



EXPANDING MARKETS FOR INDIGENOUS
CROPS – A SUSTAINABLE PATHWAY TO
FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION
The Case for Sorghum

“Because sorghum has higher nutritional qualities..., it can assist in addressing food insecurity and nutrition challenges in South Africa. However, sorghum and sorghum-based products will be competing with other basic staples and highly processed, nutritionally poor food products.”

Study to Establish Market Opportunities for Sorghum in South Africa; DSI, 2021



EXPANDING MARKETS FOR INDIGENOUS CROPS

A SUSTAINABLE PATHWAY TO TRANSFORMING FOOD SYSTEMS – THE CASE FOR SORGHUM

MARCH 2, 2023

A WILD FEAST™¹ DIALOGUE

AGENDA

Register: <https://bit.ly/WildFeast>

CHAIR:

Ms. Vuyo Lutseke, Head, Stakeholder Relations, Funding, and Partnerships; Shared Value Africa Initiative (SVAI)

10:00-10:05 WELCOME & SETTING THE STAGE

Chair: Ms. Vuyo Lutseke

10:05-10:20 OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Tshilidzi Madzivhandila – CEO, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)

Dr. Babagana Ahmadu –Country Representative, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Dr. Jemina Moeng – Chief Director, Food Security, Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development

10:20-10:35 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

*A response to the findings and recommendations of the “Study to Establish Market Opportunities for Sorghum in South Africa,” Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), 2021. (See **Box 1**)*

Presenter: Professor Julian May – Director, DSI-National Research Foundation, Centre of Excellence in Food Security

10:35-11:10 PANEL DISCUSSION

Chef Mokgadi Itsweng – Plant-based Chef and Indigenous Food Activist

Ms. Siphwe Sithole – CEO, African Marmalade Farm

Ms. Sipamandla Manquele – Co-Founder & Commercial Director, Local Village Foods

Ms. Mpho Tshukudu – Registered Integrative and Functional Nutrition Dietitian

Mr. Lethu Tshabangu – Co-Founder, Ukhamba Beerworx

11:10-11:20 Q&A

11:20-11:30 CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Tshilidzi Madzivhandila – CEO, FANRPAN

Ms. Jeanette Sutherland – CEO/Founder, AgriLuxe Marketing

¹ An AgriLuxe Marketing platform, which will be launched on March 4, 2023, to promote Wholesome, Indigenous, Local, and Diverse (WILD) crops and food products.

A. CONTEXT

The UN Food Systems Summit, which took place in 2021, underscored that food systems – the way food is produced, accessed, and consumed – are broken. The Summit concluded by focusing on solutions that (i) contribute to people’s nutrition, health, and well-being; (ii) restore and protect nature; and those that (iii) adapt to local circumstances. Key to these solutions was a recognition that we must build on good practices, such as are inherent in indigenous food systems. In its official commitment declaration to transforming its national food systems, the South Africa Government identified promotion of indigenous systems and indigenous food products among its priority agenda objectives.

The launch of WILD Feast – a market-oriented platform for promoting Wholesome, Indigenous, Local, and Diverse (WILD) food products, is a follow-up initiative to the Summit to support the transformational food system approach. This dialogue – a feature of the WILD Feast platform, aims to facilitate on-going discussions among public and private sector stakeholders to support increased awareness of and maximized market opportunities for indigenous systems and related food products.

B. DIALOGUE AGENDA

The objective of discussions will be to address 5 practical questions within the context of South Africa’s food system transformation agenda. Discussions will focus on sorghum².

1. What is the relevance of indigenous systems and food crops, particularly sorghum, to the food system transformation agenda?
2. Is there demand at-scale?
3. Is there supply at-scale?
4. What are key issues faced in aligning demand and supply markets for sorghum and sorghum-based products?
5. What should be done to unblock pathways to ensure sustainable demand and supply markets for sorghum (and other indigenous food crops), to contribute to South Africa’s food system objectives?

C. OUTPUT

The panel discussion should aim to identify three priority recommendations (to be elaborated into a position paper after the Dialogue) for the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. The position paper will contribute to the Department’s preparation for the Stocktaking Moment of the UN Food Systems Summit, scheduled for 24-28 July 2023. The recommendations

² Sorghum is a key pillar of the Department of Science and Innovation’s Bio-economy Strategy. Sorghum is also the featured ingredient (Sorghum Reimagined) in the WILD Feast™ launch on March 4, 2023.

should also be accompanied by suggested actions with which the panelists (as an individual institution or a collective) could assist to facilitate follow-up by the Department/Government

Box 1. Selected Findings and Recommendations from the “Study to Establish Market Opportunities for Sorghum in South Africa.”

1. Cereal grains (maize, wheat, sorghum, and the like.) make up a considerable portion of daily energy intake in Africa, and South Africa in particular. The growing population of South Africa will thus be a key driver of demand for grains, including sorghum
2. The dominance of junk foods is placing increasing stress on the public healthcare system as the population undergoes a ‘nutrient transition’ – from traditional diets high in grains and dietary fiber to a diet high in sugars, fats, salt, and animal-source proteins.
3. Because sorghum has higher nutritional qualities than other cereals, maize particularly, it can assist in addressing food insecurity and nutrition challenges in South Africa.
4. However, sorghum and sorghum-based products will have to be competitively priced to capture a fair market share of the growing population’s demand for food. Sorghum and sorghum-based products will be competing with other basic foodstuffs, such as maize meal and highly processed, nutritionally poor but energy-dense food products.
5. The sorghum industry in South Africa is exposed to local and international commodity prices and elasticities of supply and demand. The status of the sorghum industry is largely affected by the attractiveness of sorghum as an agriculture commodity to the farming community, the market demand from consumers in the local and international markets and the capacity, capability and profitability of the food, feed and beverage manufactures to convert sorghum into viable and attractive end-user (consumer and animal feed) products.
6. With South Africa's extreme climate fluctuations and the expected warmer and drier conditions for the future, the key role of sorghum (a drought and flood tolerant crop) in food security can no longer be overlooked.
7. Market opportunities and recommendations to support the growth of South Africa’s sorghum industry include (i) promoting import substitution; (ii) increasing exports – particularly within the continent; (iii) increasing value-added products – including for exports; (iv) increasing consumer awareness/demand.