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Publisher
Evans Mumba

General Manager
Peter Tau

Editor
+267 74 723 776
Ulla Setswalo
ulla@botswanaagri.com

Associate Editor
Bheki Fayayo
bheki@agribusinessbotswana.com

Editorial Contributions
Tsepang Mohlabane
Kotso Rametsi
Martin Sibanda
Jeffrey Kgathi

Advertising Sales
+267 74 799 855
Noah Maposa
noahm@agribusinessbotswana.com

Joshua Chibwe
joshuac@agribusinessbotswana.com
Jilowa Mwanza

jilowam@agribusinessbotswana.com
Mdu Sibizi
mdus@agribusinessbotswana.com

Elvis Tau
elvis@agribusinessbotswana.com

Subscriptions
Loyce Zemeyi
info@agribusinessbotswana.com

Address
Plot 20691, Sediba House, Sekotlo
Road, Block 3 Industrial,
Gaborone, Botswana
P.O. Box 404011 Gaborone Botswana

Botswana AgriBusiness

Tel: +267 74 799 855 | +267 74 723 776
Email: info@agribusinessbotswana.com
Website: www.agribusinessbotswana.com

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Ulla Setswalo (Editor)

The evidence is mounting that the farming economy is changing shape faster than its headline numbers suggest. Cattle numbers have fallen by 6.1% over a decade, yet commercial herds, goats and sheep are growing. Pandamatenga, long known as the grain basket, is irrigating its way into vegetables. In the North West, rangelands are being restored one community at a time, while a seized consignment of imported citrus shows how seriously regulators now guard the border. Beneath all of it sit two quiet constraints, power and capital. Solar offers off grid farms a route away from diesel, and a new financing strategy insists that every Pula prove what it delivers.

Beyond our borders, the continent's agricultural map is being redrawn. Italy is courting Mozambique's agrifood sector

and Saudi funded trials suggest the date palm could take root in Tanzania's driest regions. Angola and Brazil are lining up 800,000 hectares of arable land for potential grain production, while European money is heading to Malawi's smallholders and micro agribusinesses. South Africa and Zambia are testing how artificial intelligence can reach the farmer's phone and Zimbabwe is writing the Kampala Declaration into national strategy.

The common thread is delivery. Agreements, strategies and declarations are plentiful across the continent but capital flows to those who can execute. In this edition, we examine where execution looks credible and what it will take for agribusiness leaders to be among those who deliver.

The government has set a number that concentrates the mind. Agriculture contributes less than 2% of GDP today and the government wants it closer to 6% by 2030. That is not a gap closed by good intentions and this issue is about who is actually positioned to close it.

Into that ambition has stepped a partner few would have predicted. Oman and Botswana established diplomatic relations only in October 2025, yet a state visit in September produced nine agreements spanning food security, energy, logistics, finance and mining. Our cover story follows the capital, the markets and the machinery that could turn that diplomatic goodwill into commercial value and asks the question every investor should ask once the communiqué is signed. What happens next?



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FAO Backs Botswana's Push to Build Potato Value Chain

Rising demand for potatoes in Botswana is creating an opportunity to strengthen domestic production and expand agribusiness. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is backing government efforts to develop this crop's value chain.

Through the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture, FAO is supporting the implementation of the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) initiative, which places potato production at the centre of efforts to strengthen horticulture and expand opportunities for farmers and agribusinesses. Speaking on behalf of the Assistant FAO Representative to Botswana, Zibanani Motshabi said the organisation appreciated the Government of Botswana, particularly the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture, for its leadership and ownership of the OCOP initiative.

Motshabi also thanked members of the Technical Working Group and other stakeholders for the expertise, time and commitment they continue to contribute, saying their participation reflected a shared determination to build a more resilient, inclusive and competitive horticulture sector. The initiative comes as Botswana's agri-food system faces mounting pressure from climate change, erratic rainfall, drought, rising temperatures, pests and diseases, land degradation and high production costs. Strengthening priority value chains is therefore increasingly important for advancing economic diversification, employment creation, import substitution and sustainable rural development under the Botswana Economic Transformation Programme.

The draft Value Chain Analysis and draft Potato Strategy provide a framework for translating that ambition into practical opportunities across the potato industry. Potatoes present a potentially important entry point, given their growing domestic demand and scope to support import substitution, food and nutrition security, employment, agro-processing and inclusive agribusiness development. Realising that opportunity will require investment across the full value chain, from quality seed and climate-smart production to harvesting, storage, processing, transport, marketing and trade.

