



Company News

## **Bühler opens Application Center for Local Grains in Nigeria together with Flour Mills of Nigeria**

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*Kano, Nigeria -*

Bühler, in collaboration with Flour Mills of Nigeria Plc, has opened a grains application center in Nigeria dedicated to processing local and ancient grains. This sustainable and transformative commitment was made based on the need to address food insecurity, not just in Nigeria, but progressively across the African continent.



The main goal of the Grain Processing Innovation Center is to bring industrial processing of local grains and crops to the next level and thereby contribute to affordable nutrition. (Pictures: ©Bühler)

Today around 2.3 billion people in the world live in food insecure conditions, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

With their specific advantages, local grains such as sorghum and millet can play a vital role in improving food security, particularly in Africa. Use of these raw materials is at a low level today, and processing is not developed. To address this challenge, Bühler is opening a dedicated Application & Training Center with research and development capabilities in Kano, Nigeria, together with its founding partner, Flour Mills of Nigeria (FMN), and its collaborating partners, such as Olam Agri.

The main goal is to bring industrial processing of these grains to the next level and thereby contribute to affordable nutrition. “Sustainable food value chains utilizing local grains are the number one priority to develop Africa,” says Johannes Wick, CEO of Bühler’s Grains & Food segment.



The GPIC will empower customers, researchers, and partners to collaboratively explore cost efficient food processing solutions for local grains such as sorghum, millet, maize, soybeans, and other local crops such as cassava, different types of beans, nuts, and seeds.

“In addition to improving the food value chain, we see great business opportunities with a new category of processed food,” says John Coumantaros, Chairman of the Board of Flour Mills of Nigeria. Commenting on the foreseeable impact of the Application & Training Center, Coumantaros stated: “FMN has always been at the forefront of driving food self-sufficiency in Nigeria and progressively across the continent. The application center is well positioned to sustainably develop local grains, create business opportunities, and provide viable alternatives to some imported raw materials used in production. Therefore, this partnership further demonstrates our consistency in developing local content and in our commitment to feeding and enriching lives, every day.”

Local grains and crops offer many benefits and are therefore a key tool in improving food security. They have high nutrient density with valuable vitamins, minerals, proteins, and fats, are climate tolerant and able to withstand high temperatures and arid conditions, and require less fertilizer and pesticide than

other grains. “With these characteristics local grains are ideal plants to be cultivated in Africa, specifically under the conditions of accelerating climate change,” says Ali Hmayed, Head of Bühler’s new Grain Processing Innovation Center (GPIC) in Kano. The main reasons these local grains and crops have not yet been integrated into industrial solutions are complex, ranging from low farming volumes and short shelf life to a lack of process knowledge and equipment. Together with its partners, Bühler is now taking a major step to break through this blockage and is open to further collaborations.



The production facility includes all steps of processing, from cleaning and sorting to dehulling, tempering, and milling.

The GPIC is a three-floor building spanning an area of 480 square meters, housing pilot-scale production facilities, research and development labs, and classrooms. The production facility includes all steps of processing, from cleaning and sorting to dehulling, tempering, and milling. The heart of the plant is Bühler’s high-compression ALPesa grinding system. The GPIC will empower customers, researchers, and partners to collaboratively explore cost efficient food processing solutions for local grains such as sorghum, millet, maize, soybeans, and other local crops such as cassava, different types of beans, nuts, and seeds.

In close collaboration with the Bühler African Milling School in Nairobi, Kenya, the GPIC also offers training and education courses on local grains and their advantages and requirements in cultivation and processing. Additionally, this new Application & Training Center will enable Bühler to optimize its processing portfolio for local grains in terms of both performance and cost efficiency. The GPIC is embedded in Bühler’s global network of 25 Application & Training Centers. The first series of trials with customers has already been agreed upon.

### **Strengthening Food Security and Economy**

One key reason for the challenging food situations in Africa is that many regions of the continent are strong importers of grains, mainly wheat and rice. This makes them vulnerable to trade disruptions and foreign exchange rate fluctuations.

“Local grains offer many opportunities, not only to increase food security but also to generate new jobs in agriculture and adjacent markets, as well as enabling countries to become more independent from imports,” states Ali Hmayed.

The transformation of the food supply chain in Africa will not happen overnight. “This requires concerted efforts across numerous sectors, including agriculture, processing, recipe development, end-product innovation, and consumer engagement,” says John Coumantaros from FMN.

“Together with our partners, we at Bühler are happy to now contribute to this system change with the aim of ensuring that more people in Africa have access to affordable and healthy food, thereby reducing hunger and malnutrition,” says Bühler’s Johannes Wick.