

# DINNER-DIALOGUE

*Maximizing Africa's Agri-Culinary Heritages for Health and Well-Being*

October 12, 2023

## PANEL DISCUSSIONS OVERVIEW

---



# MAXIMIZING AFRICA'S AGRI-CULINARY HERITAGES FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

*Making Travel and Wellness Markets Work for Food and Nutrition Security*

## A. Context

1. Global sorghum markets, based on type/application can be assessed in 4 categories:
  - i. Grain sorghum (primarily for food & beverage)
  - ii. Forage sorghum (livestock feed)
  - iii. Biomass sorghum (biofuel)
  - iv. Sweet sorghum (forage, silage, sweet syrup)
2. For the purposes of this discussion, focus is on grain sorghum. Although brief references can be made to the other categories to signal the range of market segments and therefore the increased market opportunities for investing in the crop.
3. However, particular focus is based on market opportunities within the travel and wellness spaces, based on increasing health and environmental consciousness of travellers, which influences their purchasing decisions. Tourism industry reports are showing this health and environmental consciousness among travellers are significant market drivers for indigenous foods. Additionally, research shows that indigenous knowledge and food systems are intrinsically linked to healthy lifestyles, biodiversity, and environmental conservation. Indigenous foods such as sorghum, has already been labelled a “superfood” in the wellness space, which augurs well both for market opportunities for local businesses and positive health outcomes for consumers.

## B. Panel I

4. The objectives of Panel I:
  - i. Highlight market opportunities in the tourism and wellness sectors for indigenous food products, particularly sorghum.
  - ii. Critical success factors for maximizing identified market opportunities.
  - iii. Challenges to maximizing these opportunities.
  - iv. Identify at least 3 priority actions for concrete follow-up.

The following questions are posed to some of the key stakeholders<sup>1</sup> in the sorghum food value chain:

5. University of the Western Cape ⊥ **Academia**
  - i. Myth or fact? What are the genetics of the crop that provides its nutritional and climate resilience values.

---

<sup>1</sup> Given limited panel time, stakeholder availability, and/or the focus of discussions, the panelists represent only a selective type of stakeholder that would support a competitive food value chain.

- ii. Range of food/beverage products that are/can be marketed?
  - iii. Advanced technologies that would give South Africa/Africa a competitive edge in the indigenous foods/sorghum markets? What are some of the key social, economic, environmental trade-offs (if any) in applying modern technologies?
6. Tiger Brands. Local Village Foods. African Marmalade Farm ⊥ **Food & Beverage Manufacturing Company** ⊥ **Exporter** ⊥ **Trader** ⊥ **Farmer**
- i. What does the global, regional, national demand markets for indigenous foods/sorghum products look like in general and, more specifically (as relevant), for your company?
  - ii. What is driving demand?
7. Tiger Brands. Local Village Foods. African Marmalade Farm ⊥ **Food & Beverage Company** ⊥ **Exporter** ⊥ **Trader** ⊥ **Farmer**
- i. What does the global, regional, national supply markets for indigenous foods/sorghum looks like in general and, more specifically (as relevant), for your company?
  - ii. What are key supply chain challenges?
8. AgriEdge ⊥ **Farm** ⊥ **Exporter**
- i. What are critical success factors for tapping into intra- and extra-regional markets, particularly market segments that would allow a premium price for indigenous crops and related food products such as sorghum, which is viewed as a “superfood”?
9. All Panellists
- i. What could inclusive, sustainable investments scenarios to promote South Africa/African indigenous foods/sorghum look like? What advice do you have for policy makers and development organizations in terms of priority actions for follow-up?

## C. Panel II

10. The objective of Panel II is to provide some responses to issues raised in Panel I. Some of the issues raised are expected to be those that are highlighted in the 2021 Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) funded “Study to Establish Market Opportunities for Sorghum in South Africa” ([https://www.dst.gov.za/images/Annexure A Sorghum Study Report May2021 FINAL .pdf](https://www.dst.gov.za/images/Annexure_A_Sorghum_Study_Report_May2021_FINAL.pdf)). The panellists are stakeholders primarily from the public sector, whose institutions are responsible for providing the relevant enabling environment for food

value chains to be competitive. The following questions are posed to the stakeholders<sup>2</sup>.

11. **The Sorghum Cluster Initiative (SCI).** One of the recommendations of the 2021 DSI funded study highlights changes to the industry structure as one of several requirements for upgrading the sorghum value chain. The establishment of the Sorghum Cluster Initiative (SCI) was one of the recommendations that was acted upon and for which commendation should be given. The study proposed that the objectives of the sorghum cluster should be to (i) encourage strategies that create closer market linkages, (ii) improve supply chains, and (iii) foster cooperation among value chain participants (both vertical relationships among suppliers, producers, processors, buyers, and retailers and horizontal relationships between processors and farmers).
  - i. How does the structure of and strategic plan for the recently SCI ensure that these 3 proposed objectives for the sorghum cluster will be realised?
  - ii. What measures are in place to ensure that smallholder farmers and food processors are equitably included in the value chain both in terms of (a) their representation and decision-making influence in the SCI and (b) policies for which the SCI will advocate to enable them to compete against larger players within the industry (eg is the introduction of a pricing mechanism feasible?) and in other industries (eg the issue of VAT added to sorghum meal products and not to meal of its competitor product- maize)?
12. **National Department of Science and Innovation (DSI).** The study highlighted some very practical recommendations for supporting the sorghum industry vis-à-vis (a) food product development and (b) development of a SADC sorghum advance germplasm development program. How can DSI use its leverage to:
  - i. Facilitate partnerships between research institutions, university food scientists, and food manufacturers in South Africa to develop and promote new food applications for sorghum to modernize the health benefits of sorghum based foods?
  - ii. Promote action on the proposed SADC sorghum advanced germplasm development program?
13. **National Department of Health.** Despite the increasing number of health and environmentally conscious consumers globally, the rates of undernutrition, malnutrition, and non-communicable diseases remain high and continue to rise in South Africa. Given that there is a significant body of research that links diet and lifestyle to these negative health outcomes:
  - i. What are the types of policies promoted by the Department of Health that support investments in increasing production of indigenous crops, particularly sorghum?