The strategy also seeks to position potato farming as a viable and competitive business while widening opportunities for youth, women and smallholder producers. The push could help shift potato production from an agricultural activity into a more integrated commercial value chain, creating opportunities beyond the farm gate and strengthening the role of horticulture in the country's economic diversification agenda.

Citrus Seizure Sharpens Botswana's Push for Local Produce

A 10,440 kg consignment of naartjies destined for Shoprite has put Botswana's citrus import controls under renewed scrutiny, as the government steps up enforcement while urging consumers and retailers to give greater priority to locally grown produce.

The Ministry of Lands and Agriculture seized the consignment after inspectors found that it had allegedly breached conditions attached

to its plant import permit. Authorities said the shipment also failed to meet the phytosanitary requirements governing the importation of regulated plant products. Acting Director of Plant Health, Tshepo Mosedame, said investigations began after inspectors intercepted the consignment on 11 September 2026. Preliminary findings indicated that the produce had entered Botswana without complying with the conditions attached to its import permit.

The case highlights the dual challenge facing Botswana's horticulture sector. The government is seeking to expand domestic production and reduce dependence on imported produce, while its plant health authorities are tightening controls to prevent the introduction of pests and diseases that could undermine local farming. Chief Horticulture Officer Mmoloki Khukhutha said Botswana currently produces about 428 tonnes of citrus, equivalent to approximately 138,428 bags, each weighing 7 kg. With local supply available, he said, imports of commodities already produced domestically could undermine the growth of local horticultural businesses.

The Ministry is therefore encouraging consumers to support locally grown citrus and other horticultural products, arguing that stronger demand for domestic produce can sustain farmers, strengthen local value chains and contribute to food security. For importers, however, access to the market remains subject to strict plant health requirements. Imported citrus must be accompanied by an original phytosanitary certificate from the exporting country's National Plant Protection Organisation, confirming that the produce has been inspected and is free from regulated pests and diseases.

Mosedame said the seized naartjies were allegedly packed in a manner that prevented Plant Health Inspectors from detecting the consignment during routine border inspections. The Ministry has classified the shipment as an illegal import and, in accordance with the Plant Protection Act, said it will be destroyed. The enforcement action is unlikely to be confined to the border. Mosedame said compliance inspections are continuing at retailers nationwide as the Ministry seeks to ensure that imported agricultural products meet Botswana's plant health requirements.

The citrus case therefore brings two strands of Botswana's agricultural strategy into sharper focus. Protecting domestic growers requires both a market for their produce and a regulatory system capable of controlling the risks associated with imported agricultural products. As local horticulture expands, the balance between availability, market access and biosecurity will become increasingly important. The latest seizure sends a clear signal that the government intends to give locally produced food greater room in the domestic market while tightening the rules governing what enters it.

South Africa and Zambia Put Artificial Intelligence to Work

In an effort to deepen cooperation on digital agriculture and artificial intelligence, South Africa and Zambia are exploring how technology can improve agricultural services, strengthen farmer support and modernise production systems.

A South-South Cooperation Exchange Visit taking place from 14 to 17 September 2026 brings together agricultural and technology stakeholders from both countries to share practical experience in digital transformation. The National Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, is hosting a Zambian delegation comprising representatives from the Zambian Ministry of Agriculture, FAO Zambia and Smart Zambia. FAO South Africa is also participating in the programme. The discussions focus on the design, implementation and governance of digital agriculture systems, alongside the application of artificial intelligence to agricultural services.

For farmers, the value of digital systems lies in access to timely information on weather, markets, production practices, pests, diseases and government support. Platforms accessed through mobile phones and other connected devices can improve the speed and reach of communication between farmers and public institutions. Artificial intelligence can support these systems by analysing large volumes of agricultural data, identifying patterns and assisting with decision-making. Potential applications include crop monitoring, forecasting, information services and digital decision-support tools. The exchange is therefore focused on how these technologies can move from technical concepts into practical systems that respond to the needs of farmers and agricultural officials.

The participation of agricultural authorities, technology institutions and FAO representatives reflects the wider requirements of digital transformation. Technology alone cannot sustain effective digital agriculture. Institutions also need appropriate policy frameworks, data governance, reliable infrastructure and systems that can operate over time. South Africa's Western Cape provides a practical setting for discussing the development and use of digital agricultural services. Engagement with the visiting delegation offers an opportunity to examine implementation challenges, including technology adoption, data management, accessibility and institutional coordination.

