

## **The World Agricultural Forum Story**

The World Agricultural Forum (WAF) is the world's only policy neutral and internationally inclusive agriculture-driven forum.

Of the 193 countries in the world, the WAF has attracted participation from 110 countries to World Congresses since 1998. Governments, NGOs, private and public businesses and universities have represented countries in Africa, Europe, the Americas, Micronesia, the Pacific Rim, Asia, Oceania and the Indian subcontinent. It is the goal of the WAF to obtain participation and interest to participate from 50 additional countries in the next five years.

The Advisory Board to the WAF consists of representatives from various agriculture backgrounds in 16 countries including New Zealand, China, India, Morocco, Columbia, the United States, Italy, Costa Rica, Argentina, Brazil, Belgium, Switzerland, Malaysia, Indonesia, Germany and France.

No other organization on earth attracts opposing views of global agriculture on an equal platform for the discussion and creation of change. Influential speakers and participants throughout the past five World Congresses have shared their agendas and perspectives among their peers. This remarkable list includes heads of state, policy makers, corporate leaders, academia, economists and media from all aspects of the agriculture value chain.

In ten years, the WAF has convened more than 20 ministers and secretaries of agriculture from around the world and several have participated in more than one Congress. Other repeat participants or speakers include Dr. Norman Borlaug, the World Bank, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Monsanto, Tyson, D1 Oils, Nestle, Corporate Council on Africa, International Food and Policy Research Institute, The World Food Prize, Partnership to End Hunger in Africa, United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organization, European Union, U.S. Congress, U.S. Senate, U.S. Secretaries of Agriculture, OXFAM America, World Wildlife Fund, World Trade Organization, Earth University in Costa Rica, Michigan State University and Washington University.

The WAF has been at the forefront of pressing issues in agriculture, bringing controversial topics to the table such as the ever-growing food vs. fuel debate, food safety and security, agricultural sustainability, investments in agribusiness, natural resource management, impact of free trade agreements, technology and biotechnology acceptance, increasing demands and decreasing availability of fresh water, examples and advancements in bioenergy, agriculture mitigating climate change, and linking smallholder farmers to effective and equitable markets.

Throughout the last decade, the WAF has seen successes in the following areas: raised awareness of biofuels, particularly the introduction of Jatropha; named Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperative (APEC) Domestic Champion - as the Domestic Champion for APEC, the WAF provides a means for the Finance and Agriculture Ministers for the 21

member economies to further their food system agenda; consistently brings together leading global partners and competitors in the agriculture value chain to create new ideas and approaches for change; formed partnerships with the United Nation's International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Food Program and the Food and Agricultural Organization to examine the need for a Global Commission on Rural Development; creation of Non-Government Organization Council; created a community on water as it is integrated with agriculture; created a demonstration engine using *Jatropha* for education and science; heightened the exposure of their Board in both the industry and media.

### **The Problem**

The World Agricultural Forum (WAF) has commitments from the Ugandan government and President Yoweri Museveni to host (in February) the WAF 2009 biennial World Congress: *Creating Wealth in Africa By Investing in Agriculture*. WAF needs to increase awareness of and registrations for this Congress in order to achieve the broad WAF goal of a neutral, inclusive platform to address pressing policy issues in agriculture and, specifically, to support and showcase Ugandan efforts to participate fully in agricultural policy review and development.

### **The Solution**

The current WAF web site is grossly inadequate to support online registration for and promotion of the Congress to support this important meeting. New technology, new functionality and new design will enable WAF to promote the Congress more effectively to sub-Saharan African NGOs, governments, universities and private businesses, as well as their counterparts in Europe, the Americas, Micronesia, the Pacific Rim, Asia and the Indian subcontinent. In addition, it will enable WAF to more successfully provide outputs—reports, proceedings, interviews—to multiple audiences including those who cannot attend the Congress and the media.

### **The Impact**

It will showcase Uganda and Ugandan institutions as active players in agricultural policy development. It will focus issues review on agricultural policies specifically affecting sub-Saharan Africa, including smallholder farmers, sustainable development and micro-entrepreneurship. It will draw important elements of the global agricultural policy community together in a neutral arena “on the ground” where critical agricultural challenges face both the local peoples and world. In addition, WAF hopes over time to present the site in multiple languages—English, Spanish, French, German, Kiswahili, Russian, Japanese, Chinese and Arabic—but would like to present the proceedings of this Congress in Kiswahili, the official language of the African Union, if that is agreeable to the Ugandan sponsors.

### **The Time is Now**

WAF needs to enable online registration and promotion for the February 2009 World Congress as soon as possible in order to recruit presenters, attract participants and present pre-meeting materials. WAF has been “limping along” with an antiquated web site because of the press on available funds and budget from other needs. The new site and capabilities needs to be developed with alacrity.

### **The Measurable Impact**

The web site would be built with usage tracking capabilities, so WAF would be able to utilize web analytics to establish baseline usage of functionality and content and to adjust both for greater impact on a variety of audiences over time. So the web site would have enduring ability to more readily support, promote and disseminate the WAF world and regional congresses and their outputs regardless of geographic location.