security for both. Urban agriculture is a way of providing food directly for (urban) families in Africa. Although this phenomenon is not new let alone revolutionary—until recently, western cities had farms within the city borders—reintegrating urban agriculture requires a change in the nature and architecture of city planning. It requires turning consumers into producers, and changing the landscape of cities. Urban agriculture could mean a solution for global problems at a local level, and it fits in with the growing popularity of local markets and consumers' desire for locally produced food.

However, urban agriculture is not directly a solution for the urban and rural poor in Africa. Urban agriculture is done by a middle class who owns some land. The rich and those with a middle income are relatively more involved with urban agriculture than the poor, making the poor much more food insecure, up to 77% in some places. The poor have often limited access to land compared to middle income and richer groups in the urban populations; urban agriculture mainly brings food security to higher incomes. Diana Lee-Smith stressed the need to link farmers to policy processes for urban agriculture. Then urban agriculture can benefit farmers in two ways: it provides food security of the urban poor, and it intensifies the agricultural production within the city.

It is of primary importance that farmers get linked up to the market in the city. To make this work, farmers have to grow the right quality in the right amount at the right time. Produce has to be packed so waste is minimal during transport. To this end, it is necessary to consider crop diversification, allocating funds for investments, organizing distribution, technological adaptation, creating an increase of value in the production chain, and marketing. That is what CETEC in Cali, Colombia, has done.

The message seems to be that food security is not helped by making smallholders self-sufficient, but by creating access to markets, local and possibly global. Whereas the example of Cali shows how farmers can organize themselves and get access to the (super)market in the city, the initiative can also originate from the consumers in the city. In Lagos, Nigeria, for example, private parties in the city have improved logistics to get fresh produce into the city, also largely circumventing the government and NGOs.

4 Tradition and modernity?

The experiences in Cali and Nigeria put big question marks behind the analysis made by some who see two food systems developing in Africa, one of large scale, possibly high-tech agriculture for supermarkets and the urban working class, the other of small farmers for rural areas, using traditional techniques. And as most of Africa's agriculture is private and small scale, it supposedly cannot benefit from producing for the cities. For the rural crisis, a different approach would be needed. The urban people and the rural people rely on different food systems and both should be supported on their own terms. Africa, it is said, would like to preserve their local food because that food is also healthy for them. "Feeding Africa starts with letting Africa define what food for it is." An obvious question is to which extent a green revolution can be applied to traditional farming. And as the example of Cali shows, smallholders can feed the urban dwellers to their mutual benefit, so one has to question seriously whether separating the food production for rural and urban populations is a path to follow.

5 Technology in context: the Golden Quadrangle

As Ton Dietz stated, improving food security is not only about improving food production and value chains. It is also about public-private partnerships to improve what he called agro-hubs: knowledge and support clusters in and around the big cities. And it is about separate policies to reach the poor, both in more marginal rural areas, but also in the cities. Or as Raoul Bino said: one needs both hardware, 'orgware', and software—the tools and technology, organizations of and for the people involved, and the knowledge and skills of the people themselves.

Technical solutions for food production can only be implemented when there is a certain infrastructure. For the practical implementation of an irrigation management system on a farm, one needs an infrastructure of electricity and communication. To make such innovations feasible, a wider context of policy and governance is needed. Government policy, academic research and training, businesses, and NGOs working together can provide such a context—these four partners form the 'Golden Quadrangle'. Such a Golden Quadrangle should function both here, in The Netherlands, as well as locally, i.e. where the food is produced.

There is a shift in investments from governments to the private sector in international cooperation, and also business and NGOs have found each other. There is a need to reform development cooperation because capital flows are much less predominantly North-South. Furthermore, the emphasis in development relations has shifted to more responsibilities for all partners involved. In The Netherlands, the government's policy of 'Top Sectors' brings together research institutes and enterprises in the agri-business with an aim of achieving higher food security. These Top Sectors can contribute to development cooperation by sharing knowledge and making innovations available. For all programmes aimed at food security, the availability and pooling of a skilled labour force, the availability of specialized service suppliers, good access to markets, an active circulation of information between academics, businesses and governments, and firm support by government and institutions are necessary. Atzo Nicolai formulated the necessity of a combined approach as follows: "No single party is capable of providing an overall, sustainable solution. Concerted action is the only way forward. And one must realize how important it is to engage with the 'base of the pyramid', to understand, to forge relationships, to forge trust—and thus lay a solid foundation for gradual change."

6 Focus on the smallholder

Fighting hunger means to tackle the problem of smallholders and get them out of a situation of hunger. The problems for smallholders are manifold: higher transaction costs for getting food to the market; problems with meeting quality standards; a lack of schooling; and their number is shrinking due to aging as well as the decreasing popularity of farming as a job. Government policies should be aimed at providing better access to (super-)markets by smallholders. For one, this means that we approach, train, and treat them as entrepreneurs and give them the tools to be entrepreneurs. It also means reform of the markets, as Naidoo stressed when he called to "try to develop a model that makes the markets work for the poorest of the poor."

7 Conclusions: What to do ...

The seven conferences in the FoodFirst-Floriade cycle have delivered numerous insights and recommendations. In connection with the four pillars of the Dutch Development Cooperation policy concerning food security—increase in sustainable food production, better access to quality food, better access to markets for farmers, and a better environment for entrepreneurs—two concrete recommendations can be formulated.

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FoodFirst's 7 Floriade Conferences

1 FoodFirst / NWO-WOTRO, Utrecht 15 March 2012

Food Business Across Borders

Demand for food shall increase some 70% over the coming 40 years, however, for the production of food fewer and fewer resources – land, water, fertilizers – are available.

To address the problem of food security, cooperation in the quadrangle of businesses, governments, universities, and NGOs is necessary.

Jos van Gennip, chairman of the FoodFirst Coalition

Until recently it was not deemed to be obvious that government, businesses, universities, and NGOs from the field of development cooperation would come together for a discussion. But, antagonisms and mutual distrust have been replaced by the understanding that cooperation is pivotal for each to realise their own goals. That also applies to the Top Sector Policy of the current government and that comprises the 'golden triangle' of Government, Business, and Science. That triangle has to be moulded into a quadrangle by including the NGOs because local knowledge is essential for effective development cooperation.

There are many questions for the meeting of this quadrangle:

How can we develop a common consciousness that food security is a problem for the whole world, and not something that is an issue elsewhere?

How can we compare institutions in different countries, and is it possible and sensible to export the success of Asia to Africa?

How can we start up cooperation between smallholders elsewhere and businesses in The Netherlands, and what will this cooperation offer us?

How wide is the horizon for businesses? Investments pay back over a period of 20 years, and not in about 4 years, which is the horizon of politics.

Ruud Huirne, Director Food&Agri, Rabobank Netherlands

The challenge for the coming decenniums is to feed more people with fewer natural resources. The Netherlands has a huge potential in technology and education for playing an important role in handling this problem. It also fits the goals of Corporate Social Responsibility of the Rabobank to facilitate this.

Focal points for the Rabobank are: to aim at safe and sustainable supply of food; to modernise the methods of production, and to stimulate efficient and sustainable use of energy; to advance local cohesion and the cooperation between countries.

Further on, Rabobank Foundation aims at giving as many people as possible a change of a life in dignity. For this, we indeed have to think of a golden triangle, because NGOs are part of the solution.

Key note 1: The Netherlands, world player in food security

Henk Bleker, Minister of Economic Affairs, Agriculture, and Innovation

It is clear: in order to feed 9 billion people in 2050, we have to realise a steep increase in production. Limiting factors are: climate change, increasing chances for extreme weather, and the mandatory reduction of claims on natural resources. The raise in production has to be realised by 2 billion farmers, most of which are women.

This global problem, that has serious social repercussions, such as violence as a reaction to food shortage, has to be dealt with by local governments.

The Netherlands can play an important role here. Many around the world have studied at Wageningen University and Research – abroad, the agricultural sector often is the first people talk about. As a result of the high-tech agriculture, The Netherlands is the second biggest exporter of agricultural products, with a total value of €73 billion annually.

New is that food security has become a top priority in Development Cooperation. This was also the result of a resolution from Jos van Gennip and Rudy Rabbinge which was accepted by the Senate already 8 years ago. Presently, Dutch businesses participate in local networks, independent from governments. In Kenya, for example, there are about 1000 farms which produce in accordance with EU guidelines.

This can also be achieved via the Top Sector Policy, thus employing innovation for developing countries.

The raise in production has to be done in a ‘climate smart’ manner – that was the theme of an international conference which we organised in The Hague, and of 2010. Together with Vietnam we organise a follow-up in May 2012 with a world conference on climate smart agriculture.

What also should be included is stimulating export, both here and elsewhere, and logistics to facilitate production and to get the produce to the market, with as little post-harvest loss as possible. That does not always necessitate high-tech solutions. The organisation of producers in for example cooperatives so that they have a stronger position on the market; simple laboratories for necessary tests; local banks that can provide credit (analogous to the Raiffeisen-model) – those are all straightforward conditions that are necessary for enhancing food security.

Key note 2: Global food security within the Top Sector Agro&Food: new chances with the golden triangle

Martin Kropff, member of the Top Team Agro&Food

Agro and food is right in the centre of the global problems in the near future, probably together with water. The Netherlands has much to offer for these very sectors. The Netherlands have always approached agriculture from the point of view of innovation, contrary to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU that has taken the idea of protection as its starting point. Agro&Food so has become one of the biggest industrial sectors of The Netherlands. And the knowledge infrastructure in this field ranks in the top three of the world.

In international cooperation the private sector plays a bigger role nowadays, and business and NGOs have closer contacts. And when you look at investment, there is also a shift from government to private sector.