For Zambia, the exchange creates a platform to draw lessons from South African experiences while contributing knowledge from its own agricultural and digital transformation efforts. South-South cooperation allows participating countries to examine approaches that can be adapted to their own institutional and agricultural environments. The discussions also recognise that digital access remains uneven. Farmers with limited connectivity, digital skills or access to suitable devices may struggle to benefit from technology-led services. Ensuring that digital agriculture is inclusive will therefore be as important as developing the systems themselves.

As agricultural sectors face pressure to improve productivity, respond to climate-related risks and deliver better services, digital tools are becoming an increasingly important part of the policy conversation. The cooperation between South Africa and Zambia places that conversation on a practical footing, linking digital innovation and AI with the everyday needs of farmers, agricultural institutions and rural economies.



Botswana and Oman Forge Agribusiness Alliance

Food security and agricultural development are emerging as a new frontier in Botswana and Oman's expanding bilateral relationship, with both countries looking to turn diplomatic ties into opportunities that can strengthen production, investment and skills. For an agricultural sector under pressure to produce more, earn more and contribute more to the economy, the partnership could bring fresh capital, markets and expertise into Botswana's transformation drive. By placing agriculture and food security within a broader economic relationship spanning trade, investment, logistics, energy and financial services, the two countries are creating a platform that could connect Botswana's ambitions to build stronger agricultural value chains with Oman's commercial networks.

The opportunity comes at a defining moment for Botswana's agribusiness sector. The government is targeting an increase in agriculture's contribution to GDP from below 2% to around 6% by 2030, raising the stakes for productivity, investment, value addition and market development. Against this backdrop, the State Visit by Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman, to Botswana from 16 to 17 September 2026 has added momentum to the relationship. The two Heads of State agreed to deepen cooperation in food security and agriculture alongside oil and energy, financial services, mining and minerals, health, tourism, transport and logistics, education and skills development, and trade and investment.

The prize for Botswana is bigger than securing food supplies. It is about building an agricultural economy capable of producing competitively, processing locally, accessing new markets and attracting

the investment needed to move value chains further up the ladder. That wider framework matters because agricultural growth depends on much more than what happens on the farm. Reliable energy supports irrigation, cold storage and processing. Efficient logistics determine how competitively produce reaches markets. Access to finance enables businesses to expand, while skills and technology can lift productivity and product quality.

The two countries also welcomed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Business Botswana, creating a platform for stronger private sector engagement. The State Visit also produced an Air Services Agreement and an investment promotion agreement, while the leaders welcomed the decision to allow visa-free short visits for nationals of both countries. These developments arrive as Botswana pushes to commercialise agriculture and reduce its reliance on food imports. Programmes including the Botswana Livestock Commercialisation Project, A Ditsale and Lemang Dijo form part of broader efforts to raise productivity, strengthen production and move farmers towards more commercially viable enterprises.

Oman could become a valuable partner in that transformation. The joint communiqué also commits the two countries to co-operation in energy security, sustainable energy development and regional energy integration, areas with direct implications for agricultural production and agro processing. The relationship extends beyond agriculture, with nine bilateral agreements and instruments covering investment promotion, air services, energy, medicines and pharmaceuticals, political consulta-

tions, general cooperation, private sector engagement and mining. A co-development agreement covering copper and gold opportunities further demonstrates the breadth of the emerging economic relationship.

For agribusiness, the opportunity lies in how these different pieces connect. Investment in energy and logistics can reduce the cost of doing business. Trade links can widen markets. Skills partnerships can strengthen human capital. Financial cooperation can improve access to capital, while stronger private sector ties can bring producers closer to investors and buyers. The pace of the relationship is notable. Botswana and Oman established diplomatic relations on 14 October 2025, followed by high-level engagements that have quickly expanded the scope of economic cooperation. The two leaders have now directed their ministries and institutions to establish mechanisms for tracking implementation and advancing the agreements.

That implementation will be critical. The success of the partnership will ultimately be measured in new investment, stronger agricultural enterprises, greater processing capacity, improved market access and better returns across the value chain. As Botswana works towards a more productive and commercially viable agricultural economy, the Oman relationship offers another channel through which capital, expertise and markets could move closer to the sector. The next phase is to turn diplomatic goodwill into commercial relationships and agricultural potential into measurable economic value.

