

Youth-led, African agribusinesses announced as Pitch AgriHack 2021 winners

Six youth-led agribusinesses showcasing market-ready innovations for African farmers - which include mobile crop processing machinery, produce delivery services and e-commerce and farm financing platforms - have won a share of US\$45,000 in the Pitch AgriHack 2021 competition at the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF).



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The companies, which now have an opportunity to attract new investments via the AGRF Agribusiness Deal Room, were competing in three categories: early-stage, mature/growth-stage, and women-led.

In a fourth, invitation-only category, known as the AYuTe Africa Challenge, US\$1.5m in grants were awarded to two youth-led agritech businesses that are increasing access to emerging technologies for smallholder farmers across Africa to grow their businesses and incomes.

The Pitch AgriHack competition, aimed exclusively at youth-led African businesses bringing technological innovation to the agriculture sector, is sponsored by Heifer International and hosted by Generation Africa, a thematic platform of the AGRF.

"The youth of Africa have a crucial role to play in our continent's food and farming future. Food systems change is one of the most pressing global issues as humanity negotiates a new balance with the natural world amidst the undeniable impacts of climate change," said Dr Agnes Kalibata, president of AGRA and Special Envoy to the UN Food Systems Summit.

"Pitch AgriHack is a wonderful initiative that awards youth-led innovative agricultural businesses. At the intersection of technology and agriculture, new innovations have the capacity to enable and uplift smallholder farmers, and drive agricultural transformation across Africa."

Pitch AgriHack Winners

The winners of the three open competition categories are:

Early-stage category:

Winner – Jeffrey Appiagyei of SAYeTECH Company Limited in Ghana. Jeffrey's company designs and manufactures climate-smart agricultural machinery that increases productivity of smallholder farmers.

Runner-up – Gabriel Eze of Rural Farmers Hub in Nigeria. Gabriel's company provides agricultural services with a core product, called Capture.

Mature- and growth-stage category:

Winner – Mahmud Johnson of J Palm in Liberia. Mahmud's company has created innovative labour-saving technology for Liberia's smallholder farmers, helping them to produce wild palm oil more profitably and efficiently, while not contributing to deforestation or animal habitat destruction.

Runner-up – Gladys Amiandamhen of Farmcrowdy Limited in Nigeria. Farmcrowdy has developed a technology ecosystem called Farmgate with various innovative software products, to help farmers maximise their output and increase their profits.

Women-led agribusiness category:

Winner – Ore Alemede of GrowAgric in Kenya. Ore's company provides a full technology end-to-end solution that optimizes the entire agriculture value chain, providing small and medium-scale farmers with training, marketing linkages and accessible working capital.

Runner-up – Nomaliso Musasiwa of Fresh In A box in Zimbabwe. Nomaliso's company offers an innovative e-commerce platform that connects smallholder and urban farmers of fresh local produce as well as other food products with customers locally and globally enabling payments to be made from anywhere in the world, an important feature linking diaspora family members with loved ones at home.

Winners of the Invite-Only AYuTe Africa Challenge run by Heifer International:

- ColdHubs – solar powered cold storage for developing countries
- Hello Tractor – connecting farmers to nearby tractor owners via a mobile app

"Pitch AgriHack and the AYuTe Africa Challenge support youth-led technological innovation in the agriculture sector. We believe that the agricultural sector has the potential to provide future jobs for Africa's growing youth population, while advancing the continent's food security agenda," said Adesuwa Ifedi, senior vice president for Africa Programmes at Heifer International.

The Pitch AgriHack 2021 winners will receive continued support as they develop and grow their enterprises. Individual profiles have been made public on the genafrika.org platform and reviewed for relevance to their investor community.

Nearly 600 business owners from 37 African countries applied to the competition. Countries represented at the finals at the AGRF Summit were Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

"Generation Africa is proud to be the host of Pitch AgriHack 2021. Competitions like this, and the entrepreneurial communities that are shaped around them, give young agripreneurs access to the tools and expertise they need to make their businesses successful," said Dickson Naftali, head of Generation Africa.

"Seeing the ideas that are coming from young entrepreneurs across Africa makes me very excited about the future of agriculture on our continent," said Ebunoluwa Bolodeoku, head of business transformation for Africa at Heifer International, and Pitch AgriHack judge.

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