The WUR has projects running worldwide, and cooperates with the governments, including local embassies, and with trade and industry.

The three themes for the Top Team Agro&Food are:

- 1 More with less (land, minerals, etc.);
- 2 More added value, less loss in the chain;
- 3 International leadership.

Het FoodBEST-programma is the basis for European *Food KIC*'s – a KIC is a Knowledge and Innovation Community. The vision of FoodBEST is: “To be the best facilitator for turning global challenges into business opportunities in the food sector.”

The mission is: “To facilitate the development of healthy and appealing food for a growing world population in a competitive and sustainable way.”

The goals are: “to

- Increase the number of start-ups, patents, license agreements, entrepreneurial candidates and training courses;
- Increase added value in food production, stimulating interdisciplinary collaborations and innovation models as well as public private partnerships across Europe and globally.”

In this way, the programme offers a basis for creating public-private partnerships that can handle the problem of food security.

Discussion

Minister Bleker on the CAP: export subsidies have to be stopped, that is the policy of the Dutch government.

Kropff: there are more players involved than only the 'golden triangle'; NGOs for one, and consumers.

What happens to local knowledge when we roll out our agenda; what about green beans which are exported from Kenya to The Netherlands, whereas the people in Kenya are starving from hunger?

Bleker: local businesses with which we work have to sign a CSR-statement. In Kenya the problem is that the fertile part of the country does not produce for the arid parts. But one cannot blame it on the businesses; the logistics within the country leave much to desire, and similar to other countries, self-cleaning capacities vis-à-vis corruption have yet to be developed. Via development cooperation one cannot change local governance.

Huirne: Business know very well about their responsibilities, and sustainability. One also has to consider that a big company such as Heineken has a much stronger position to stand up against corruption than a small company.

Kropff: Further on, this is a problem for public administration; what type of governance works 'here', what works 'there', what does not work, which mechanisms are at work?

Presentation NWO-WOTRO programme Global Food Systems

Eric Smaling, Member of the Board of WOTRO Science for Global Development

The new NWO theme Agro, Food, Horticulture, has three focal points:

1. Sustainable and safe production;
2. Healthy food;
3. Food security in global perspective (thus; Global Food Systems).

The ideas behind NWO-WOTRO Global Food Systems are:

- » Science inspires development and vice versa
- » Mission: research for sustainable development.

The challenge for Global Food Systems is to stimulate public-private partnerships (in The Netherlands in in DC-countries) for addressing global problems, especially those of food security, water, and health.

It is about food security in the long run for vulnerable populations.

It is about sustainable solutions, reflecting the interconnections of energy, water, health, and climate change.

- » Global solutions + complexity of chains = system solutions;
- » The consumer is central; how is demand developing. We see a development in which marginal groups grow into an urban middle class;
- » Cooperation between researchers and entrepreneurs in developing countries, and building capacities.

Main question: how to feed 9 billion people?

- » We need more land, but where is land available, and what about biodiversity and deforestation?
- » More output per unit – the green revolution – but how much more can we gain here nowadays?
- » Less waste, solve the bottlenecks in logistics;
- » Eat less, or eat more, or eat better quality – the complex issues of hunger, poor nutrition, hidden hunger, obesities, and the question of distribution, governance, and influencing behaviour.

When we look at the future, we see growing cities, growing income, and changing habits of eating. Most of the 9 billion people shall be consumers, not producers of food. What is positive, is the demographic credit of Africa, the most endangered continent: it has a young population and many women can be contributing.

Duo-presentation 1: Metropolitan Food Security: Cooperation between Industry and Universities across borders

Jan Hak, Chairman Groep Fabrieken van Machines voor de Voedings- en Genotmiddelenindustrie (GMV)

Metropolitan Food Security: is a result oriented initiative with a market driven approach. It is a platform of the sectors Water, Agro&Food and Horticulture.

Its main characteristics are: a holistic approach of consumer acceptance; involvement of logistics, clean technology, pharmaceutical and organic products, and the use of ICT and High-Tech methods.

Characteristics:

- » Innovative
- » Bottom up
- » Demand driven
- » Chain approach (primary, secondary and maybe tertiary)
- » Technologies: connecting sectors
- » Cementing relationship agro-sector – industry
- » Entrepreneurial approach North - South

Goals :

- » Securing Food in and for Urbanized Areas
- » Stimulating Entrepreneurship
- » New Business Opportunities
- » Cooperation Business and Academia
- » Know-how Sharing and Transfer
- » Spin-off: Innovations in Science, Technology, Education, Training

The golden triangle should be led by entrepreneurs.

In the near future, 70% of all people shall live in urban centres, and that is a problem in the make: “The cities of the developing world are spectacularly ill-prepared for the explosion in urban living.” (Van Ginkel, H., 2008 in FAO, 2009).

in short, we are faced here with the following problems:

- » Metropolises thirst for water, which has to come from far places > pressures on distant ecosystems, increase amount of dry zones in soils > increase migration to cities.
- » Agriculture: prime agricultural land converted into residential or industrial areas.
- » Transport: more and more food will have to be transported to and distributed within cities > infrastructure insufficient > stable supply can be jeopardized. (FAO, 2009)

Solutions should honour the 7 p’s:

1. People
2. Professional
3. Pro-active
4. Plan
5. Performance
6. Planet
7. Prosperity (which is a better term than ‘profit’).

Raoul Bino, general director Agrotechnology & Food Sciences Group, WUR

Raising production to feed those 9 billion people is simpler said than done. Improving seeds to raise potential yields is possible, but how do you realise that potential? What is then important is the right combination of hardware, ‘org-ware’, and software.

Hardware, for example: COFCO in China – development of greenhouses including the whole (value) chain around these. The Netherlands is good in integration of chains.

Org-ware: CORFO (Chilli) – reinforcing of the organisation of the agro-industrial sector, with as goals:

- » Make the Chilean food industry more competitive
- » Build human capacity for innovation in food industry in Chile
- » Improve links between science and industry
- » Establish Chile as innovation hub in LA Region

Software: African Agribusiness Academy – training people in starting a business, offering internships, and coaching.

- » Entrepreneurship is key to development and food security
- » Learning from own experience, building a knowledge base
- » African private sector in the lead
- » Trust in power of African entrepreneurs
- » Impact on smallholders.

Presentation II: Cooperation and innovation in the food chain: from rural production to urban consumption

Heleen Bos, Account manager Organics Rijk Zwaan

Via AFRISEM Rijk Zwaan works on building capacities in Africa via developing better seeds in a joint R&D-programme. AFRISEM is a joint initiative of Rijk Zwaan and East West in Tanzania. It aims at developing better vegetable varieties for the local producers and local markets. Marketing of improved varieties has to go together with intensive instruction and trainings programmes.

We would like research to be done on the following questions:

- » Building of capacities of all those involved in the chain from better seeds to the market stand;
- » Vegetable chain analysis: from producer to consumer;
- » Post harvest losses: when do losses occur, what can be done to prevent them?

This is more than just technology, also economic and social circumstances are of influence. There are bottlenecks on the market: smallholders have to find the way to the market, they have to become entrepreneurs.

Further on, how can we give city and country side sufficient access to food?

Then, laws and rules can be a problem. Kenya prohibits the import of seedlings, which has caused low yields of potatoes. And within a country there can be tariff barriers between parts of a country.

Lia van Wesenbeeck, Senior researcher Stichting Onderzoek Wereldvoedselvoorziening, VU University Amsterdam (SOW-VU)

The Stichting Onderzoek Wereldvoedselvoorziening, connected to the VU University Amsterdam, was founded in 1977, after the world food study that the Club of Rome had started in 1972. Its goals are:

- » Research into the causes of poverty and hunger;
- » Design and evaluation of policies in the field of food, agriculture, and development in order to combat poverty and hunger.

The research has a multidisciplinary character, and a qualitative approach from the perspectives of

- » Economy;
- » Hydrology and earth sciences;
- » Agro-economy and ecology;
- » Food and nutrition sciences;
- » Mathematics, statistics, system-analysis.

Certification of food producers is less simple than it seems at first glance, but certification is necessary for farmers to gain access to foreign markets. How can we facilitate that?

Logistics is important; during transport in West Africa tomatoes, for example, deteriorate. When one knows what price one can make at the market with the deteriorated produce, and what prices first quality makes, one can calculate how much one can invest in better packaging and transport. The growth of the BRIC-countries is also a result of the transfer of knowledge via development cooperation – it is not at all a falsification of the usefulness of development cooperation. Think also of the huge impact of public knowledge on development, in areas such as

- » Law;
- » Accounting;
- » Cooperation policy discussions;
- » Technical innovations.

So, scientific research has a clear role in the ‘golden quadrangle’.

Jos van Gennip Conclusions

The Netherlands has a lot to offer.

Connect the Top Sectors with Development Cooperation, government, and industry.

Producers elsewhere in the world are the addressees.

Help those producers who cannot cope with the developments.

NGOs here and elsewhere have to join in the process.

Results should materialise in an ‘alliance for global sustainable agriculture’.

Lastly, **Paul Beck**, Director General of the Floriade welcomes the FoodFirst Conferences at the Floriade, Venlo, the place where the next sessions will take place. These conferences fit the goals of the Floriade: to be not just an exposition of high-tech horticulture, but also to contribute to changes in policies and behaviour.

[jfg]

**_*_

Cooperatives and Development

Cooperatives are vehicles to help less powerful to accomplish their goals and make a fist: together you stand stronger in an open and global market. Cooperatives rely on trust between the partners, so can they function in low trust societies? Being a member of a cooperative does not always guarantee that one gets the highest price; cooperatives' perspectives are for the longer term. And more generally, what are the circumstances that influence the success of a cooperative?

