

Acquisition to promote cassava production in sub-Saharan Africa

Philafrica Foods, one of the largest food processing companies in South Africa, has announced its acquisition of a majority stake in The Dutch Agricultural Development & Trading Company's (DADTCO) cassava processing activities. DADTCO has pioneered innovative mobile cassava processing technology that is having a major positive impact on Africa's smallholder farmers.



Museruka Emmanuel via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

With existing operations in Mozambique and advanced projects in West Africa, Philafrica Foods is looking to leverage DADTCO's technology and its management team's extensive experience to scale cassava processing in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

"Philafrica's vision is to transform the lives of millions of African smallholder farmers by creating market demand by means of large-scale food processing. DADTCO's vision to unleash the potential of cassava throughout Africa, the technical expertise of its management team and innovative mobile processing technology, align perfectly with our vision and values," said Roland Decorvet, CEO of Philafrica Foods.

Cassava is a root crop grown in tropical climates. In Africa, it is the second largest source of carbohydrates after maize. "Currently eight of the top 10 producers globally are in SSA, with a total of 145 million MTs – 54% of global production – produced annually in Africa."

Convenient cassava

One of the many advantages of cassava is that it needs less water than maize and rice, making it an attractive crop for smallholder farmers. Another is that it can remain underground for more than two years after maturity, reducing the need for large storage facilities.

DADTCO developed an entirely new product called Cassava Starch Flour, which is a perfect substitute for wheat flour as well as corn-starch in the food processing, baking and beverage industries that are poised to grow as the African middle-class increases. It also offers a non-gluten and grain-free alternative to traditional products usually containing wheat, thus catering to an increasingly health-conscious population.

“We see massive opportunity in cassava as currently less than 5% of total production in Africa is industrially processed at scale,” said Decorvet.

While the financial details of the transaction were not disclosed, Decorvet said that the company will actively pursue close collaboration with donors to make mobile cassava processing technology available to as many smallholder farmers in SSA as possible.

Philafrica Foods is supported by the AFGRI Group, an investment holding company focused on food and agriculture with an underlying ethos as an enabler of food security in line with the Philafrica vision.

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