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Innovations Session N°7
Innovations in the African
agroprocessing sector:
the key role of SMEs and
businesses



INNOVATIONS^{Wi-Fi}
SERIES



BIOGRAPHY AND PRESENTATION OF AGRO EXPRESS

Agro
EXPRESS

Agro express, le bon goût sans effort!
des purées 100% naturelles pour une cuisine facile

Les produits Agro express sont réalisés à partir d'une sélection des meilleurs fruits provenant d'une agriculture sans OGM. Nos produits sont conseillés pour vos différents repas, plats et conserves. Ils sont très pratiques pour vous faire gagner du temps et de l'énergie.

EN VENTE PARTOUT

Contrôlé par le LCCSA

Mélange d'épices

Ail

Purée de tomate

Purée de tomate

Gingembre moulu

Piment assaisonné

LCCSA

BIOGRAPHY

- I am Euphrasie DASSOUNDO ASSOGBA, manager of the company Agro Express. Initially, I am a marketing and international trade technician. I reconverted to agri-food processing in 2013.
- The idea of creating Agro Express came from a scene of post-harvest losses in a market in Couffo, a department in Benin, where women were throwing away tomatoes because of poor sales. It was a shock and, since that day, I have told myself that my fight is to do everything possible to reduce the frequency of these post-harvest losses. I coordinate the company's day-to-day activities. I am the head of the company, a mother and a housewife, which is not always easy.

PRESENTATION OF AGRO EXPRESS

- Agro Express is a company specialised in the processing of fruit and vegetables; we are located in the Atlantic department, commune of Kpomassè in Benin.
- We currently employ 16 people and we plan to recruit 6 more in the next two years.

AGRO EXPRESS ACTIVITIES

- Agro Express produces canned fruit and vegetables (tomato puree and concentrate) and spices (garlic and ginger puree, spice mix and seasoned chilli). The products are packaged in glass jars and can be stored for one year. The raw materials are sourced directly from the field from a network of growers during the season of abundance (tomatoes) and full-time for the other crops.

OUR ACTIVITIES



Production



Sale

OUR PRODUCTS



OUR PRODUCTS



pot

Roots

CONTEXT

- Climatic constraints, considerable post-harvest losses, low processing capacity, etc. are the main challenges of the tomato sector in Benin. Very often, producers do not find clients and leave the tomatoes in the fields to rot. The result is that with the overabundance of tomatoes during the harvest period, the consumer market cannot absorb everything. This situation of supply exceeding demand also forces farmers to sell their harvest at low prices when they have no secure sales channels.
- For example, the amount of tomato loss is estimated at several hundred tonnes per year in the country, including 250 tonnes in 2020 in the commune of Kpomassè alone. These post-harvest losses, in addition to causing a loss to the national economy, also create difficult situations for farmers, who often have loans from decentralised financial services. They therefore find themselves in a situation of unpaid debts, with the seizure of their material goods (motorbikes, bicycles, etc.), which can go as far as the imprisonment of the debtor's wife or the debtor himself until the debt is repaid.

AGRO EXPRESS MARKET

- In the beginning, the company produced 30 to 100 jars per day, which is equivalent to about 120kg of fruit tomatoes.
- With the increase in market demand, the production capacity was increased to 1/2 ton per day, which is equivalent to about 800-1000 jars of tomato puree.
- The clientele is made up of individuals, supermarkets and shops selling local products in several towns in Benin, but also in certain countries in the sub-region such as Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina and Niger. Agro Express also participates in trade fairs and exhibitions and is active on social networks.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Today, we have an agricultural cluster initiative for the tomato sector in Kpomassè, where we are based. We have a network of tomato growers from whom we buy all the production; the network will expand as our market develops. This initiative was awarded the "Game changers in agriculture" prize by the German International Development Cooperation Agency (GIZ) in 2020.
- The objective in the next two years is to produce tomato purees and spice purees in aluminium lids to make them more accessible to the population in terms of cost and to allow those who do not have a refrigerator to preserve the products after opening.

Thank you