Vincent Lokin

In light of the current food problematic (feeding 9 billion in 2050, scarcity of food, energy, minerals and land) we have to increase production by 70%, link smallholders to global markets, and make investment in developing countries possible. A vast majority of farmers worldwide are smallholders (85% has less than 2 ha of land, 97% less than 10 ha). Smallholders face problems such as higher transaction costs for getting food to the market; problematic quality standards and lack of schooling; aging and less influx due to decreasing popularity as a job.

Cooperatives are a viable way ahead because they connect economic viability with social responsibility. A cooperative is simply a business, organised by people (not by capital), and it is done by the people involved, they do not need to wait for others to start.

Joseph Nyagah

Africa is a continent characterised by food insecurity: production has gone down in several places; distribution is a problem (available food is in the wrong places); what is produced, is too much of the same kind; there is an overdependence on donor food.

Poverty affects the ability to produce food for the right markets. Natural hazards limit production. Conflicts and wars, within and between countries, disturb production and distribution. And a lack of knowledge and lack of infrastructure pretty much complete the litany of reasons why the picture for Africa is so bleak.

Governments have to make the right policies. At least there is currently an initial agreement between African governments to invest 10% of the BNP into agriculture. However, this level of investments has not yet been reached.

The African farmers are less educated and have less access to financing compared to other farmers. In order to be more productive, they need more incentives than they currently have. Seed and fertilizer programmes are in place, but the means to continue these are lacking.

In Kenya about 30% of the dairy farms are organised in cooperatives. The sector is so big that it justifies a minister of cooperatives. Cooperatives are a viable middle way now communism has collapsed and Wall Street capitalism is in the process of collapsing. Cooperatives have an important role in training and educating farmers, and for access to financing. They offer support to farmers at the grass roots level. The role of the government vis-à-vis cooperatives is to create the right environment where cooperatives can become stronger, and to act as an auditor. The government does not own the movement; cooperatives are independent private sector actors.

Christiaan Rebergen

Cooperatives play an important role in the development of Africa, and they are important for donor countries because of the stabilizing effect they have. During the bank crisis, we saw a run on credit unions and cooperative banks such as Rabobank.

Food security is one focus of the Dutch government. There is a need to reform development cooperation because capital flows are much less predominantly North-South. The emphasis in

development relations has further on shifted to more responsibilities for all partners involved. In that context, cooperatives are crucial in empowering persons.

Q&A

Are cooperatives the key to success? In any case not the guarantee; in the end, their success depends also on the market. And one has to invest in good people (members) and qualified managers.

What can we learn from Kenya? Reduce the involvement of the government, set up cooperatives as independent institutions. And realise that one has power in the market to get better deals – as Kenya did with coffee prices.

Interview Daniel Njenga and Frank van Ooijen

A problem for a cooperative is that sometimes members pass by the cooperative when they can get a higher price outside when in need for more income. This is a problem in Kenya; it has been a problem in The Netherlands. Cooperatives pass through the same phases and meet the same problems when developing. In the end, the benefits of a cooperative are the better service, and the possible advances on money and credit.

Duo presentation Ellen Magnus and Ton Duffhues

Experiences from Mali and The Netherlands: The experience with how cooperatives develop currently in Mali, fits very well with how cooperatives developed about 100 years ago in The Netherlands. Initiatives to form cooperatives are taken by local leaders. Informal relations (family, friends) are characteristic for cooperatives during the formative years. Solidarity often has priority over formal rules in these early phases. In a later phase, relations become more formal (this latter point emphasized by Minister Nyagah in the discussion). Cooperatives grow out of personal networks with as leading values trust, profit and solidarity.

Sathis de Mel

The reality of cooperatives is that they cannot reach all the poor. Often, cooperatives work in isolation; they do not take into account other stakeholders.

Why is it that cooperatives pass by the poorest of the poor? For one, the poorest of the poor cannot join a cooperative because they have no collateral. Then, the risk of giving them credit is too high, and the overhead is too high in relation to the small accounts they would need. Micro financing is the only solution for these people to invest in their business. And this access to credit can reduce their poverty successfully. In contrast to cooperatives, micro financing in this way benefits the whole of the community, not only the members.

Micro financing meets two problems in order to be able to keep providing its services: a financial, and a political back up. Arthacharya, Mr. Mel's organisation, is now backed by a cooperative bank (an Indian subsidiary of Rabobank), in order to strengthen its position and continue its services.

Governments are often negative about micro financing: it empowers the poorest of the poor, after all. NGOs that back up the micro financing organisation can alter this attitude.

Pierre van Hedel

Rabobank holds on to some strict guidelines when backing up initiatives such as Arthacharya, among others: no lending without saving; transparent governance; a functioning financial reporting system; embedding in local society; no market disturbances to be caused; independent from money freely provided by NGOs.

Jos van Gennip

A cooperative is a an enterprise as well as a community; it is a culture. Stakeholders involved comprise the government, which should support and keep itself at a distance; the cooperative and its members itself; the cooperation of cooperatives, to make a fist against other (commercial) players in the world market.

Good management and moral leadership are important for cooperatives. What are the goals of the cooperative, what are the addressees, whom are they representing? A question left at the end of this conference is whether cooperatives can be important for other sectors than agriculture. It was alluded to when talking about the financial crisis. It is something to be explored further.

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Food and Sustainability

Hans Eenhoorn

Sufficient food is a basic human right, according to the UN declaration of 1948. However, there still is widespread hunger.

In the period 2008 till 2011, we saw a spike in world food prices, and in that same period, an additional 150 million people were forced into hunger. This serious problem affects not only the urban poor, but also and most of all the rural smallholders. Fighting hunger means to tackle the problem of smallholders and get them out of a situation of hunger.

The food crisis is here to stay for the nearby future. Its driving forces are:

- » Rising populations (6.5 now to 9 billion in 2050);
- » Rising per capita incomes and concomitant changes in diet;
- » Growing demand for livestock products;
- » Growing demand for bio-fuels;
- » Increasing land scarcity;
- » Slowing of productivity increases in agriculture;
- » Climate change;
- » Increasing water scarcity;
- » Fertilizer scarcity (urea, phosphate);
- » Unfavourable Public Mindset.

The crisis can be solved; we have to produce twice as much with half the input:

- » Invest heavily in agricultural development, with a priority to increasing smallholder productivity;
- » Lower animal protein consumption/production;
- » Mitigate /adapt to climate change;
- » Increase agricultural research and education;
- » Accept 'safe' GMO's;
- » Reduce use of scarce resources (water, energy, phosphate);
- » Concentrate on 3rd generation bio-fuels;
- » Improve rural infrastructure;
- » Reduce post-harvest losses and fight waste.

The Worldconnectors have proposed directives for Dutch policy that tackle these issues. Invest € 1 billion ODA, during 10 years, in agriculture for global food security and climate smart, fair and sustainable growth, aiming to:

- » Alleviate chronic hunger for 1 billion people;
- » Feed a world with 9 billion people by 2050;
- » Achieve a new and sustainable Green Revolution;
- » Strengthen a leading role for The Netherlands in International and Development Cooperation;
- » Involve the Dutch private sector throughout the agro-food supply chain;
- » Contribute to international political stability.

Nitin Desai

Food production has increased over the last 30 years, yet almost a billion people are hungry. Hunger is not a problem of deficient production, but a problem of transport and distribution, i.e., getting the

food where it is needed. It is also a problem of post-harvest waste, especially in the rich countries. And it is a matter of the type of food people want when they have more money to spend. They tend to demand more meat, and to produce meat one needs more energy for the equivalent nutritional value other food has.

Due to our system of agriculture, we have reached the borders of our planet in many ways. To turn us around, we should, among other things, focus on food security as primary goal, an important part of which is education of farmers; then, we have to opt for an ecology approach, which means designing policies for the whole farming system and not for individual products; and we should foster the local farmers, which means that we treat them as entrepreneurs and give them the tools to be entrepreneurs.

Prem Bindraban

Ecological footprint, land area, and availability of water are issues for food security.

Measuring in grain equivalents for the composition of a diet is a good standard to compare diets.

Distribution and transport: most food is not traded but produced fairly locally. Only food for cattle is traded. So is transport and distribution really the problem?

Though for instance one needs 1000 l water for producing 1 kg of grain, the real trigger to produce more are nutrients in the soil: without nutrients there is little growth, even if there is enough water, and with nutrients there is already growth when only the minimum water is available.

So, do not continue outdated methods of production. The emphasis on maintaining interest of current (industrial/political) players and emotional appeals leads to a false reality (e.g. organic agriculture); counter-productive solutions (e.g. bio-fuels); and extreme unrealistic options (e.g. vegetarian diet).

Europe realises much higher yields per hectare than Africa, and continuing with these low yield methods will cause more and more forest and savannahs to be cleared. Also growing crops for bio-fuels takes away too much natural lands and valuable water resources. We have a food problem, not an energy problem. And that fertilizers are too expensive for smallholders is not a food-problem, but an economic problem.

Vegetarianism is not a solution; do enjoy your steak! Ruminants such as cows and sheep eat rangeland grass – which we do not eat -- and make valuable protein out of it. Pigs and chicken eat grains and other crops which could be eaten by humans – that should be more of a concern.

A solution for the food problem is a policy that uses technology combined with an institutional infrastructure. Europe has done so, with the Plan Mansholt, combining technological development with knowledge centres such as Wageningen UR. Asia has followed that path recently. Africa yet has to jump on this wagon.

Panel discussion

Paul Engel: we are in the wrong paradigm, the paradigm of either more meat, or more crops, etc. We should shift to being smart and efficient and making people feel better and feed themselves better. We always think of large lots of land with one crop, we forget the also smart farmer with a small lot who grows over 30 crops on his field. Food security is not a technical problem, but a political problem.

