



JULY

W2A Investment Insight Newsletter

Unlocking Opportunities in EU and Nigerian Agriculture Sectors
(Using Belgium as a Case Study)

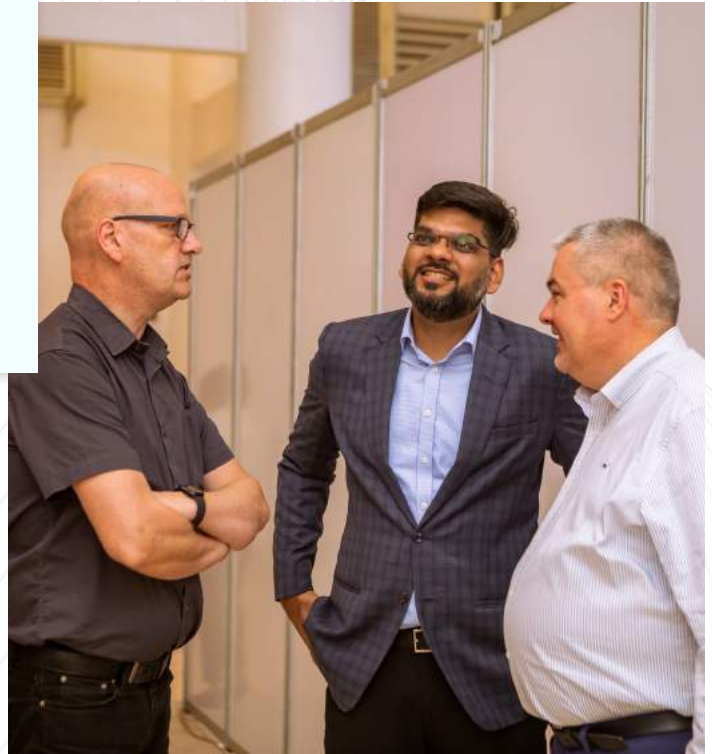
Introduction

The EU agri-food sector has been a key player in the global market, with steady growth and increasing trade surplus in recent years. The latest report from the European Commission highlights the continued success of the EU agri-food industry, with a trade surplus of €6.7 billion in March 2024. Exports saw a significant increase of **4% to €20.1 billion**, driven primarily by higher prices for olives and olive oil. On the other hand, imports remained stable at €13.5 billion, showing a slight decrease compared to the previous year. These figures demonstrate the resilience and competitiveness of the EU agri-food sector in the face of changing global market dynamics.



One of the key opportunities for the EU agri-food industry lies in expanding its trade relationships with African countries, particularly Nigeria. With a growing population and increasing demand for high-quality food products, Nigeria presents a lucrative market for EU agri-food investments. By leveraging their respective strengths and expertise, the EU and Nigeria can collaborate to further boost the agri-food industry in both regions. Strategic investments in infrastructure, technology, and sustainable practices can help improve productivity and efficiency in the agricultural sector, leading to increased trade opportunities and economic growth.

Furthermore, supportive policies and regulations are crucial in ensuring a conducive business environment for agri-food companies to thrive. By working together to address challenges such as market access barriers, food safety standards, and environmental sustainability, the EU and Nigeria can create a mutually beneficial partnership that drives innovation and fosters economic development.



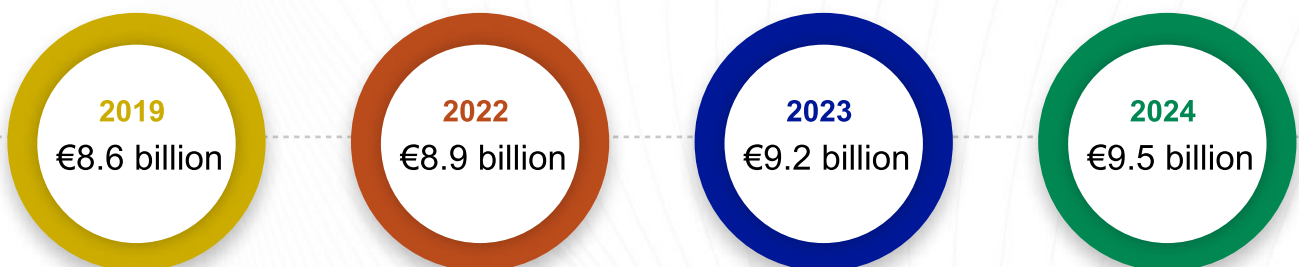
By seizing opportunities for collaboration and investment in key markets such as Nigeria, the EU is well-positioned to further strengthen its position as a leader in the agri-food trade. With careful planning and strategic partnerships, the EU-Nigeria agri-food industry has the potential to drive sustainable growth and contribute significantly to the economic development of the region



