

Letter from the President of AAVF

Our world is challenging us. The problems we face originate from us. The world population is expected to grow to 11 Billion by 2050. At the same time, we have a never-before-seen rate of urbanization, an ever-shrinking supply of vital resources, climate change and a deeply unbalanced ecosystem. This unfortunate confluence of factors is creating a growing number of serious questions and unknown outcomes regarding the future of food production and the wellbeing of humankind. It is increasingly clear that the answers lie in innovation.

Africa's food shortage and poverty has decreased from 53% to 43% since 1990. However, there is still immense pressure on food production and distribution systems due to rising populations and rapid urbanization. African farmers lack the appropriate support and expertise necessary to implement the sustainable, suitable and appropriate transition to an urban farming infrastructure. With power failure still ubiquitous in many African cities, the success of urban farming strategies has been slow to develop; it is clear that investment and innovation are needed to turn a promising opportunity into something more viable.

Vertical Farming is a step in this direction of providing a solution for food security- one piece in the puzzle of solving the problems facing our world. Building a food production system which uses less land, less water, less fertilizer and puts higher value, nutritious food at the doorstep of the consumer, is undoubtedly a huge step forward for agriculture and human development. We are at a point when the technology not only already exists but is improving at an exponential rate; the question is not when but how? How big of a role can vertical farming play in securing the availability of food for future generations while protecting the planet in the process.

Integrating sustainable food production into the urban environment and becoming climate resilient is a necessary step for a modern society. Vertical Farming offers all of this, while also serving as a tool for uplifting quality of life in densely-populated urban areas.

Vertical farming is a smart solution that will use the most advanced technologies in agriculture to provide answers for Africa's food production questions. Vertical farms are climate-controlled and produce the same quality of food regardless of environmental factors like droughts, floods, pests and disease. By remaining independent of the outdoor environment, vertical farms can provide food for urban and rural areas alike that suffer from food shortage during periods of extreme weather.

But you cannot simply build a vertical farm and consider the job done. A significant amount of financial and material aid will be necessary to provide a fully operational vertical farming system in a given area. A concurrent education system must be created and funded to provide farmers with the tools they need to transition into the world of climate-controlled, technology-dependent farming. However, this will have a knock-on effect: by providing them with this technical background, they can become the innovators and educators of the future. With help from government aid, vertical farming creates additional income sources for urban citizens, many of whom are migrant farmers from rural areas.

There can be no doubt that we have to act now and move toward more sustainable thinking and practices. In many ways, Africa is primed to leapfrog modern agricultural practices and become a leader in the future of sustainable agriculture, With the right support, expertise and implementation, we can turn a great opportunity into an engine of sustainable urban uplift and food security.

WE can do this together. Nothing is impossible!

Josephine Favre