Botswana Pushes Land Planning Beyond the Cities

Land development is taking on a broader economic role, as the government places greater emphasis on how spatial planning, infrastructure investment and land reform can unlock opportunities beyond the country's urban centres.

The Assistant Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Motsamai Motsamai, met a joint delegation from UN-Habitat and the African Development Bank to review progress on a partnership that is increasingly extending into rural and community areas. Discussions included the Segoditshane River Corridor Master Plan, progress in establishing the UN-Habitat regional office in Gaborone and a new spatial planning initiative for Mababe, an Okavango Delta settlement with Basarwa/San communities.

The Mababe initiative brings a stronger community dimension to Botswana's spatial development agenda, placing planning within a rural setting where land, settlement patterns and in-

frastructure are closely linked to livelihoods. The meeting also considered reforms to Botswana's land legislation, alongside the African Development Bank's role in financing bankable infrastructure projects. A technical expert workshop involving stakeholder ministries was also outlined as part of the ongoing work.

The convergence of land policy and infrastructure finance is significant. Effective spatial planning can determine where infrastructure is developed, how settlements expand and whether communities are connected to economic activity. Therefore, the emerging partnership extends beyond planning individual areas. It points towards a more integrated approach in which land management, infrastructure and development finance are considered together. As land legislation evolves and new planning initiatives move forward, the focus will increasingly be on translating spatial plans into practical development that reaches communities as well as cities.



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Livestock Numbers Signal a Sector in Transition

Botswana's livestock sector is changing beneath the headline numbers, with the latest Agricultural Census pointing to a more complex picture of declining cattle numbers alongside growth in commercial production, goats and sheep. The findings from the 2025 Agricultural Census are expected to give government, farmers, investors and development partners a clearer basis for deciding where the sector needs support as climate pressures, livestock diseases and constraints on grazing resources reshape production.

The Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture, Kefentse Motshegwa, said reliable and current agricultural data is essential to understanding these shifts and directing interventions where they are most needed. The census shows that Botswana's national cattle population declined by 6.1% between 2015 and 2025. At the same time, the commercial cattle subsector recorded growth, while goat and sheep populations increased. For Statistics Botswana Statistician General Raymond Lekobane, the contrasting trends

underline the need to look beyond aggregate livestock figures and examine how production is evolving across species, production systems and districts. The changes come as livestock producers contend with increasingly difficult operating conditions. Recent droughts, livestock diseases, climate variability and pressure on grazing resources continue to constrain production and expose vulnerabilities across the sector.

Motshegwa said the census provides an opportunity to identify where targeted investment is required, particularly in water infrastructure, sustainable rangeland management, fodder production, veterinary services, vaccination, agricultural extension and biosecurity. The value of the census, he stressed, will ultimately depend on what follows the data. In addition, Motshegwa said the findings should not remain statistics on paper but must be translated into policies and programmes that improve productivity, resilience and sustainability within the livestock sector.

That places greater emphasis on how gov-

ernment and industry respond to the structural changes emerging from the census. The decline in national cattle numbers, alongside expansion in other livestock categories and the commercial subsector, suggests that Botswana's livestock economy cannot be understood through cattle numbers alone. Lekobane encouraged policymakers, researchers, farmers, investors and other stakeholders to use the findings to deepen their understanding of the agricultural sector and strengthen evidence-based decision-making.

The preliminary results are expected to undergo further analysis, with the full 2025 Agricultural Census report scheduled for dissemination by December 2026. The data arrives at a critical point as the country seeks to strengthen domestic agricultural production, diversify its economy and build greater resilience to climate and production risks. The census may therefore prove most valuable not for what it says about the size of Botswana's livestock herd, but for what it reveals about the direction in which the sector is moving.

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Eastfort Turns Pandamatenga's Rain-Fed Fields Into a Horticulture Hub

Pandamatenga's reputation as Botswana's grain basket is being complemented by a growing horticulture business, as farmers turn to irrigation to produce vegetables for informal traders, households and major retailers throughout the year.

Along the A33 road, the shift is visible during the winter season, when motorists travel hundreds of kilometres to buy bags of potatoes, butternuts and onions for resale in informal markets. Much of the produce is also reaching supermarket shelves, signalling a broader change in the commercial profile of the area. Eastfort Holdings is among the farmers driving that shift. Founded in 2008 by Kaarl Viljoen as a large-scale, rain-fed grain farming operation, the company has expanded into irrigated horticulture to reduce its exposure to dry spells and make greater use of Pandamatenga's fertile black cotton soils.