In that respect, the situation is changing according to Hans Eenhoorn. Agriculture is back on the political agenda in Africa, and the insight has developed that the green revolution can only work, as it did in Asia, when there are laws and rules that support the farmers with price and guarantees.

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Breaking the hunger cycle

Frans van den Boom

We see an impressive growth in Africa, at a time that there is a decline in Europe. The problems we face are man-made, so they can be solved by us.

NCDO connects the global to the local – connecting via knowledge, training and master classes, and fuelling dialogue and discussion (SID, Round Table, One World).

The new scarcities are the hinge between an older situation and the new realities – it is still the poor who take the beating.

Food is important for NCDO: everybody needs food, it is an issue that is simple to explain; our current eating habits are not sustainable; The Netherlands have a lot of experience and knowledge on food.

The irony now is that we do produce enough that 9 billion people can be fed, but still almost 1 billion people suffer from hunger!

Africa has a normal recurrence of a lean season (the period when the last harvest has not been enough to bridge the time till the following harvest). When that season happens years in a row, people will suffer.

Africa has an enormous economic and agricultural potential and business is seizing it. Both small scale solutions (Vietnam, e.g.), as well as large scale solutions (Brazil) are an example.

Issues

Developing countries eat more dairy products, and dairy products are in general inefficient products (the animals eat our food).

Post harvest loss: in Africa, 1/3 is lost on the land and in transport; in Europe, 1/3 thrown away later in the chain.

Renewed interest in urban agriculture: a way of providing food directly by/for (urban) families in Africa.

Prof. David Millar

Ghana has the fastest growing economy of Africa, but hunger and poverty have not decreased.

Is there an African agriculture? No, there is a multiplicity of expressions which we can categorize.

Current focus is on “food for markets first”.

Africa does not focus on their own indigenous agriculture, they rely on external knowledge.

Re. the Report on the green revolution in Africa by Kofi Anan.

Food sovereignty: defining what is food is more important than food security.

Despite that countries reach goals, Africa remains a food insecure continent.

Food prices are higher than ever since 1984. Added to that, there is a lack of quality seeds, and poor access to credit.

The gap between local production and consumption will increase with global development.

Integrating multidisciplinary approaches – economic, political, spiritual.

Africa's land is being used for global targets and markets. Most of Africa's agriculture is private.

Large scale agriculture is feeding the cities. For the rural crisis a different approach is needed. All policies now being implemented marginalize the small farmers. Supermarkets are for the working and urban classes.

Africa at large needs a different way.

We want to preserve our local food because that food is also healthy for us. Food has a social dimension; what one calls ‘food’ is what one has learned over the years to call ‘food’.

Challenge: pay attention to the farmer's driven food system, the traditional system. The urban people and the rural people rely on different food systems, both should be supported. Feeding Africa starts with letting Africa define what food for it is.

Madeleen Helmer

There is an important link between climate change and food security. The most important asset of rural people is their knowledge of the local climate – when to plant, when to get more cattle, etc – but this knowledge is rendered obsolete due to climate change. It is the poorest of the poor who do not have much schooling who is affected most by this.

Added problem for Africa is that there is not sufficient collected data to discover the trends in climate change taking place.

Rainfall in Ethiopia has decreased over a 30, 40 year period. Early warnings from the Red Cross did not generate much response. Only when an emergency actually had developed, aid became available. How can we react earlier? Governments are triggered by emergencies; we (= governments, NGOs, and the public) only get to action after shocking pictures have appeared in the news, with the standard first reaction: why did not you see it coming?

The idea of the Great Green Wall

Horn of Africa, where the problems are now the most severe, is exceptional – this happens only once every 60 years. The Sahel, western Africa, is not exceptional. The Great Green Wall is an idea to plant a 'wall' of trees from east to west in order to protect against drought. In Burkina Faso and Niger it has been shown to work: the trees provide shadow, which cools down the soil and makes agriculture more easy.

Discussion

Boogaard (Rabo): How can we connect the formal and informal value chain in agriculture – that would be a step forward? For a bank, the formal chain is more likely to be a partner.

Problem for smallholders: to connect them in cooperatives, one has to connect with the local, informal and family ties (Millar).

Synchronize aid (get crops going, and then bring in emergency food); get rid of subsidies, change your attitude (the goods of the earth are for all of us); accept the mindset there is, do not change it, but use it to embrace development.

Column Joris Lohman

Are Kenyan beans in AH evil? These beans provide work for many locals. Are they still neo-colonial? Increase the value of food, pay more and appreciate it more.

Let us export knowledge and management, and not food. Regional food security is the key for the coming decennia.

Janneke Hadders

"Agri Yield Management Systems" -- paving to road to sustainable agriculture.

The company Dacom started as an information system during the growth season. It relies on extensive data about crops, water needs, soil, weather, and it can advise on even an hourly basis. Irrigation management has been a price winning innovation. It measures on several levels the moisture in the soil and then will advice when and how much water is needed, preventing using too much, or at the wrong time. Applying too much water, just because it happens to be available, leads to less optimal growth.

Discussion

Peter Heintze: is this a system that can be used by small holders, because it requires an extensive infrastructure which is hard to pass by local governments.

Millar: more manageable for bigger farms; I would need access to the World Bank and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for this to work.

Hans Eenhoorn

Reduce post harvest loss! 1/3 of harvests is lost, amounting in Holland to 200kg per person per year, with a total value of €4.4billion, being the amount the Dutch government gives in development aid! Sub Sahara loss is 150kg p.p.p.y., but not at the consumers level, but in transport.

To fight losses, look at the whole value chain from seed to mouth – in each step value is added: working the soil, fertilizer, transport, packaging, etc.

There is a clear momentum to tackle this problem; NGOs, businesses, and several Dutch ‘Top Sectors’ are involved, and governments send signals:

- » The EU has marked the year 2014 as the year against food-waste, on January 19th. 2012 the European parliament adopted a resolution to aim for 50% reduction in food-waste by 2025.
- » On 5 July 2011 the African Union (AU) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to reduce post-harvest losses in agriculture.

Discussion

Food issue has to be taken out of the context of development aid (Joris).

Dutch people buy based on price, not on quality, though this attitude is changing (witness the land mine campaign and the anti child labour which started already mid-60-ies) (Frans).

Van Gennip

Summarizes the conference in the following highlights:

- » Food has a spiritual dimension.
- » Food for the cities, food for the neighbours.
- » Connect tradition and modernity, and become farmer-entrepreneurs.
- » Ownership and spirituality of the African farmers is important.
- » Farmers feed themselves, and then their neighbours, and then the city.
- » Current crisis in Horn is worse than that of 15 years ago, but there are less people in famine now.
- » Locally producing for the global market – more on that on June 19.

[jfg]

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Investing in Food Security & Food Markets in Africa

Marcia Luyten

In whose food security are we interested? The Chinese's of the Sudanese's? The contradiction is that Africa is the most food insecure country, and due to its land area it has the largest potential for food production as business opportunity.

Distribution is a major problem: logistics and politics are hindrances (Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation Ben Knapen has reserved millions for improving logistics!).

How can the needy get their share?

Ton Dietz

Presents a poster on the food situation in Africa, produced by the ASC.

In many countries (from the group of 10 preferred receivers for the Dutch Government), food production is growing faster than the growth of the population. Nigeria is especially booming. For two, Burundi and Kenya, the situation is alarming. Urban growth is higher than the total population growth. Food production has to face up to the urban explosion.

Trends:

- » Growing population;
- » Africa realises an even higher growth in food production;
- » Export of food is growing, but this is in the segment of luxury foods (green beans, e.g.), animal food, and basic foods.
- » Import of basic foods has grown, at higher prices than the peak of 2007;
- » In most countries people have per person more food available;
- » Access (both equal access and minimum access) to food is a problem – the rural and urban poor have less to eat;
- » Urban food demand is growing enormously.

West Africa is dominated by Nigeria, where farmers have been able to cope with food demand in the urban centres, despite the political problems in the country. The middle class that has come up in the urban centres organises itself better logistics; the government's role here is limited to cutting the red tape, and making better prices for farmers possible (keeping prices low is a counterproductive policy).

Improving food security is not only about improving food production and value chains. It is also about public-private partnerships to improve agrohubs: knowledge and support clusters in and around the big cities. And it is about separate policies to reach the poor, both in more marginal rural areas, but also in the cities

Stefan Schmitz

Africa is not a continent of problems; it is a continent of opportunities. The image we have of Africa must be corrected. One third of African countries have growth numbers that equal those of Asian countries.

Demand for agricultural goods has increased, and that leads to new opportunities. The FAO expects a doubling of demand for food by 2050, and Africa has a high potential for realizing this production.

The private sector is necessary here, we need innovative capacity.

For development cooperation the following is important:

- » Dialogue between the government and the private sector;

- » Transparency, an open debate about reform and inclusion of the private sector;
- » Education and training, responsive to the needs of the labour market;
- » Responsible investments in land.

More money is needed for Africa, and also a new policy framework. The Horn of Africa has shown that long term investing in agriculture is mandatory and will have results. Local projects or single products approaches do not work; a broad approach to agriculture together with businesses makes a difference.

Rudy Rabbinge

The availability of food is much better than ever before, except for Sub-Sahara Africa where population outgrows production. Hunger and obesity at the same time show that access to food is a problem. A growing middle class also causes a change in diet: more animal products, which increases the demand for crops. A (new) Green revolution is necessary – the lack of a green revolution is a major reason that Africa is lagging behind.

Why is Africa lagging behind?

