

Sustainable business models key to sustainable modernisation of agriculture in Africa

Nuradin Osman, Vice President and General Manager, Africa for AGCO Corporation, Your Agriculture Company, speaking at the [2017 African Green Revolution Forum](#) (AGRF), said: “The transformation of on-farm mechanisation can make a major contribution to improving rural livelihoods by boosting productivity and growth in rural incomes and making farming an appealing and worthwhile career choice for young people.”



Nuradin Osman, Vice President & General Manager AGCO Africa speaking at the AGRF2017 under the topic Spurring modern Farm Development in Africa – Technology, Mechanisation, Infrastructure, and Power (Source: AGCO Corporation)

Advancing and transforming African agriculture

Under the theme *Growing Inclusive Economies and Jobs through Agriculture*, the AGRF 2017 sought to create a new agenda for action by pushing the boundaries of possibility in the fields and markets of African agriculture. AGCO has been a partner and sponsor of AGRF since 2014 and is co-chair for the Thematic Working Group on Mechanisation, drawing, in particular, on its widespread practical experience of African agriculture and knowledge developed at its pioneering AGCO Future Farm in Zambia.

“Through our investment in initiatives like our Future Farms, AGCO is committed to advancing and transforming African agriculture,” explained Osman. “The implementation of modern farming techniques and the more efficient use of resources empowers communities to develop a sustainable food production system and increase farm productivity – thus improving local economies, helping to create jobs and inspiring the next generation to move into agriculture.”

Examine the agricultural mechanisation of sub-Saharan African smallholders

Key to the sustainable commercialisation and modernisation of African agriculture are sustainable business models. Speaking at the AGRF Thematic Working Group Meeting on Mechanisation, Mark Moore, AGCO agricultural advisory manager, outlined a new 18-month collaborative project the company is leading for AGRA (Alliance for a Green Revolution for Africa).

The project is set to examine the agricultural mechanisation of sub-Saharan African smallholders and the development of local farm service centres known as agro-dealers. The project kicked off in July 2017 and will assess the affordability of mechanisation systems along with farming practices, such as conservation agriculture for smallholders, and develop and evaluate the agro-dealer approach for supporting and training smallholders. Co-partners in the project include Harper Adams University in the UK, FutureSeeds Zambia and the University of Zambia.

Major work on the initiative will take place at the AGCO Future Farm in Lusaka. This 150ha farm, which also includes a mechanisation training centre and poultry learning centre, is a hub for developing leading-edge agriculture for Africa. It demonstrates the value of mechanisation, technology and sustainable farm practices systems through real-life experience.



AGCO Future Farm, Zambia (Source: AGCO Corporation)

“We will be trialing a model to establish the levels of income a smallholder farmer needs to achieve to pay for mechanisation services like crop establishment,” Moore explained. “We will also trial a similar model to understand the income a local agro-dealer needs to generate in order to supply and support local smallholder farmers in their area with services like tillage and planting contract work and the supply of farm inputs. By defining an initial business case for mechanisation and other products and services that small-scale farmers need to be successful, the aim is to ensure that they and the local agro-dealer supporting them both have sustainable businesses.”

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