According to Eastfort Holdings manager Jorine Rich, irrigation has allowed the company to produce nutritious crops across a wider part of the year while creating benefits for consumers, informal traders and large retailers. The company schedules much of its horticultural production during winter, taking advantage of Chobe's mild, frost-free conditions. The climate is particularly suitable for crops such as tomatoes, which are vulnerable to severe cold.

During the current farming cycle, Eastfort cultivated onions, tomatoes, green peppers, watermelons and sweet potatoes, while butternuts were being grown for the November harvest window. The company planted 3.5 hectares of tomatoes and expects to harvest 140 tonnes. A further 4.5 hectares of green peppers produced an estimated 120 tonnes, with both crops still under harvest. Eastfort also planted 22 hectares of onions, which are currently being harvested, and five hectares of watermelons, harvesting of which began this week.

The expansion has not been without difficulty. Rich said the company faced significant market pressure at the start of the season while vegetable import restrictions remained relaxed. Following

appeals from farmers, the government introduced a winter vegetable import ban, helping local producers secure a stronger market, particularly for tomatoes, which have a short shelf life.

The operation currently employs 25 permanent workers and an additional 170 temporary workers during the harvesting season. Employees are involved in activities ranging from picking to packaging, while crop yields are supported through pest-control and timely spraying programmes. Eastfort's location remains a logistical challenge, particularly for retailers concerned about the distance between Pandamatenga and major markets. The company has, however, benefited

from backhaul trucking, with trucks delivering goods to Kasane returning south with farm produce.

The company also owns trucks that transport vegetables to customers in Francistown and Gaborone. For Eastfort, the next stage of expansion could lie in agro-processing. Rich said the company would like to investigate opportunities to add value to its produce through research, capital investment and the acquisition of processing machinery. The move from rain-fed grain production into irrigated horticulture illustrates how investment in water, logistics and market access can broaden the commercial potential of established farming areas.



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Rangeland Pressure Forces New Approach to Botswana's Livestock Economy

Deteriorating grazing conditions are placing additional pressure on livestock production and rural livelihoods in Botswana's North-West District, prompting renewed efforts to restore communal rangelands and strengthen farmer participation in land management.

Opening a full council meeting on 14 September 2026, North-West District Council Chairperson Itumeleng Kelebetseng warned that bush encroachment and declining rangeland quality were reducing productive grazing areas and increasing pressure on the resources that remain. He welcomed the implementation of the Eco-system-Based Adaptation and Mitigation in Botswana's Communal Rangelands Project, facilitated by Conservation International and being implemented alongside the Herding for Health model.

The initiative seeks to improve rangeland management, strengthen livestock productivity and support community livelihoods. The programme is currently being implemented in Phuduhudu, where 242 cattle belonging to 30 voluntary farmers have been enrolled. Ten Eco-Rangers

have also been appointed, while community members have received training in animal husbandry. "A significant step is now underway in Sehithwa, where community engagements are commencing to facilitate the rollout of the program. The emphasis will be on ensuring that communities are not merely beneficiaries of the program but are active participants in determining how their communal grazing lands are managed," added Kelebetseng.

Following Sehithwa, Shorobe has been identified as the next area for community engagement and rollout of the Herding for Health approach. Kelebetseng said the phased implementation would allow lessons from the initial areas to inform future interventions. He urged councillors, traditional leaders, farmers and communities to support the programme and participate in decisions concerning communal grazing land. He said the success of the initiative would depend on community ownership, practical implementation and a shared commitment to managing rangelands as an important resource for present and future generations. Despite the pressure on grazing resources, the district's livestock

sector continues to contribute to the regional economy. Between April and July 2026, 10,260 cattle were slaughtered at the Maun export abattoir.

During the same period, 184,207.80 kg of beef was exported to the Democratic Republic of Congo, while 252,802.10 kg was supplied to green zones, including Gaborone, Francistown, and other areas. The remaining beef was consumed in local markets in Maun and Kasane. Kelebetseng also highlighted efforts to strengthen crop production through farmer training. A total of 107 farmers received training in seed production, including 69 in Sehithwa and 38 in Maun. The programme was undertaken in collaboration with the Botswana Agricultural Marketing Board, Cross Corn and AF-AFRI. A further 191 farmers received training in Integrated Pest Management through meetings, practical demonstrations and training sessions in Legothwana, Tsanakona, Chanoga, Gogomoga, Kareng, Sehithwa and Tsau.

