

Scientists challenged to Prevent Food Loss in Africa.

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Scientists across the African continent have been challenged to provide practical ways of dealing with food loss and waste in order to end food insecurity across the continent.

Speaking at Safari Park Hotel, during the inaugural Africa Post Harvest Conference, Mr. Willy Bett, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, challenged scientists to offer practical solutions to farmers and help them avoid food wastage. He observed that 30% of food from farms don't make it to the dining table. " We can feed more Africans if we avoid food loss", he quipped. Mr. Bett further challenged scientists to take the solutions to the farmers doorsteps.

Mr. Bett enumerated the various measures taken by the government to deal with food insecurity in the country. Such measures include: slaughter and preservation of animals from arid areas, providing fish processing facilities to fish farmers, provision of coolers to preserve milk among other massive investments in food production.

University of Nairobi Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi noted that combating food loss will require research and innovations. " We need solutions through research and innovations, " he said. He added that there is need for data to help deal with the interventions.

Africa Development Bank CEO, Damien, reiterated the bank's commitment to fund farmers across Africa. He said that for Africa to be food sufficient, we must become food exporter and not importer. "Africa want to become food exporter, yet we import \$ 111 Billion worth of food.", he said. He said

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that Africa must move towards the top of the value chain , eliminate malnutrition and transform its raw materials.

The first Africa Post Harvest Conference which was organized by the University of Nairobi in collaboration with other partners had over 600 participants across the world. Some of the solutions proposed to handle post-harvest challenges include: financing farmers, use to modern technologies, agricultural research, strong agricultural institutions, ready access to markets, good infrastructural development, technical knowhow to combat post-harvest loss and having high impact research in collaboration with the private sector.

According to Dr. Jane Ambuko, Chair, Local Organizing Committee, Africa Post Harvest Conference, 1.3 billion tons of food is lost every year in Africa due to lack of technologies to deal with the food loss and lack of ready access to markets.

The event was supported by Rockefeller Foundation, Swiss Agency, Post-Harvest Foundation, AGRA, Compatible Technologies International among others.

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