



## Forging partnerships to stimulate Agricultural Research for Development



ASARECA and other Pillar 4 Institutions are set to start implementation of the Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) project, supported by a grant from the European Commission (EC) and managed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The five-year programme is valued at USD 30 million. Other Pillar 4 Institutions include the Agricultural Forum for African Advisory Services (AFAAS), the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA), the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF) and Forum for Agricultural

Research in Africa (FARA). The project is uniquely designed to promote food and nutrition security, economic development and climate change mitigation in Africa by improving the capacity and effectiveness of the sub-regional organisations (SROs) to deliver high quality scientific outputs. Meanwhile, ASARECA and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) have revised their existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to boost collaboration and strengthen relations between the two African institutions. This and other updates in this issue

**Prof. Jean Jacques Mbonigaba Muhinda**  
**Executive Secretary—ASARECA**

## ASARECA News



1. [ASARECA work on Agro-](#)

## Featured stories



[Tanzania](#)

- [Biotechnology for Food and Nutrition Security in Eastern and Central Africa](#)
- 2. [ASARECA kicks off implementation of CAADP-XP4 project targeting climate change mitigation](#)
- 3. [ASARECA, COMESA renew MoU to strengthen collaboration](#)
- 4. [COMESA, ASARECA well aligned to Africa's priorities, says Secretary General](#)
- 5. [ASARECA in talks with Center for Global Development on Biotechnology Research and Development](#)

## News from our Partners

### Kenya

Obviously the largest economy in East Africa, Kenya appears to be on track towards legitimizing GMOs. The Cabinet is expected to soon decide on lifting the ban on GMOs, a move that will likely be closely watched by other Eastern and Central Africa countries including Uganda and Tanzania where research and contained trials of GM crops are ongoing. In this analytical article, we ask: [Will Kenya's positive move towards GMOs influence her EAC neighbours?](#)

### Rwanda

In an intensified effort to fight stunting, which has become a national concern, the Rwanda has introduced five new sweet potato varieties. Rwanda: New Sweet Potato Variety Introduced To Fight Stunting. [Rwanda: New Sweet Potato Variety Introduced To Fight Stunting](#)

### USAID

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) plans to invest \$70 million in new agricultural biotechnology initiatives to help deal with food insecurity challenges across the world. The package provides new collaboration opportunities for businesses, NGOs, universities and others to co-create the next generation with agricultural biotechnology investments. Details in the article: [USAID to invest \\$70 million in new](#)

Farmers in Tanzania have become a critical part and parcel of the generation and relaying of information that technical and policy leaders need to make key decisions in agriculture and irrigation sectors. The farmers under the Virtual Irrigation Academy (VIA), use data signals to irrigate their farms in some of the most water and nutrient efficient ways. Together with technical data collectors, they connect Wi-Fi readers to the tools installed in their fields, hence relaying data instantly to the VIA online platform. The platform is accessed by the National Project Manager, the Research facilitator; the National Project Coordinator and the project facilitators at Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) based in Australia. *Explore this exciting model in this article: [Data rules: How technology intelligent farmers are influencing decisions and policies affecting them](#)*



### Tanzania

Staying with Dodoma, Tanzania, meet **Ms Kibia, Meshack Ntoga** and **Robert Kilewa**, farmers who have defied their hostile environment to make a living. Dodoma receives only four months of rain starting from December and ending just about April. End of story for the agricultural calendar. So how do the farmers here manage the remaining part of the year? See details in this article: [Achievements, challenges and opportunities for Tanzania Irrigation](#)

### Ethiopia

The Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) is in the process of integrating the latest technology for data digitalization across its breeding programs, starting with bean, sorghum and chickpea. A big push has now been given in this endeavor, with extensive work and training sessions with the Integrated Breeding Platform (IBP) for the deployment of its Breeding Management System (BMS), from 12-29 March, at various locations across the country. Learn more in this article: [Ethiopia: Forging Ahead with Breeding Digitalization](#)

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### Madagascar

The traditional farming practice causes tens of thousands of acres of Madagascan forest to be destroyed each year. Now the island's government is calling on the international community to help it fight the flames. Details: [Madagascar calls for help to tackle slash-and-burn deforestation](#)



### Uganda

Uganda's Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries has kick-started the rollout of the **Nucleus Farmer model**. Unveiled by Hon. Vincent Bamulangaki Ssempijja, the Minister for Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, the model promotes an exemplary farmer at village level, who has adopted best practices of Agriculture as promoted by the Ministry. The selected farmer serves as the area's link to, among others, government mechanisation and irrigation services, agricultural financing, technologies, highly-productive crop varieties and animal breeds et cetera. Learn more on this model from Uganda's example: [Roll-out of Nucleus Farmer Model by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries Under Way](#)

## AR4D Events

**Featured Event: November 25 to 29th, 2019 in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire:** [The 4th AFAAS Africa-Wide Agricultural Extension Week \(AAEW\)](#) will be held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire from 25th to 29th November 2019 with a focus on building synergies between Public and Private Sector Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (AEAS) for Sustainable Agricultural Development in Africa. The event will be embedded in the Agricultural and Animal Resources Fair (SARA).

### Other Events

1. December 2-13, 2019 in IFEMA- Feria de Madrid, Spain: [The 2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference](#). This is an update on the venue change from Santiago, Chile.
2. January 23-24 in Nairobi, Kenya: [2nd Symposium on Climate Change Adaptation in Africa](#).
3. November 18-20, 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya: [ARUA International Conference 2019](#)
4. **March 2-4, 2020** in Moroto, Karamoja-Uganda: [ECHO East Africa Symposium on Improving Nutrition and Livelihoods in Pastoralist Areas](#).
5. November 18-19, 2019. Johannesburg, South Africa: [9th International Conference on Environment and Climate](#)
6. November **27-28, 2019**. Dubai. [The Innov8agric challenge to support African agripreneurs](#)
7. **Novembre 27-28**, Dubai. [Farmers' Conference \(MTFC\)](#): "The 2019 edition of the conference is set to introduce Agro-trade and networking conference to connect Africa and the Middle East"

8. **December 1-3, 2019** in.Cairo, Egypt: [1st Edition of the International Conference on Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture \(FNSSA\)](#)
9. **January 23-24, 2020** in **Nairobi, Kenya**: [2nd Symposium on Climate Change Adaptation in Africa](#)

## Publication



### Mulching effects on soil nutrient levels and yield in coffee farming systems in Rwanda

**Authors:** *Innocent Nzeyimana, Alfred E. Hartemink, Coen Ritsema, Jean Jacques M. Mbonigaba, Violette Geissen*

While the use of mulching material in coffee farming in Rwanda is still scarce due to the unavailability of the required biomass, a recent study has recommended the adoption of a strategy for managing locally available mulches to improve soil fertility and coffee yield. The study aimed at assessing the effects of the different organic mulches applied in coffee farming on soil fertility and coffee yields in different agro-ecological zones of Rwanda, shows that organic mulches improve soil nutrient levels. Amounts of nutrients released into the soils were regulated depending on the mulch type [biomass] applied and the environmental. The study confirms that adding high quantities of organic mulches to the soils per se does not necessarily improve soil fertility. It shows that different mulches have different effects in supplying nutrients to soils depending on the quality of the mulch materials, climatic conditions and soil types.



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