Exposition on the Belgian Agriculture Sector Performance

The Belgian agriculture and agri-food sector play a significant role in the country's economy, contributing a substantial output value. As of 2022, the sector demonstrated resilience and growth, with the total output value reaching EUR 8.9 billion, up from EUR 8.6 billion in 2019. This growth trajectory continued into 2023 and 2024, with estimates indicating the total output value rose to approximately EUR 9.2 billion in 2023 and is projected to reach EUR 9.5 billion by the end of 2024. This upward trend is attributed to increased productivity, technological advancements, and favorable trade conditions.

The structure of the sector is diverse, encompassing various sub-sectors such as fruits, vegetables, livestock, and milk production. Flanders, the northern part of Belgium, leads in livestock, fruits, and vegetable production, while Wallonia, the southern region, is more focused on crop farming, including cereals and sugar beet. This geographical specialization has allowed Belgium to optimize its agricultural output, catering to both domestic consumption and international markets.



Trajectory Growth

The Nigerian Agriculture Sector



The Nigerian agriculture sector has witnessed significant growth over the past decade, driven by government initiatives and increasing private-sector participation. With over 92 million hectares of arable land and a favorable climate for a variety of crops, Nigeria offers vast investable opportunities for international investors, particularly from the EU. Key commodities such as cocoa, cashew nuts, ginger, and sesame seeds are not only in high demand locally but also command premium prices in international markets. The sector's growth trajectory is further bolstered by the country's youthful and dynamic workforce, which is eager to engage in agribusiness.

As the Nigerian government continues to prioritize agricultural development through favorable policies and incentives, the sector stands as a lucrative investment destination. EU investors can leverage Nigeria's agricultural potential to tap into the growing demand for food and agricultural products, making it a strategic market for sustainable investment and trade. Moreover, Nigeria can help fill gaps in the EU market for organic and exotic products, addressing the increasing consumer demand for diverse and high-quality agricultural produce. This symbiotic relationship can enhance food security, diversify supply chains, and drive economic growth for both regions.

The Belgian Financial Needs and Trends

The financial landscape of the Belgian agriculture sector has been evolving, with significant investments required to sustain growth and modernization. Between 2014 and 2020, the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) for Flanders and Wallonia contributed EUR 1.6 billion to the sector, focusing on investments in physical assets and support for young farmers. These investments have been crucial in addressing challenges such as farm consolidation, access to land, and the integration of new technologies. Organic farming has seen considerable growth, driven by consumer demand, policy support, and higher profitability. In 2018, the output value of organic products increased by 15%, reflecting a broader trend towards sustainable and environmentally friendly farming practices.

International Integration and Future Outlook

Belgium's agriculture sector is well-integrated with international markets, benefiting significantly from excellent infrastructure and substantial import and export flows. This robust integration opens up numerous growth opportunities, enabling Belgian agricultural products to reach global markets and allowing the country to import diverse agricultural goods to meet domestic demand. However, this high level of integration also exposes the sector to global market fluctuations and varying trade policies, making it crucial for Belgian farmers and agri-businesses to stay adaptive and competitive.

The broader European Union, with its single market and common agricultural policy, further enhances Belgium's agricultural trade capabilities. The EU's collective bargaining power, extensive trade agreements, and regulatory frameworks provide a stable environment for agricultural trade, benefiting Belgian exporters and importers alike. However, the sector must continually adapt to evolving EU policies, international trade agreements, and market dynamics to maintain its competitive edge and ensure long-term sustainability.



Looking ahead, the EU and Belgian agriculture and agri-food sectors must navigate several challenges, including demographic shifts, financial constraints, and pressures from market integration. The aging farming population and the need for substantial capital investment in modern agricultural technologies are significant hurdles. Nevertheless, with strategic investments in innovation, enhanced support for young farmers, and favorable policy interventions, there is immense potential for sustainable growth and innovation. The upcoming EU-Nigeria Agri-Investment and Trade Forum offers a crucial platform to explore these opportunities. By fostering collaboration between European and Nigerian stakeholders, the forum aims to drive mutual growth, enhance trade relations, and promote sustainable agricultural practices across both regions.