---

<sup>2</sup> Given limited panel time, stakeholder availability, and/or the focus of discussions, the panelists represent only a selective type of stakeholder that would support an enabling environment for competitive food value chains.

- ii. What additional policy initiatives can be/are being supported by the Department (particularly those that would increase consumer awareness of the value of indigenous foods)?
  - iii. What practical mechanisms can the Department enact to support stronger coordination/collaboration with the agriculture and tourism sectors to promote indigenous crops, such as sorghum?
14. **South Africa Tourism.** The National Tourism Sector Strategy 2016-2026 highlights the need to: (a) continually seek out competitive options, new products, and market development to maintain SA as a relevant and desirable destination and (b) take into account emerging trends, such as interest in green, sustainable, and ethical tourism, to identify adapt, and take advantage of relevant opportunities. Within this context, as a response from Panel II:
- i. How has the tourism sector positioned and/or is positioning itself to take advantage of this growing trend among travellers/tourists (both domestic and international) opting for healthier, local, tasty food experiences?
  - ii. Is agritourism a specific strategic objective in South African Tourism's portfolio?
  - iii. If no, why not. If yes, what practical mechanisms can the tourism sector enact (or are already enacting) to support stronger coordination/collaboration with DALRRD to promote indigenous crops, such as sorghum to support the healthy, local, nutritious food related demands from travellers/tourists?
15. **World Food Programme (WFP)/SADC.** One of the important initiatives WFP is known for is the procurement of foods for school feeding programs and humanitarian crisis relief. WFP is also collaborating with SADC to strengthen and/or establish national grain reserves. Further, it is currently supporting research on promoting indigenous foods within southern Africa.
- i. What are some of the initial findings of the research?
  - ii. School feeding and national grain reserves programs offer market outlet opportunities for smallholder farmers and food processors. How can these potential opportunities be maximized by WFP and SADC through public-private sector partnerships?
  - iii. How can WFP/SADC use its leverage to support national and regional policy reforms and implementation for promoting competitive sorghum value chains?
16. **South African Urban Food & Farming (SAUFF) Trust.** One of the initiatives of the SAUFF Trust is Food Dialogues, an annual food program of talks and events that focus on local food systems and a range of stakeholders to find ways to work together in creating a better food future. Dialogues are often regarded as nothing more than talk shops. Assuming that some of the fundamental constraints to maximizing market opportunities for indigenous foods are lack of (i) awareness/understanding of some of the dynamic growth markets that can serve as incentives for investing in indigenous crops/food products (ii) efficient coordination/collaboration within and between government departments (particularly agriculture, tourism, health) to provide an enabling environment for businesses (especially SMEs) to compete/take advantage of these markets; (iii) strategic partnerships between the public and

private sectors; and (iv) appreciation for the high and diverse returns on investments in indigenous food systems (social, economic, and environmental):

- i. What role does the Food Dialogues play in mitigating these 4 constraints and what are some examples of concrete follow-up actions that resulted from the dialogues?
- ii. What are some critical success factors to ensure that dialogues are much more than talk shops?

---

## WILD FEAST DIALOGUE PANELLISTS

---

### AGENDA 17:30 - 20:00

**FACILITATOR:** Ms. Jeanette Sutherland, Founder, AgriLuxe Marketing (ALM)

**17:45-18:15** **PANEL DISCUSSION I: MAXIMIZING MARKET OPPORTUNITIES IN THE TRAVEL AND WELLNESS SECTORS FOR INDIGENOUS CROPS/FOOD PRODUCTS.**

Dr. Ndomелеle Ludidi, Professor of Biotechnology, University of the Western Cape

Ms. Mary-Jane Morifi, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Tiger Brands

Ms. Sipamandla Manqele, CEO, Local Village Foods

Ms. Siphwe Sithole, CEO, African Marmalade Farms

Ms. Elrita Venter, CEO, AgriEdge

**19:20-19:50** **PANEL DISCUSSION II: RESPONSE TO PANEL DISCUSSION I**

Ms. Petru Fourie, Agricultural Economist & Convenor of the Sorghum Cluster Initiative

Dr. Maneshree Jughmohan-Naidu, Director, Agricultural Biotechnology, Department of Science and Innovation

Ms. Rebhone Ntsie, Director, Nutrition, Department of Health

Ms. Nombulelo Guliwe, Acting CEO, South Africa Tourism

Dr. Menghestab Haile, Regional Director, WFP

Mr. Kurt Ackermann, CEO, South African Urban Food and Farming Trust