Kelebetseng concluded that such interventions were important in helping farmers manage pests and diseases and protect crop yields and livelihoods. He also stressed the need for a reliable road network, noting that infrastructure was essential to agriculture, tourism, trade, education, healthcare, emergency response and access to markets. The district's development priorities therefore extend beyond livestock numbers. Restoring grazing land, improving farmer knowledge and strengthening transport infrastructure will all be important to sustaining agricultural activity and protecting rural economic opportunities.



Mozambique and Italy Deepen Agribusiness Cooperation

Agriculture is emerging as a stronger pillar of Mozambique's economic partnership with Italy. Businesses and institutions from both countries are converging in Maputo to identify investment opportunities across the agri-food value chain.

The Mozambique-Italy Forum, held on 14 and 15 September 2026, brought together government officials, financial institutions, investors and agribusiness professionals for two days focused on expanding commercial cooperation in agriculture and food production. Organised by the Italian Embassy, the ICE office in Maputo and the Mozambique-Italy Chamber of Commerce and promoted by the Agrifood Africa network, the forum brought representatives from Italy's Tuttofood and Cibus Tec trade shows together with companies seeking opportunities with Mozambican businesses and institutions.

The first day attracted around 60 industry professionals and was attended by Planning and Development Minister Salim Vala, representatives of international financial institutions and the Mozambican Investment Agency (Apiex). Opening the forum, Italian Ambassador to Maputo Gabriele Annis highlighted agriculture's strategic role in bilateral cooperation, pointing to initiatives planned under the Mattei Plan for Africa, including the

Manica Agri-Food Center (CAAM).

The forum follows an agribusiness meeting held in Maputo a year earlier with Italy's Minister of Agriculture Francesco Lollobrigida, reinforcing agriculture as an expanding area of bilateral engagement. Vala highlighted the sector's contribution to economic growth and called on entrepreneurs to invest in modernising Mozambique's agricultural sector. The second day shifted from policy discussions to commercial engagement, with B2B and B2G meetings and visits to local businesses and markets, including Rural Focus and Inalca.

A working dinner at the Italian Embassy was attended by Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Minister Roberto Albino, providing further opportunity for discussions around investment and cooperation. The engagement comes as Mozambique seeks to modernise agricultural production, strengthen domestic value addition and attract investment into its wider agri-food economy. For Italian companies, the forum provides a platform to explore commercial opportunities in one of Africa's emerging agricultural markets, while Mozambique gains access to international agribusiness expertise, technology and potential investment.



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Tanzania Eyes New Date Palm Industry After Saudi-backed Pilot

A crop better known for thriving in the Middle East could become a new commercial opportunity for Tanzania after a Saudi Arabia-backed pilot confirmed the potential for date palms in some of the country's driest regions. The conclusion of an exploratory project has given Tanzania new evidence that date palms can perform in selected drought-prone areas, opening the door to investment in commercial production, processing and exports.

The initiative, titled "Emergency and Resilience Building Support for Smallholder Farmers Affected by Drought through Exploratory Date Palm Cultivation in Tanzania", was implemented through a partnership between the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KS-relief) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). Feasibility studies found that date palms can perform well in selected areas of Dodoma, Singida and Tabora, provided farmers have appropriate water-management systems and follow good agricultural practices.

At a handover ceremony at the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute in Dodoma, FAO Representative in Tanzania Nyabenyi Tipo said the project had generated valuable evidence and created a foundation

for further investment. "The infrastructure, knowledge and experience established through this initiative provide an important foundation for future growth," said Tipo. The project has supported research, farmer training, irrigation development and the introduction of quality date palm planting materials. TARI also received irrigation systems, a screenhouse, a tractor and other equipment to support continued research and development.

The next opportunity lies beyond proving that the crop can grow. Tipo said Tanzania would need to develop an integrated value chain spanning production, processing, marketing and value addition. She added, "Moving forward, continued collaboration among government institutions, research organisations, development partners and the private sector will be essential in transforming the sector into a sustainable economic opportunity for farmers and communities."

The pilot has also strengthened agricultural cooperation between Tanzania and Saudi Arabia, with Saudi Arabia signalling interest in supporting the emerging sector. Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Tanzania, Yahya Bin Ahmed Okeish, described the initiative as a foundation for deeper cooperation around a complete date palm value chain, including production,

processing, trade and marketing. Deputy Minister for Agriculture David Siliinde welcomed the partnership and said the government would support the emerging sector through research, policy measures and investment promotion.