The 3rd Europe-Nigeria Agri-Investment and Trade Forum



The upcoming 3rd Europe-Nigeria Agri-Investment and Trade Forum, themed "Connect Deal, Seeding Growth," aims to bridge the gap between the European and Nigerian agricultural sectors by fostering trade relations and investment opportunities. This forum is pivotal for international trade, as it seeks to harness the vast African market, particularly Nigeria, given its government's commitment to the agricultural sector and strengthening robust bilateral trade relations with EU nations. By connecting stakeholders from both regions, the forum will facilitate knowledge exchange, innovation, and sustainable growth in agriculture.

Welcome2Africa International, with a database of over 2,000 agribusinesses interested in connecting with European partners, offers a unique platform through the Europe-Nigeria Agri-Investment and Trade Forum. This forum reaches a vast audience of stakeholders, including SMEs in the agribusiness sector. We believe that the participation and partnership of key stakeholders will amplify the forum's success and create sustainable avenues for bilateral trade and investment between Africa and the international community.

over
2,000
agribusinesses

Justification for EU-Nigeria Forum Participation and Strategic Partnership



The 3rd Europe-Nigeria Agri-Investment and Trade Forum, organized by Welcome2Africa International, is an unparalleled opportunity for stakeholders from both the European Union and Nigeria to forge strong, sustainable partnerships in the agriculture sector. Scheduled from September 11th to 13th, 2024, in Brussels, Belgium, this forum themed "Connecting Deals, Seeding Growth," promises to be a dynamic platform for exploring and capitalizing on the immense agricultural potential between these regions. By attending, EU nations and investors can directly engage with a diverse array of Nigerian agribusinesses, ranging from small and medium enterprises to large-scale operations, thereby gaining firsthand insights into the vast opportunities available. The forum will facilitate meaningful interactions, workshops, and networking sessions designed to foster robust trade relations and mutual growth.

The global agricultural market is undergoing significant transformations, driven by technological advancements, sustainable practices, and increased consumer demand for organic and exotic products. For EU investors, the forum presents a unique chance to diversify their agricultural portfolios and access Nigeria's rich natural resources, favorable climate, and expanding market. The Nigerian government's commitment to agricultural development, through policies and incentives, has created a conducive environment for investment. This synergy between EU technology and Nigerian resources can lead to innovative farming techniques, improved productivity, and enhanced food security. Moreover, EU nations can benefit from Nigeria's strategic position as a gateway to the larger African market, thereby amplifying their investment returns and market reach.



Partnering at the 3rd Europe-Nigeria Agri-Investment and Trade Forum holds the potential for lucrative deals that can significantly impact both economies. For Nigeria, increased investment from the EU can translate into job creation, technology transfer, and enhanced agricultural practices, leading to sustainable economic growth. For the EU, securing reliable sources of agricultural imports and creating new export opportunities can help fill market gaps and meet the growing demand for diverse and high-quality food products. The forum will also address critical issues such as supply chain management, financing, and market access, providing comprehensive solutions to the challenges faced by both regions. By harnessing these opportunities, the forum aims to seed growth that is beneficial, sustainable, and transformative for the global agricultural landscape.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Belgian agriculture and agri-food sector's performance and the strategic initiatives by Welcome2Africa International underscore the importance of international collaboration. The 3rd Europe-Nigeria Agri-Investment and Trade Forum stands as a testament to the potential for growth and prosperity through enhanced trade relations and investment opportunities.



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Bio



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Raphael Udoh, a distinguished lawyer, serves as the Government Relations & Legal Affairs Lead at Welcome2Africa International. With his legal expertise and strategic vision, Raphael has spearheaded the creation of the inaugural edition of the W2A Investment Insights Newsletter, aiming to catalyze trade and investment across Africa, with special focus in Nigeria. Under the editorial leadership of CEO Bamidele Seun Owoola, this newsletter promises to deliver cutting-edge insights and opportunities, driving the continent's economic growth and innovation. Our doors, backed by a dedicated W2A team of experts, are open to all stakeholders for collaboration and to address their respective investment and trade interests.

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