



Many Legs Make Light Work

Insect Farming in Ethiopia | Knowledge Exchange Event Report

Thursday 28th of November 2024

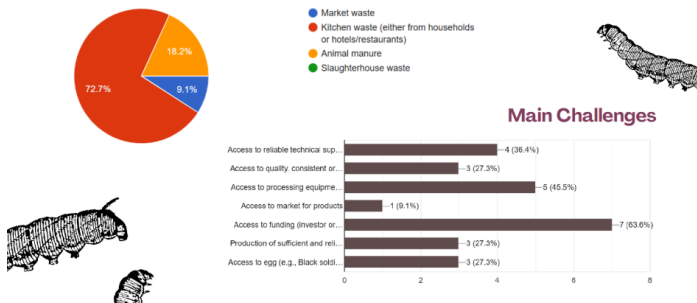
Introduction

On Thursday 28th of November 2024, The **Netherlands Food Partnership** (NFP), in collaboration with **TRAIDE Foundation**, **ACEN Foundation** and the **IN-FEAST Partnership**, hosted a Knowledge Exchange Event on Insect Farming in Ethiopia: Many Legs Make Light Work. The event specifically focused on black soldier fly (BSF) farming. Key points included the sector's potential for sustainable food production, alternative proteins, and organic fertilizer. Challenges identified were collaboration among stakeholders in the sector, access to finance, technical capacity building and awareness / image of the sector. The session also highlighted the need for effective communication and partnerships to support BSF farming in Ethiopia.

Mr. Ibrahim Palaz opened the meeting by indicating the background of the session and highlighting the outcomes of a preliminary survey that was held among Insect Farming sector stakeholders.



Main source of waste



What do you expect from an Association?



Acceptable yearly membership fee according to respondents is between **100 - 7000 ETB**

Presentations

Mrs. Jannifer Muthike, Board member of the Association for Insect Farming and Its Products (AIFIP) in Kenya, informed the audience the emergence of AIFIP and the challenges it faces in their ambition to become the pivotal organisation in the insect farming sector in Kenya. She highlighted the objectives of the Association and the role an Association can play in, for example, the promotion of insect farming and the economic empowerment of its members. At the same time, she elaborated on the complexity



of the inclusion of members' interests whilst ensuring efficient and decisive operations of the Association.

Mrs. Somaya Naser El Deen PhD, Animal Nutrition Researcher at Wageningen University and Research, elaborated on the [feasibility study](#) that was conducted last year on BSF production for animal feed in Ethiopia. She highlighted how BSF farming has the potential to overcome challenges of expensive and unsustainable conventional sources of animal proteins, the inadequate handling of urban waste, and depletion of soils and the high costs of fertilisers. Accordingly, she identified current bottlenecks in the system, such as logistics and partnerships to enable a reliable supply, the need for standards and regulations to warrant quality and safety, and cultural perceptions among customers and consumers. Recommendations to overcome these bottlenecks included effective communication towards government officials, consumers and entrepreneurs; working in partners (esp. On waste collection); scientific research to develop production techniques; and field demonstrations to showcase the benefit of BSF products.

Finally, Mrs. Helen Getaw Yalew, Senior Sector Performance & Value Chain Development Advisor at Stichting Wageningen Research Ethiopia, elaborated on the challenges and opportunities in accessing finance for BSF businesses. She highlighted the nature of the supply and demand side of financing in the agricultural sector in Ethiopia, and shared various examples of models of inclusive financing. She closed by showcasing the work of the [RAISE-FS Project](#) and the accompanying Innovation Fund.

Break Out Sessions

After the presentations the participants entered into side sessions based on the insect farming industry's main challenges¹: **access to funding, improved technical capacity / training, and improved collaboration.**

Side Session: Access To Finance

Participants found that the insect / BSF sector in Ethiopia is underdeveloped and considered a high-risk business by financiers. This makes it difficult for financial institutions to engage in investments. Additionally, local microfinance institutions seem to have a limited capacity to provide loans to BSF businesses. At the same time, participants also identified challenges on the 'demand

¹ Participants were asked about the main challenges within the industry upon registration. The side sessions were organised around the 3 challenges that were ranked highest.



side' as insecurity among BSF actors to engage with financial instruments - due to technical challenges in BSF production - contributes to risk-averse behavior of BSF producers.

Suggested solutions focused on sensitisation and appropriate financing mechanisms for BSF producers:

- **Raising awareness** about the sector, e.g., by highlighting its contribution to sustainability among commercial poultry farms;
- Exploring **alternative financing options** other than formal financial instruments, e.g., community financing (friends and family);
- Providing **low-interest loans** to support the sector; and
- Improve **technical challenges** of BSF production.

Side Session: Technical Capacity / Training

Participants identified a lack of both **technical as well as soft skills** among many BSF producers. Therefore the following trainings and opportunities for further research were proposed:

- Training on **awareness raising** and consumer behavioral change;
- Research on **animal feed quality**;
- Training on **access to finance and market access**, especially for Microfinance institutions;
- Training for **TVETs** to design, prototype, and manufacture the equipment for uplifting BSF businesses to commercial scale (e.g. drier, crusher, pelletizing, etc);
- Training on **waste management handling techniques** like segregation and collection to improve the quality of waste substrate.

Moreover, it was suggested to align trainings with those provided by ICIPE to engage private sectors to follow up with feasible business models.

Side Session: Sector Collaboration

Participants indicated that organized sectoral collaboration in the Ethiopian insect farming sector is still largely non-existing. There is no platform for collaboration and for some participants this was the first time connecting in an organized manner with fellow BSF stakeholders. Collaboration thus far largely happens on a needs-basis between businesses (e.g. supply of 5DOL or eggs to each other) and is based on personal networks. Cultural reservations towards insects are a concern for large-scale uptake of insect based products.

Suggested solutions and actions focused on 'starting small', and creating an overview of and interaction between sector stakeholders:

- Development of a solid **platform** for sectoral collaboration (e.g. association)
- **Learning** from neighboring countries like Kenya



- **Awareness creation**
- Organizing face-to-face **stakeholder events** in Ethiopia
- **Workshops** for technical capacity building and awareness creation
- Developing a **website for knowledge sharing and sharing contacts** of insect-focused businesses in Ethiopia

Contact

Thank you for helping to make this exchange of knowledge, information and experiences a success. If you have any further questions, or perceive opportunities for collaboration please do not hesitate to contact us. You can also check out more work on Insect Farming in East Africa through our [Insects for Feed](#) Community Platform at [NFP Connects](#).

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