The opportunity for Tanzania's semi-arid regions extends beyond introducing another crop. A commercial date palm industry could create new demand for irrigation, processing, packaging, logistics and marketing while diversifying farmer incomes in areas increasingly exposed to drought. The pilot has therefore moved the date palm opportunity into a new phase, with attention now turning towards whether Tanzania can translate field evidence into a commercially viable agricultural value chain.



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SENER360 tower trusses are manufactured from pipe and not angle iron as is commonly used in other brands. The advantage of the lighter material enables us to use two more sets of trusses per tower than is possible with angle iron trusses, ensuring an exceptionally strong structure. An added advantage of the pipe truss structure is its aerodynamic superiority above angle iron as a structural material. That is the reason for a SENTER360 machine withstanding a windstorm of 158km hour (actual field data), confirming the reason why no SENTER360 was blown over in a recent storm (the only brand not blown over) Standard long base beams, sturdy tower supports, stabilizing rods, diagonals and a low centre of gravity contribute to exceptional stability.

INNOVATIVE CONTROL PANELS

The same modular principals used throughout the entire SENTER360 design is also visible in our control panel design. Our 'basic' control panel is similar in functionality to the top panels of most other brands.

All new and old** SENTER360 panels can be controlled by your cell phone*, Tablet*, computer or base station by adding a simple plug in "Communicator" unit of your choice (GPRS/cell network, Wi Fi or radio unit). Full pump control, VSD control and feedback is also available on the same system.

*{Android, IOS and other}

**{older panel controls are limited to on/off, direct mm adjustment, run and stop feedback communication.}

New panels have full function internet controls, record keeping, graphs, etc.



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Angola and Brazil Put 800,000 Hectares in Play for Agribusiness



Angola is putting land, capital and Brazilian agricultural expertise behind an ambitious drive to expand grain production, with a new cooperation framework setting the stage for large-scale farming projects from 2027. Angola and Brazil signed a farm investment memorandum of understanding in Luanda on 15 September 2026, targeting cereals and grains, including beans, rice, soybeans and peanuts.

Signed by Angola's Minister of Agriculture, Isaac dos Anjos, and Brazil's Minister of Agriculture, André de Paula, the agreement moves bilateral agribusiness cooperation beyond trade toward production on Angolan soil. The memorandum falls under the Programme for Productive Agricultural Investment Brazil-Angola, which draws governments, private operators and financial institutions into a framework for developing agricultural projects and mobilising investments. At the centre of the initial programme is Terra Lunda, a 20,000 hectare grain project in Lunda Norte province with an estimated investment envelope of about \$83.2 million.

The project is scheduled to run from 2027 to 2030, bringing approximately 5,000 hectares into production each year. Angola has framed the scheme as an integrated crop and livestock initiative that will also test Brazilian agronomic practices under local conditions and build domestic technical capacity. The ambition extends well beyond the pilot. Angolan authorities have

identified around 800,000 hectares of arable land for surveying, spatial planning and potential Brazilian-led agricultural enterprises, with grain and protein production at the centre of the programme.

The push forms part of Angola's broader effort to diversify its economy beyond oil while increasing domestic food production and reducing reliance on imports. Financing structures are also being developed around the agricultural programme. An indicative blended model would see Brazil's development bank BNDES provide about 45% of project funding, while Brazil's export financing programme BB Proex would contribute 23%. Angola's Sovereign Wealth Fund would provide around 17%, the Development Bank of Angola about 5% and producers the remaining 10%.

BNDES is also preparing to resume project financing in Angola, with agriculture identified as a focus, potentially giving investors access to credit lines and export-finance support. The emerging framework gives the partnership a more commercial structure, connecting Angola's agricultural land and investment ambitions with Brazilian production expertise and financing mechanisms. The scale of the land allocation, however, makes implementation critical. The next phase will determine how quickly projects such as Terra Lunda move from agreed frameworks to operational farms, financed investments and measurable production.



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Malawi Unlocks \$8.6 Million for Smallholder Agriculture

A fresh \$8.6 million financing facility is set to push more capital into Malawi's rural economy, targeting smallholder farmers and micro agribusinesses operating at the heart of the country's agricultural sector. The European Investment Bank (EIB), through EIB Global, will provide Centenary Bank Malawi with €7.5 million to expand access to finance for smallholder farmers and agrifood microenterprises.