Study by Inter Academy Council “Realizing the promise and potential of African agriculture”

- » Weathered soils
- » Erratic rainfall
- » Endemic plant and animal diseases
- » Absence of one dominating crop and a multitude of farming systems, thus a need for many different technologies
- » Dominant role for women – limited access to resources
- » Land and labor productivity is low
- » Lack of investment in agricultural research
- » Lack of knowledge infrastructure
- » Lack of functioning academic institutions
- » Brain drain
- » GDP & Investments in agriculture
- » Not functioning local and regional markets
- » Land entitlement inappropriate
- » No stimulating political and economic environment
- » Inadequate capacity to impact global policy formulation
- » Lack of good governance

So there is a clear need for investment in research and education, and for renewal of institutional arrangements.

IAC report makes the following Strategic Recommendations:

- » Technology options that can make a difference;
- » Building impact-oriented research, knowledge and development institutions;
- » Creating and retaining a new generation of agricultural scientists;
- » Markets and policies to make the poor prosperous and food secure;
- » Increase investments in agriculture and infrastructure.

Priorities on farming systems

Invest in institutions

- » Design and invest in national agricultural science systems that involve farmers in education, research and extension
- » Encourage institutions to articulate science and technology strategies and policies

- » Increase agricultural research investment on average to at least 1.5 percent of agricultural gdp in African nations in 2015
- » Cultivate African centres of agricultural research excellence
- » Strengthen CGIAR.

Create new scientists

- » Broaden and deepen political support for agricultural science
- » Mobilize increased and sustainable funding for higher education in science and technology, minimizing dependence on donor support
- » Focus on current and future generations of agricultural scientists
- » Reform university curricula
- » Strengthen science education at primary and secondary school levels.

Interventions related to marketing

- » Increase investments in rural infrastructure
- » Strengthen capacity to expand market opportunities
- » Reduce barriers to increased African trade with OECD countries
- » Improve data generation and analysis related to agriculture, food, and nutrition security and vulnerability
- » Institute effective intellectual property rights regimes to encourage the private sector and facilitate public-private partnerships.

Impact of IAC-report: Alignment in studies

- » World Development Report 2008
- » International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD)
- » MDG: Halving the Hunger: it can be done
- » Multi-country agricultural productivity programme for Africa (MAPP)
- » OECD Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Agriculture (POVNET)
- » FAO The State of Food and Agriculture (2005): Agricultural Trade and Poverty.

A New Green Revolution: AGRA programs develop practical solutions to significantly boost farm productivity and incomes for the poor while safeguarding the environment.

Follow-up activities

- » IFDC programs on integrated soil fertility management including market development for input provision and sale of produce
- » CAADP political commitment of African governments: African-led and African-owned initiative which focuses on: soil fertility, marketing, agricultural research, food supply and hunger
- » AAA stimulation of entrepreneurship
- » Strengthening food security programs in various countries: USA, DFID, The Netherlands.

AGRA, established 2006 to implement a 2004 report on undernourishment. As a result, undernourishment is decreasing (maize increased 12%, cassava 15%).

Discussion

Post-harvest loss: look at the whole value chain

There is a wide agreement that subsidies have to be ended, but it is still difficult to take that to Brussels.

Land grabbing is not just negative, it can be a vehicle for further investments; just saying 'No' is not realistic, there have to be good rules.

Rijk Zwaan and Unilever are companies that work in Africa getting better seeds and better conditions for the workers.

Diederik de Boer

Cluster approach

Clusters are “geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field” (Porter, 1998). So, work with knowledge centres, academics, and businesses together in a specific area so that mutual support and exchange is possible.

Clustering is good for businesses. Enterprises in the cluster together do better than those who are not part of the cluster. Reasons are, a. o., the availability of a skilled labor force and of specialized service suppliers, improved market access, and better circulation of information.

These clusters are comparable to the “Top Sector Policy” of the Netherlands, and the clusters around Schiphol Airport and the Rotterdam Harbour.

Experiences with these clusters in Africa include the corridors in Mozambique and Tanzania, the cluster development by On the Frontiers (Porter) in Rwanda, and the Round Table Africa, an initiative of Maastricht School of Management.

Challenges for businesses are

- » Keeping up with the knowledge revolution and increasing global competition
- » Lack of critical mass of skills and talent
- » Weak links between businesses and knowledge institutions
- » Weak governmental, institutional support
- » Failure to meet international standards.

The Round Table Africa tries to address these issues. Its elements are:

- » To stimulate sustainable business by linking research with business development (link macro-micro) in East Africa
- » A Focus on MBA and PhD students (public and commercial funding)
- » A programme of MsM and ESAMI
- » Four steps (linkages): Education, Research (Gov.-Value Chain analysis), Round Tables (Africa-Europe), Projects (Business).

Results after 6 years

- » 50 PhD/ DBA students from Africa enrolled
- » 50 different kinds of business-research such as:
 - business community partnership (horticulture, Tanzania)
 - The role of the middleman (potatoes in Kenya)
 - Agro-input subsidy packages in Tanzania
 - EAC trade hurdles for the agro-sector
- » Different projects (SME agro-bank, Association of oilseed-producers, Waste management system for the Serengeti, etc.).

So did we link Dutch investors with African businesses? That proved to be difficult for us in the end, to be honest. As a knowledge institute we are good in education, research; other skills we have to develop further, or seek matching partners.

Piet Heemskerck

Africa Agribusiness Academy started to tackle agro business in Africa and The Netherlands. Pointing at the government is not the right way; the idea is to create a community of best practices where one can also share problems and solutions.

The intended impact on society:

- » Entrepreneurial spirit as a driving force for African development;
- » SMEs as business leaders and role models;
- » Growing from small to medium-scale agribusiness firms;
- » Market access through improved agribusiness chain linkages;
- » Enhanced incomes, (urban) food security, less hunger.

Gerard van Empel of Rabobank shared his experiences and insights as director Advisory Services of Rabo Development. Rabo Development's mission is to provide developing societies with improved access to financial services, employing cooperative principles and banking expertise. It provides long term capital to local partners to serve unbanked clients, from individual farmers to small and medium-sized enterprises. Its approach is to collaborate as a minority shareholder and engaged board member, rather than acting as a controlling majority shareholder. It offers three types of development support: capital, management services and technical assistance.

Panel with Gerda Verburg

Do Dutch companies participate in German agro food policies? Schmitz will find out.

AAA-rating is not necessary for doing business; you need people who have knowledge about agro business.

Voluntary guidelines in agro? It is a first step, the next is to implement guidelines on a global level, start monitoring and capacity building in countries and legal institutions. Name and Shame has to go together with Name and Fame.

More publicity around these opportunities, too much stays below the radar.

Summary by Jos van Gennip

Could there be the momentum now to come up with a master plan for coordinated action in Africa?

Improving food security:

- » local ownership and foreign investments;
- » supply and access;
- » public and private (government has a task; private sector to take its own initiative);
- » Investment versus land grabbing;
- » dealing with growing urban demand and global demand.

[jfg]

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The Business of Food and Nutrition Security

“We know the absence of micronutrients leads to irreversible damage to children growing up. 300 children die every hour. We need to try to develop a model that makes the markets work for the poorest of the poor.” (Jay Naidoo, 2012)

The fifth FoodFirst conference at the Floriade in Venlo focussed on the effects of malnutrition, both hunger and so called ‘hidden hunger’. Every day, 870 million suffer from hunger. Two billion people lack the essential nutrients to live a long and healthy life. The problem is still growing: the world’s population rises fast, and the demand for food rises even faster.

Good nutrition is crucial for a normal physical and mental development of children and defines their opportunities in later life. Investing in human capital through better nutrition is one of the most cost-effective ways of helping countries’ economic growth (Copenhagen Consensus, 2008).

The FoodFirst conference brought together international experts in business, policy making, civil society organizations, and science to reinforce partnerships that tackle global food and nutrient security. The Netherlands is an obvious location for conferences like these because of its world-leading position in the food sector and the expertise and experiences connected herewith.

The moderator of the day, **Paulus Verschuren**, special advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and expert in the field of nutrition security, set out the focus of the day: “We don’t have to worry about food, we are surrounded by it. The poorest have to worry day by day, struggling how to feed their families. They don’t have the variety we have. Quality of food is important particularly for their children. Thousands of people die due to lack of access to a variety of food. The damages done by malnutrition are irreversible.”

Four dilemmas

The conference centred on improving access to (nutritious, healthy, and varied) food for the poorest population. Four important threads showed up in the presentations. The first was briefly mentioned by moderator Verschuren: a call for new partnerships. “We need a new global call. Businesses start to understand you can’t set up a business in a society that is not healthy. The elements of solutions are there. We need to work together more, and better. Nobody is as smart as all of us together.” The second thread was the inclusion of women and children. Third, balancing surplus of food with malnutrition, and relating to this, the fourth dilemma was to tackle governmental incapacities and cultural gaps that lead to inefficient distributions.

Joining forces

The first keynote speaker was **Jay Naidoo**, a former activist, union leader, Minister in Nelson Mandela’s Cabinet, and now chair of the board of GAIN, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, a foundation with headquarters in Geneva that is committed to addressing malnutrition facing two billion people in the world. Naidoo started with expressing his affiliation for cooperation with the Netherlands: “The Dutch are not afraid to speak their minds. There is commitment from the private sector to do something about food and nutrition security in the Netherlands, e.g. companies such as Unilever, because it is the right thing to do.” Naidoo underlined that we have all the knowledge, the legislation, business models, NGO expertise that allows us to do so, but lack the political will. And

within the new partnerships and business models, he stressed to “put the health and the human dignity as our foremost priority. (...) Why don’t we roll up his sleeves and just do it?”

