

WPO congratulates Winner of the 2024 SAVE FOOD Award – Tomato Jos in Nigeria



The World Packaging Organisation (WPO) is pleased to advise that the global SAVE FOOD project competition annual award winner for 2024 is Tomato Jos Farming and Processing Limited from Nigeria.

Through a global alliance, the SAVE FOOD Initiative, which was founded by Messe Düsseldorf and interpack, is promoting a more responsible use of resources along the entire food supply chain and actively contributing to the reduction of food loss and waste. Save Food Org follows UN SDG 12.3, fighting for a reduction of food loss and waste.

As a part of the initiative the Save Food Org team have developed an annual project competition that actively seeks smart agricultural practices and logistics solutions and/or innovative processing and packaging ideas that could support minimising food loss and/or waste across the value chain.

Judged by an esteemed panel of experts from the World Packaging Organisation (WPO), UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organisation), and FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations), the judging panel were on the lookout for projects that make a significant impact in reducing food loss and waste with the winning project awarded a grant of € 10,000.



2024 winner Tomato Jos Nigeria

For the 2024 Project competition Tomato Jos was recognised for its groundbreaking efforts to combat post-harvest loss, empower small farmers and promote sustainability in Nigeria's agricultural sector.

Through innovative solutions such as large-capacity crates, training programs and modern farming techniques, Tomato Jos is empowering over 350 small farmers, creating over 4.000 jobs and reducing dependency on imported tomato products. Their inspiring work addresses one of the most critical issues in Nigeria's agricultural sector - post-harvest loss of tomatoes, which affects 45% of the crop annually.

Mira Mehta, the visionary behind Tomato Jos, is proving that practical, sustainable solutions can transform communities. From improving transport infrastructure to developing climate-friendly agricultural practices, their mission goes beyond food waste - it's about creating opportunities and securing livelihoods.

Between surplus and imports

Nigeria is the largest producer of tomatoes in Africa south of the Sahara. Despite this, the country imports tomato products worth millions of US dollars per year. Why? Almost half of the crop yield spoils due to a lack of cold chains, poor storage and transport facilities and high temperatures and humidity, which is an economic disaster for the small farmers.

Tomato Jos, founded in 2014 by Mira Mehta, runs farms, creates jobs and produces its own brand of tomato paste in Kaduna.

Training programmes teach small farmers modern cultivation methods while high-quality seeds, fertiliser and technologies ensure higher yields. An innovative credit system facilitates establishing productive operations and reinforces the farmers' financial independence. "Among other things, we provide small farmers with knowledge about when to ideally harvest tomatoes and how to best sort and package them", says CEO Mira Mehta.

Transport packaging is the key to success

One of Tomato Jos' pragmatic solutions is the use of large-capacity crates. These sustainable packaging solutions significantly reduce damage to the tomatoes compared to the woven baskets that are traditionally used.

They protect the fruit during transport and are easy to stack thanks to their uniform design. The available space in lorries is used optimally, reducing transport cost per unit. Additional training for the transport personnel in handling the tomatoes when loading and unloading is also having a positive effect.

The Save Food Org Team and the judging panel would like to congratulate Mira Mehta and the Tomato Jos team for their commitment to sustainability and innovation. The €10.000 prize will help them expand training programs, improve packaging systems and scale up their impactful initiative.

Together, let's continue to inspire change and build a future with less food waste and greater food security.

If your company or organisation is interested in becoming a member of SAVE FOOD, or wants to know more about the annual SAVE FOOD project competition please contact - Ivania Portillo-Elzer: PortilloI@messe-duesseldorf.de