Announced on 15 September 2026, the facility will divide the funding equally between sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture and businesses supporting women's economic empowerment. Centenary Bank will channel the financing to agrifood microenterprises with fewer than 10 employees and to smallholder farmers, widening access to longer-term funding

for businesses and producers that remain underserved by conventional finance. The facility also includes technical assistance to strengthen the bank's capacity to increase agricultural lending, reach underserved customers and encourage the adoption of climate-resilient practices.

"Our partnership with Centenary Bank allows us to channel long-term financing where it is needed most: in rural communities. When a microenterprise can borrow, it can invest and grow. And when it grows, that means more jobs and income for the entrepreneur and their family," said Marko Primorac, Vice-President of EIB. The financing forms part of the European Union's Global Gateway initiative, which supports investment partnerships outside the bloc.

Agriculture contributes about 25% of Malawi's gross domestic product and employs more than 70% of the workforce, according to the World Bank. Micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises contribute an estimated 47% of GDP and support about 1.7 million jobs, according to the European Union. Yet access to finance remains a constraint on investment across the sector, while increasing exposure to droughts, floods and other climate-related shocks is adding pressure on rural livelihoods. The new facility is therefore positioned to support both agricultural investment and resilience, giving farmers and small businesses greater capacity to invest, expand production and withstand climate-related disruptions.



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From Diesel to Solar, Botswana Rethinks Farm Power

Reliable and affordable energy is emerging as a critical piece of Botswana's agricultural growth equation, with the shift towards more commercially productive farming increasingly dependent on the ability to power irrigation, storage and processing beyond the reach of the national grid.

Agriculture is moving higher up the country's diversification agenda as the government seeks to raise productivity, develop markets and strengthen the sector's resilience to climate pressures. Yet for many farming enterprises, particularly those operating in remote areas, access to dependable power remains a fundamental constraint on commercial expansion. Much of Botswana's farmland and farming activity is located in off-grid areas where extending the electricity network can be economically unviable. Renewable energy offers an alternative, but its

adoption has been constrained by the high upfront cost of equipment, leaving diesel generators as the most common source of power for remote farming enterprises.

That dependence comes with a direct cost to the agricultural business model. Diesel raises operating expenses while also carrying environmental and public health implications, making energy efficiency increasingly relevant to farmers seeking to improve margins and build more resilient operations. The National Development Bank of Botswana (NDB) has responded by initiating a funding programme to support farmers in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change through renewable energy solutions and water-efficient irrigation practices.

The significance extends well beyond

emissions reduction. For commercial farms, energy is an input that determines how efficiently water can be moved, crops can be irrigated, produce can be cooled and commodities can be processed. More reliable and affordable power can therefore strengthen the economics of production while opening room for greater activity beyond the farm gate. Irrigation is particularly important in a climate where water availability can constrain agricultural output. Pairing renewable energy with water-efficient irrigation can reduce dependence on diesel while improving the efficiency of one of farming's most important resources.

The same logic applies to cold storage and agro-processing. Access to dependable power can support refrigeration, extend the shelf life of produce and create greater scope for processing closer to production areas. This can strengthen



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market access while reducing losses and allowing farmers and agribusinesses to capture more value from what they produce. The energy question also sits within a broader push to diversify Botswana's economy. Industry leaders have identified farming, tourism and energy among the sectors that could contribute to a wider economic base as the country looks beyond its traditional dependence on diamonds.

For agriculture, however, diversification will require more than expanding production. It will depend on building the infrastructure and commercial systems that allow farms to operate efficiently, connect to markets and move further into processing and higher-value activities. Renewable energy could become an important part of that infrastructure, particularly where conventional grid expansion is difficult to justify. Distributed power solutions offer farms a route to greater energy independence while reducing exposure to volatile fuel costs. The challenge remains financing. High upfront capital requirements can prevent farmers from adopting technologies that may lower operating costs over time. Expanding access to suitable financing will therefore be central to turning renewable energy from a climate intervention into a practical agricultural investment.

As Botswana seeks to build a more productive and commercially resilient agricultural sector, the energy strategy around its farms will continue to matter just as much as the production of the strategy itself. Cleaner, more efficient and more reliable power can lower costs, improve water efficiency and support the infrastructure

that is needed to move agriculture further into storage, processing and commercial markets. For an industry operating across vast distances and often beyond the grid, powering the farm may be one of the most important steps toward powering agricultural growth.




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