Naidoo stressed the “need to try to develop a model that makes the markets work for the poorest of the poor.” The problem is urgent: “We know absence of micronutrients leads to irreversible damage to children. 300 children die every hour, while we have the science, and the money to prevent this.” He advocated to focus on the mother, since she is the one who needs the right nutrition when she’s pregnant, who can make the choice to breastfeed her child, who feeds her children, and who informs her children what food to eat while growing up. This inclusion of, and focus on women and children represented the second thread throughout the conference. (*The keynote speech by Sriparna Ganguly Chaudhuri, Director The Hunger Project India, shares these experiences.*)

Dutch Commitment

The conference turned to the focus on partnerships with the second keynote speaker **Ben Knapen**, Minister for Development Cooperation. He articulated the Dutch governments’ commitment to food security and nutrition: “We are putting our money where our mouth is, we have expanded our budget from €160 million to €435 million in 2015.” He summed up several initiatives the Ministry supports: the Amsterdam Initiative Against Malnutrition, UNICEF, GAIN, SUN, fertilisation programmes, and sustainable trade initiatives. He expressed the need for help: “We can only facilitate, others have to do the job, because they have the expertise: NGOs such as the Hunger Project, outstanding companies like DSM, Unilever, and Friesland Campina.” Knapen ended his speech with pointing at the urgent issue of rising food prices, due to drought or speculation: “If you spend 80% on food, rising prizes almost immediately affect your life.”

Inclusion of women and children

In her presentation, **Sriparna Ganguly Chaudhuri**, Director of The Hunger Project India, stressed that the solution lies with the women, because gender inequality is intrinsically linked with a lack of quality food. She brought forward her experiences from working in the slums of India:

“Business should work with local women, who often live in deprived situations. These women need to be sustained in different ways, they need to have options, and they need to be educated. Men tend to spend a lot of their income on alcohol. So when the women come home from a long day of hard work, they often get beaten. How will they be able to make the right choices, and make good meals for their children? Also, they did not have good food when growing up. These women have been conditioned to a situation where they don’t have anything. They don’t know better: nobody has invested in them, they have been neglected. So we need to educate these women what is good food to prepare for their children, based on local vegetables.”

These women have very little voice in the decisions that affect their life, they have no access to markets, cannot get loans, have no rights, and are subjected to the caste system.

Balancing surplus and malnutrition

Chaudhuri emphasized the impact of malnutrition in India: despite a vast quantity of buffer and reserve stocks of food grain in India, about 300 million people live below the poverty line, 42% of children under 5 suffer from malnutrition and in rural areas deaths by starvation are still common. This introduced the third thread throughout the conference: how to balance surplus with malnutrition. Chaudhuri said that only 48% of all food supply in India reaches the poor, 52% of food supply gets lost due to a.o. a lack of infrastructure (Naidoo would later on relate this to a lack of governance.)

Tackling governmental incapacities

This related to the fourth thread throughout the conference: tackling governmental incapacities and cultural gaps that lead to inefficient food distributions. Governmental incapacities included “the complete lack of political will to make it work”, according to Chaudhuri. She mentioned how people would move to the city, expecting to find more income and food there, but would in fact end up in the slums where they have no address and are thus excluded from governmental food programmes. This supported her statement that “change can only come if we empower the village, they need to have a voice in the decisions at political tables and conferences.”

The fourth speaker, **Atzo Nicolai**, President of DSM Netherlands, asserted to get the ‘max out of the mix.’ His speech supported partnerships with and inclusion of the poor: “No single party is capable of providing an overall, sustainable solution. Concerted action is the only way forward. And second, one must realize just how important it is to pragmatically engage with the ‘base of the pyramid’, to understand, to forge relationships, to forge trust – and thus lay a solid foundation for gradual change. If you really want to combat malnutrition, you need to be a local insider.” Later on in the discussion he said: “they don’t want our food now,” emphasizing education to overcome cultural differences.

He elaborated on DSM’s innovative work to combat malnutrition: “We innovate at ingredient level: vitamins, minerals, fatty acids, enzymes, premixes of micro nutrients. Second, at the product level: two examples are the kernel-fortified rice NutriRice and MixMe micronutrient powders sachets in different formulations, distributed via the WFP and UNICEF.”

DSM also innovates at business model level. For example, they recently introduced Quali-Blend as a nutritious ingredient, which stands for nutrition & quality, to be marketed via a franchise model for street food in Indonesia. Finally, they established innovation through the partnerships with WFP and UNICEF.

Discussions

During the discussion it proved again (this also surfaced in the earlier FFF conferences) that all parties seek a hybridization of expertise of businesses, NGOs, knowledge institutions, and governments, which stressed the importance of the FoodFirst cyclus. Nicolai stated: “We have experienced that when finding sustainable solutions for hidden hunger, malnutrition, development and poverty, the role of nutrition needs to be reinforced across a wide spectrum of sectors including food, health, social protection, education, gender equality, and environmental challenges. Breaking down the silos of disciplines and organizations is required not only to make better use of resources, but also to leverage the expertise of all parties involved. And respect each other’s roles and capabilities.”

Chaudhuri emphasized cultural influences. In India, political parties play a big role in exploiting the gaps that occur in the hierarchy within families (i.e., who gets to be the first to eat the food), caste hierarchy, religious differences and rural categorization: “We have three or four beautiful food programs started by the government, but it doesn’t work because they don’t want it to work.” According to Chaudhuri, targeted approaches don’t work because there is lot of fall-out within the process. Therefore she advocates a holistic approach. Furthermore, she stressed to take into account that women leave home for wage labour 11 days after they have given birth, leaving the baby at home, without food and without breastfeeding them. Additionally she emphasized that there is a social stigma on breastfeeding.

Naidoo stressed that all our solutions are at supply side, but that a lot needs to be done at the other side, the governance side: “Food distribution leaks because someone is benefitting from it. Who is feeding from the system? Are we prepared to take a stance against important people? It is a minefield out there. In the end of the day everything is political.”

A suggestion was made from the audience to integrate the smallholder's role: "If the farmer can't benefit from new business models and make more money he's not interested."

The conference ended with an analysis and points for further action by **Wim Naudé**, Acting Dean Director of the Maastricht School of Management. He started with quoting Amartya Sen¹:

"Famines are easy to prevent if there is a serious effort to do so, and a democratic government, facing elections and criticisms from opposition parties and independent newspapers, cannot help but make such an effort. Not surprisingly, while India continued to have famines under British rule right up to independence (the last famine, which I witnessed as a child, was in 1943, four years before independence), they disappeared suddenly with the establishment of a multiparty democracy and a free press."

Naudé summarized that we have many gaps in our knowledge and therefore need a coalition of forces. We need education for people to make informed choices and acknowledge that many populations have resistance against certain forms of nutrition. The food industry has become big business, but with innovation and huge growth, also inequality grew because many people do not have access. There is a need for internal regulation at company level to conform to ethical standards regarding eradicating poverty. And also for external regulations, because a lack of regulations leads to unwanted incentives for banking, resources, and technology: we don't want our food prices to become linked. He ended with focussing on the need to train the smallholders as businessmen, entrepreneurs. To reinforce their food production with a business approach, education and research.

Hereafter, **Jos van Gennip**, Chair of the FoodFirst Coalition gave a personal word of thanks to all partners involved.

The day closed with a presentation of '**Too Good To Waste**', an initiative by the winners of the Battle of the Cheetahs of the NCDO. This group of young food professionals raised awareness for the more than 30% of food that is thrown away in the production process. It falls off the plant, or does not look good enough. Too Good To Waste will travel around the Netherlands to hand out delicious gazpacho that is made from this 30% 'waste', just to show: "Food waste is not waste until you waste it." To see more about their initiative, watch their film via [this link](#).

Short summary of the key outcomes of the day

To conclude, investing in human capital through better nutrition is one of the most cost-effective ways of helping countries' economic growth. New partnerships should access the poor, and include women and children. Food dilemmas are increasingly difficult due to price fluctuations, drought, climate change, and a high urbanisation rate. Education is key to help the poor make right decision regarding food. NGOs are needed for capacity building and understanding cultural gaps. Local governments should be addressed on their incapability in the food distribution process. These partnerships allow a strong joint strategy that reinforces each partner's expertise.

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¹ Sen, A. (1999). Democracy as a Universal Value, *Journal of Democracy*, 10. 3, 3-17.

Urban Agriculture

“It is expected that over 500 million Africans will live in cities by 2020. The poor have often limited access to land compared to middle income and richer populations; therefore urban agriculture mainly brings food security to higher incomes. We should focus on providing land for the poor” (Lee-Smith, 2012)

The increasing urbanization rate demands alternatives to feed the urban population. This final FoodFirst conference discussed urban agriculture’s potential to establish food security, improve quality, poverty alleviation, and greener, more livable cities, while saving energy, water, waste and space.

Resurrecting urban agriculture

Lia van Wesenbeeck, Senior researcher of the Center for World Food Studies at the Vrije Universiteit van Amsterdam, moderated the conference.

Doeke Faber, President of the FoodFirst steering group, introduced the topic urban agriculture. He argued that it is not a new creation but a resurrection: two decades ago, urban agriculture was common practice in the city, but throughout the years it has been relocated to the rural areas. Thus, although this phenomenon is not revolutionary, reintegrating urban agriculture requires a change in the nature and architecture of city planning. It requires turning consumers into producers and changing the landscape of cities. Therefore he stressed urban agriculture as a necessary development, to promote solutions for global problems at a local level, to benefit from the growing popularity of local markets and consumers’ wishes for local products. He ended looking forward to the World Expo at Milan in 2015 that will promote the development of green cities and address worldwide food security.

