

Statement of Young Farmers 2019 to GFFA Ministerial Conference

As young farmers from around the world, we have gathered in Berlin to discuss the topic of Agriculture goes digital: smart solutions for future farming.

With an ever increasing population and demand for good quality, safe food from a decreasing amount of available land, farmers need to improve their productivity and efficiency. Digitalization has a role to play in this.

Digitalization is the process of collecting and converting information into a relevant and useful data resource.

As young farmers we see digitalization on three levels:

- (1) For the individual farmer to collect and utilize information within their farm business
- (2) Sharing information with other farmers to help improve performance
- (3) Connecting with consumers and all other relevant stakeholders

Digitalization and the use of technology on farms creates many opportunities including improved profitability, productivity, traceability, resource-use efficiency and positive environmental outcomes. Digitalization helps to introduce the younger generation to agribusiness.

The most important challenges we are facing in regard to agricultural digitalization are inadequate infrastructure, skills and training, data ownership and accessibility.

To address these challenges we would like your attention, support and the implementation in your countries of the following:

1. Ensure adequate and ongoing investment in up-to-date infrastructure including broadband, cell reception and power.
2. Invest and support skills and capability development. This can include training for farmers so they have the skills to utilize technology.
3. Include in legislation protection for the following principles in relation to farmer data.
 - Farmers maintain ownership
 - Farmers provide permission to who has access to it
 - Farmers can request for it to be deleted any time
 - Common data standards to ensure easy sharing between programs
4. Consult and collaborate with farmer organizations regarding legislation, skill development and new technologies.
5. Ensure technology is accessible and affordable to all farmers regardless of scale, sector or location.

We, young farmers of the world, are eager to work in collaboration with the government, the private sector, research institutions and each other. Let's mobilize the talent and dedication of our generation to ensure agriculture is equipped to prosper now and in the future.

We thank the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture for the invitation to take part in this special event. We appreciate the opportunity to engage in the discussion and urge you to keep involving young farmers and their representative organizations in the future.

January 19, 2019