

NEWS & FEATURES

Beyond "One-Size-Fits-All": Experts Advocate for "Tailored Irrigation" to Elevate Tanzania's Agricultural Productivity, Focusing on Farmer-Specific Needs

Published: 28 January 2025

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania – A critical dialogue on modern irrigation technologies unfolded in Tanzania on January 26, 2025, as Agribusiness East Africa joined forces with key organizations like AMAGRO, COPRA, TOSCI, SAGCOT, and others. The online gathering brought together experts, farmers, and stakeholders to explore cutting-edge solutions for sustainable irrigation practices that align with the nation's agricultural goals.

Tullah Mloge of the SAGCOT Centre set the tone for the discussion, underscoring the need for tailored irrigation solutions. "Too often, farmers invest in irrigation systems without adequate guidance, resulting in inefficiencies, financial losses, and unmet expectations," she cautioned. Mloge stressed that while enthusiasm for irrigation is commendable, "lacking technical expertise often leads to poor decision-making." She urged farmers to seek professional advice: "Consulting an irrigation specialist is essential to assess your farm's specific needs... and to recommend the most effective system."

Eng. Octavian Lasway, CEO of Holly Green Agric Group Ltd, an irrigation and hydrology expert, delved into various technologies, from drip irrigation to sprinkler systems, furrow irrigation, and subsurface irrigation. He emphasized that factors like crop type, soil conditions, and water availability should guide the choice of technology. Lasway also provided a historical context, tracing Tanzania's irrigation journey from traditional methods like the "mfongo" system to modern schemes like Loa Moshi and Usangu.

The discussion then turned to the practicalities of implementing these technologies. As one expert, Eng Dickson Mallya, from the Lower Moshi Irrigation scheme, explained, "Each of these technologies has its advantages and is suited to different farming contexts. For example, drip irrigation is highly efficient for water conservation, while sprinkler systems are ideal for large-scale farming." He highlighted the need to consider economic viability, noting that high-value crops might justify investments in advanced systems, while low-value crops require more cost-effective options.

Throughout the meeting, participants emphasized the importance of farmer education and training. Mloge stressed that "a well-planned irrigation system not only maximizes water efficiency but also ensures long-term sustainability and productivity." This sentiment was echoed by others who highlighted the need for farmers to have the knowledge and skills to operate and maintain their chosen systems effectively.

The meeting served as a vital platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration, bringing together diverse voices to address the challenges and opportunities of modern irrigation in

Tanzania. By combining technical expertise with practical considerations and farmer perspectives, the event helped chart a course towards a more sustainable and productive agricultural future for the country.

Key Takeaways from the Tanzania Irrigation Meeting:

- **Tailored Solutions are Crucial:** Irrigation systems must be carefully selected based on individual farm needs, including water availability, soil type, and crop requirements. A "one-size-fits-all" approach leads to inefficiency and financial losses.
- **Expert Advice is Essential:** Consulting with irrigation specialists is critical to making informed decisions and avoiding costly mistakes. Farmers should seek guidance before investing in any irrigation system.
- **Farmer Education is Key:** Training and education are essential to empower farmers to operate and maintain modern irrigation technologies effectively. Knowledge sharing and capacity building are crucial for long-term success.
- **Water Management is Paramount:** Efficient water use, water quality testing, and appropriate treatment methods are vital for sustainable agriculture and optimal crop production.
- **Collaboration is Key:** Success hinges on collaboration between farmers, experts, and stakeholders. Open communication and shared understanding are crucial for overcoming challenges and achieving shared goals.
- **Technology Drives Progress:** Embracing technology can transform agriculture in Tanzania, improving yields, efficiency, and livelihoods. Continued exploration and adoption of appropriate technologies are essential.

End

Published 28 January 2025 · News & Features

Source: <https://agcot.org/2025/01/28/beyond-one-size-fits-all-experts-advocate-for-tailored-irrigation-to-elevate-tanzanias-agricultural-productivity-focusing-on-farmer-specific-needs/> · AGCOT Centre, Dar es Salaam