Providing land to the poor

First keynote speaker **Diana Lee-Smith**, the founder of the Mazingira Institute in Nairobi, Kenya, outlined current implementations, policy prospects and dilemmas at the grassroots levels in urban agricultural Africa. This non-profit organization is concerned with equitable development and environmental sustainability. It has an interdisciplinary approach to the issues of human settlements and environmental management, gender, health and environmental awareness, peace, cooperation and environment. Using slides of agricultural situations, she discussed the challenges to achieve food security amongst the poor population in Africa. “It is expected that over 500 million Africans will live in cities by 2020. The rich and middle income population do more urban agriculture than the poor in relation to their numbers, making the poor much more food insecure, 77% in some places. The poor have often limited access to land compared to middle income and richer populations; therefore urban agriculture mainly brings food security to higher incomes.” She stressed the need to link farmers to policy processes. Urban agriculture benefits farmers in two ways: it provides food security of the urban poor, and it intensifies the agricultural production within the city. Thus, the emphasis should be on providing land for the poor, because urban agriculture will otherwise benefit those who already have land, the richer population. Additionally, a lack of infrastructure creates problems, for example in Nairobi, where during clashes in January 2008 the only railway line was torn up. The single-line track built around 1900 provided the only distribution and passenger service to neighbouring countries, now cutting off the entire region. Other issues arise with polluted land; in poorer areas many people live on dumpsites, where they produce their food. Lee-Smith summed up countries that have implemented policies for urban agriculture already.

Tanzania has had supportive laws and policies for two decades. Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Cameroon and others tolerate urban agriculture but lack the policy framework to support it. Kenya has a draft policy. Cape Town has an urban agricultural policy and policy unit in the City Council since 2007, providing services to framers and consultative forums.

She concluded by stressing the need for international support, the IDRC in Canada has been supporting research and policy development since the 1980s, Urban Harvest - the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) - supported policy and institutional development in three African countries from 2002 to 2012. Other examples include the RUAF foundation, an international network that provides training, technical support and policy advice. Answering the moderator's question, Lee-Smith stressed that African cities have much to offer. Enhancing its agricultural capacity - especially to improve the food security of slum dwellers - should be done by building on existing projects. This summer, the first Urban Agriculture Summit in Toronto focused on existing North-South exchanges and collaboration. Lee-Smith emphasized the need to increase the farmers understanding of health risks based on scientific knowledge, best practices, and the risks of contamination.

Linking rural and urban

The second keynote speaker, **Alberto Rodriguez**, Director of CETEC, Cali in Colombia elaborated on developing a city market in an area with frequent armed conflict. CETEC creates alliances, organizing smallholders in rural Columbia, to achieve food security by connecting rural and urban areas and improving access to markets. Cali is a city in the Southwest of the country with 2,5 million inhabitants. During Colombia's debt crisis in the 1980s, the 'lost decade', the economy shrunk and drug trafficking and violence further destabilized society. CETEC started in 1985 to look for alternatives to link smallholders to the markets. The organization now works with 28 rural organizations with 1200 participating families, 12 urban organizations, and second grade organizations that help with coordination and representation. Using the examples of tomatoes and *panela* (a popular cane sugar drink), Rodriguez illustrated CETECs integrated and diversifying approach: stimulating crop diversification, allocating funding for the investments, organizing the distribution, addressing technological adaptation, and creating an increase of value in the production chain. The last phase of the products is marketing, for which they have created alliances within the city between the producers, the processing companies, the consultancy companies, and the top private sector, including supermarkets and the financial sector. Creating these peaceful relationships is extremely important, especially in a country with frequent armed conflict.

Progress has been made. Rodriguez mentioned that the self-sufficiency of food products has grown, generating 1170 extra jobs per year. Fresh vegetables produced by local smallholders' associations are sold in supermarkets, just like poultry meat in the numerous chicken grills. And environmental sustainability is on the agenda. However, new problems arose due to the free trade agreements. Rodriguez emphasized that the subsidies of the United States on their agricultural products interfere with the outlook for local food production in Colombia. Colombian products are becoming non-competitive also because of the revaluation of the currency due to booming mining exports. Additionally, the production of biofuels competes with food production in the city. Answering the question from the moderator about the competition with the US, Rodriguez said that there's no guarantee for success but to continue with the efforts.

Do it yourself: from tiles to strawberries

Lisa Alix presented her initiative 'Urban Gardening – From Tiles to Strawberries' – motivating citizens to transfer a neglected city terrain into a city garden. The initiative is a roadmap for future 'Food Guerrillas': how to find the owner, finding other participants and how to deal with polluted land. And then: "turning boring patches of land and dog walking areas into strawberries and flowers."

The Garden City

After the break, the conference remained in Dutch spheres. **Adri Duivestein**, Deputy Major of Almere, gave an overview of the development of the city in the field of urban agriculture and green city development. Almere is only 30 years old, and quite different from other cities as it is built on reclaimed land – the city is “a 100% manmade.” Duivestein referred to Ebenezer Howard as one of the Founding Fathers for the city’s green orientation, who developed the City Garden Concept: “Town and country must be married.” As a result, Almere is not created as a compact city but poly-nuclear, having several city centers. Most of it is designed by the well-known architect Rem Koolhaas. An important aspect is also the city’s focus on the middle class, giving them access to a green environment. However, a downside of this planned approach is that Almere’s inhabitants did not participate in the development of the city, most of it happened on ‘blue print’ and in standardization, with the focus on quantity instead of quality; whole blocks of houses were built in similar style. Therefore in 2006 a new urban policy was initiated with the so-called Almere Principles, which state: “cultivate diversity, connect place and context, combine city and nature, anticipate change, continue innovation, design healthy systems, and empower people to make the city to be a liveable and healthy city in 2010.” An illustration is the Homeruskwartier, a project where people can build their own house, or school, or farm.

Feeding Milan

The final keynote speaker, **Anna Meroni**, President of Nutrice Milano, presented this project, an initiative that uses public urban spaces for communal agricultural projects. The first pilot was ‘the Earth Market’. Milan didn’t have a farmers market before, and the goal was to experiment with food services – for example a weekly vegetable box service. Meroni elaborated on the challenge to find a sustainable approach and continuous supply, because soon the demand outgrows supply. Meroni explained the strategy: training farmers, setting up local distribution services, setting up a cooperative supermarket, and integrate research and teaching. Another urban agricultural activity was the vegetable garden on the campus of Milan’s university. Showing a short film of the project, Meroni illustrated how the use of public land connects people to the university and integrates a plot with the city culture. However, as the university’s soil appeared polluted, possibilities were limited. To cope with the polluted soil and to continue the gardening project boxes are being used.

An integrated rural and urban approach

During the panel discussion all keynote speakers were invited to the stage to discuss effective strategies for urban agricultural approaches. The main questions were: “What can we learn from each other?”, “how to deal with pollution?”, and: “what are the roles for all stakeholders?” Lee-Smith said that for effective food distribution, networks are essential. Duivestein mentioned that integrating food with city life is necessary. Meroni stressed that ownership is key -- it should be transferred to the market to manage the service. A remark from the audience (Africa Studiescentrum) added that food chains should be short, within the city or its periphery. Frans van de Boom, NCDO, asked how to deal with pollution. Lee-Smith said that pesticides are hardly used in Africa, because they are expensive. She promoted the use of – cheaper – human waste. According to her, human waste should be encouraged in agriculture, because although it was seen as unhealthy, if treated, human waste provides a good alternative to pesticides. A good approach is starting with treating sewerage waste: “only in the 21th century we started to understand the human risks of contamination but we haven’t transformed the system.” She said the sewer was designed to get rid of human waste, not to treat it and reuse it.

A sustainable approach

The final discussions emphasized stakeholder involvement and financial struggles. Rodriguez said that experiences showed that urban and periphery-urban areas work together to complement their

production and achieve higher volumes. Lee-Smith agreed that both urban and rural should be part of an agricultural approach. To create sustainability, Rodriguez stressed the need for political will and financial involvement. Meroni agreed that a lack of sustainable funding undermines a permanent project. According to Meroni, sustainability should be the main strategy, not only because of ideology but also for a value-adding approach: “the more you can add value at the beginning, and the quicker you get to the consumer, the more revenue both sides make: the producer saves distribution costs and the consumer has an affordable and qualitative product.” Lee-Smith said she struggled to bring in donors to her organization’s projects. According to Duivestein, it is a struggle to combine small-scale agricultural city development with the open competition for food production. Rodriguez remarked that the US’s free trade agreements created conflict between smallholders and large-scale food production in Colombia. The production of corn in Colombia is now only profitable if it is part of a production chain, for example as chicken food.

Joining hands

Hans Hoogeveen, Director General of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, closed this final FoodFirst conference by summing up the key lessons of food security: “we have learnt that there is much more to think about food and food security. And how important the partnership is – joining hands between politics, research institutes, civil society and the private sector, addressing and discussing issues is the way forward.” In 2022, the Floriade will be hosted in the Netherlands again, this time in Almere. Hoogeveen stressed the importance to continue talks about food and agriculture in urban areas, especially in relation to conflict, climate change, and migration. Cities occupy only 2% of land surface, but 60% of people are living in the cities. Therefore, these initiatives should continue, to enhance resilience to climate change, reduce emission, address the gap between rich and poor, and to address health and environmental risks. “Hunger for action can only be stilled by sharing knowledge and transferring skills.” He referred to Kofi Annan, who said that PPPs, public private partnerships, should be private public partnership, because the private sector knows how to act, and the government should provide the framework. Therefore he promoted scaling up the initiative: for every dollar spent in private sector investment to alleviate climate change, the government should add a dollar in public sector investment. These forms of partnership are needed.

The circle is closing

Hereafter **Jos van Gennip**, chair of the FoodFirst Coalition, made his final closing remarks ending the FoodFirst series: “The circle is closing.” He emphasized the new perspectives that were addressed during the conferences, discussing climate change, deepening ideas and policies, the priority of a comprehensive approach in international cooperation, and cooperatives with the Netherlands, especially now a new cabinet is forming. He thanked the core of participants for forming a community between the four actors; civil society, research institutions, the government and the private sector. And after thanking everybody who helped to organize, facilitate, fund, develop and coordinate the conferences, he looked forward. The road to Milan’s Expo in 2015 and Almere’s Floriade in 2022. “Some new initiatives are already on the table to continue achieving a new era of food security.”

And then the conference ended with a last moment of inspiration. **Elma Roelvink** presented her project ‘Pluk de Stad’ [Harvesting the City], a website where you can find and share trees, bushes, flowers and all other edible things in your city, when to pluck it and recipes to prepare it.

[km]

FoodFirst Conferences

15 March 2012

Nederland wereldspeler voor voedselzekerheid

Henk Bleker, Staatssecretaris van Economische Zaken, Landbouw en Innovatie

Mondiale voedselzekerheid binnen de topsector Agro&Food: nieuwe mogelijkheden vanuit de gouden driehoek

Martin Kropff, Lid Topteam Agro&Food

Presentatie NWO-WOTRO programma Global Food Systems

Eric Smaling, Bestuurslid WOTRO Science for Global Development

Metropolitan Food Security: Samenwerking tussen industrie en academia over de grenzen heen

Raoul Bino, Algemeen Directeur Agrotechnology & Food Sciences Group, Wageningen Universiteit

Jan Hak, Voorzitter Groep Fabrieken van Machines voor de Voedings- en Genotmiddelenindustrie (GMV)

Coöperatie en innovatie in de voedselketen: van rurale productie tot urbane consumptie

Heleen Bos, Accountmanager Organics Rijk Zwaan

Lia van Wesenbeeck, Senior onderzoeker Stichting Onderzoek Wereldvoedselvoorziening, Vrije Universiteit (SOW-VU)

24 April 2012

Introductory speech

Vincent Lokin, Director Cooperatives and Governance, Rabobank Nederland

Key note speech

Joseph Nyagah, Minister of Cooperative Development and Marketing of Kenya

Christiaan Rebergen, Deputy Director General International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands

Double interview with:

Daniel Njenga, Manager Kiambaa Dairy Farmers Cooperative, Kenya

Frank van Ooijen, Corporate Director Sustainability Friesland Campina

Dutch cooperative experiences

Ellen Magnus, Advisor Royal Tropical Institute

Ton Duffhues, ZLTO

Access to finance

Sathis de Mel, Executive Director Arthacharya Foundation, Financial cooperative Sri Lanka

Pierre van Hedel, Managing Director Rabobank Foundation

8 May 2012

Introduction

Hans Eenhoorn, Worldconnector and Former Senior Vice President of Unilever

Keynote speech

Nitin Desai, Trustee WWF International, Member of the Indian Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change, Secretary-General of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, 2002

Keynote speech

Prem Bindraban, Director ISRIC World Soil Information, Wageningen UR

Panel discussion with:

Hans Eenhoorn, Worldconnector and Former Senior Vice President of Unilever

Paul Engel, Director of ECDPM and Professor Public Policy and Innovation, Maastricht School of Management

Paul Jansen, Director Corporate Public Affairs Agri at VION NV

Wouter Verhey, Policy Coordinator Food Security, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation

29 May 2012

Introduction

Frans van den Boom, Executive Director / CEO NCDO

Keynote speech

Professor David Millar, Pro-Vice Chancellor University for Development Studies Ghana

Madeleen Helmer, Director Policies and Communication Concerns Red Cross Climate Centre

Innovative approach 1

Janneke Hadders, Director Dacom, winner MKB Innovation Top 100 with an irrigation system for crops

Innovative approach 2

Hans Eenhoorn, Worldconnector, Former Senior Vice President of Unilever, Initiator 1-2-1 Food Losses Initiative

19 June 2012

Introduction

Ton Dietz, Director African Studies Centre, University Leiden

Keynote speech

Stefan Schmitz, Head Task Force for Rural Development and Global Food Security, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany

Keynote speech

Rudy Rabbinge, Sustainable Development & Food Security, Wageningen University

Cluster Approach

Diederik de Boer, Director Round Table Africa / Senior Project Consultant Maastricht School of Management

Presentation 1

Elijah Kang'ara, Ugandese entrepreneur

Piet Heemskerk, African Agribusiness Academy, Wageningen

Presentation 2

Gerard van Empel, Director Advisory Services, Rabo Development

28 August 2012

Welcome

Paulus Verschuren, special advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the field of nutrition security.

Keynote 1

Jay Naidoo, Chair of Board of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

Keynote 2

Ben Knapen, Minister for Development Cooperation

Keynote 3

Sriparna Ganguly Chaudhuri, Director The Hunger Project India

Keynote 4

Atzo Nicolai, President of DSM Netherlands

Analyses and points for further action

Wim Naudé, Acting Dean Director MSM

2 October 2012

Introduction

Doeke Faber, President FoodFirst steering group

Key note 1

Diana Lee-Smith, Founder Mazingira Institute Nairobi, Kenya

Key note 2

Alberto Rodriguez, Director CETEC Cali, Colombia

Key note 3

Adri Duivestijn, Deputy Mayor of Almere

Key note 4

Anna Meroni, President Nutrire Milano

Conclusions

Hans Hoogeveen, Director General, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation

Participant's Ratings

After the cycle was finished, all participants were asked to fill in an online questionnaire. 29 participants gave their opinion. In the ratings, 1 means very good, 5 means very poor.

Table 1: ratings of the quality of the conferences

	Rating
15 March 2012: Voedselzaken over grenzen heen	
What is your opinion on the conference in general?	2,40
What is your opinion on the delivery of the lectures?	2,20
What is your opinion on the content of the lectures?	2,40
What is your opinion on the quality of the discussion?	3,00
24 April 2012: Cooperatives and development	
What is your opinion on the conference in general?	1,80
What is your opinion on the delivery of the lectures?	2,00
What is your opinion on the content of the lectures?	2,00
What is your opinion on the quality of the discussion?	2,00
8 May 2012: Sustainable Food Production	
What is your opinion on the conference in general?	2,25
What is your opinion on the delivery of the lectures?	2,25
What is your opinion on the content of the lectures?	2,00
What is your opinion on the quality of the discussion?	3,00
29 May 2012: Breaking the Hunger Cycle	
What is your opinion on the conference in general?	2,20
What is your opinion on the delivery of the lectures?	1,60
What is your opinion on the content of the lectures?	2,00
What is your opinion on the quality of the discussion?	2,60
19 June 2012: Investing in Food Security & Food Markets in Africa	
What is your opinion on the conference in general?	2,00
What is your opinion on the delivery of the lectures?	1,67
What is your opinion on the content of the lectures?	1,67
What is your opinion on the quality of the discussion?	2,50
28 August 2012: The Business of Nutrition Security	
What is your opinion on the conference in general?	1,80
What is your opinion on the delivery of the lectures?	1,80
What is your opinion on the content of the lectures?	2,10
What is your opinion on the quality of the discussion?	2,56
2 October 2012: Urban Agriculture	
What is your opinion on the conference in general?	2,46
What is your opinion on the delivery of the lectures?	2,62
What is your opinion on the content of the lectures?	2,62
What is your opinion on the quality of the discussion?	3,00

In general, the most critique is levelled at the discussions, and if specified, the lack of time was mentioned often.

Table 2: Rating of the impact of the 7 conferences

The information I acquired at the conference(s) was useful to me.	2,71
<i>I have gained more knowledge about food issues and agricultural development because of the FoodFirst conference(s)</i>	2,79
FoodFirst contributes to the extent to which I am committed to food and agricultural issues	2,52
<i>Because of the FoodFirst activities I extended my network</i>	2,63
At the FoodFirst activities I got into contact with new partners to collaborate with in the future	2,78
<i>I think that FoodFirst is a valuable addition to the discussions and developments around food security and agriculture in the Netherlands</i>	2,50

Participation and coverage

A Participation at FoodFirst / Floriade conferenties

Registered via foodfirst.eu:	550;
(Student) groups from EMRC, WUR en MSM:	210;
Total number of persons attending:	760.

A vast majority indicated they were invited by the organisations, be it FoodFirst or the partner organisations. A fairly large number of participants indicated that they were invited by colleagues or at university classes. A fairly small group indicated they had read an (electronic) newsletter of one of the participating organisations or sponsors. A very small number of participants had found out about the conference via general 'surfing' via services such as google.

B Visits to www.foodfirst.eu

(1) From the start in November 2011 till December 31, 2012, the website has been visited 8354 times by 5,162 individuals who realised a total of 20.564 page views. On average they read 2.46 pages and spent 2.28 minutes on the site. Such an average time for a visit means that the information on the website was interesting and engaging.

(2) Looking at the number of visitors, the issues of Food and Health (28 August 2012) and Urban agriculture (2 October 2012) generate the most interest.

(3) Most visits were generated by the invitations that we send out. As our cumulative name-base after the last conference contains about 500 persons, it is clear that invitations were forwarded prolifically. The respective partners with which we have organised these conferences have really helped to attract people and to spread the word about FoodFirst.

(4) Other sources of visits were search-engines (1607 visits, 20% of total visits), and websites that provided links to the FoodFirst website (these referrals accounted for 1948 visits or 23% of total visits).

Of these referrals, the 4 most active were:

socires.nl:	254 (3%)
facebook.com:	205 (2.5%)
ncdo.nl:	122 (1.5%)
sidint.net:	101 (1.2%)

Total share of visits generated by social websites is 401 (4.8%), of which Facebook's share was the biggest: 221 (2.6%). Social websites had very limited impact. The networks of the organizing parties were far more important.

(5) Most visits to foodfirst.eu were from the Netherlands.



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