

FARMER TO FARMER:
A Conversation Between Maria Beatriz “Pilu” Giraudo of Argentina and Gilbert arap Bor of Kenya

6-MINUTE VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Giraudo:

Gilbert, which are your most important challenges today?

Bor:

Farmers do not have access to adequate machinery, adequate information and technology, adequate training, adequate financing ... and African governments have been slow in investing in agriculture, so the infrastructure is quite difficult.

Giraudo:

We are very different in each place all around the world and we have different conditions, but a lot of things are the same at the end of the day. We need the right policies to interact, we need the right incentive, we need support to do the things always around sustainability in order to achieve production, quality, quantity ... and of course, in a profit way and also commitment to social development.

Bor:

No-till farming practices, that is very well developed in your country. It has been discussed in my country for the last 20 years, but farmers have not yet adopted the no-till production. Many farmers still believe that you have to plow the land, they have to see the soil coming up, being turned, to accept that work has been done on the farm.

What we need here is study visits by farmers from my country to your country and other areas where no-till agriculture has taken roots. If we got farmers to understand the importance of no-till production, they would reduce the amount of fuel that they have to use ... you could get farmers using more herbicides ... And that would convince the farmers that adopting no-till agriculture is a better deal for them. But this should also be supported by government policy on biotechnology.

Many African countries have not yet adopted biotechnology. I'm happy that my own country, two years ago, allowed the use of biotechnology

Giraudo:

In my country, no-till was the very first step. But then, we have a lot of other practices like crop rotation and integrated pest management. And biotech is crucial in this because we have a huge mandate about producing more with less. We need to work more in that because only 12 percent of the cultivated area all around the world is under conservation agriculture.

Bor:

What is the average land holding in your country for farmers? For example, what is the size of your farm?

Giraudo:

We have farmers from a very small scale and from a very big scale ... And going to my farm, we are producing in more or less 2,000 hectares.

Bor:

In my country, the majority of farmers are small-scale producers. In fact, when I say I farm on 25 acres, the majority of the farmers will look at me as a medium-scale or a large farmer because the majority have one hectare or less, and their production is mainly subsistence production.

Giraud:

That is a big challenge to work together with the best and the right technologies because we work with nature, we don't have recipes. We need to be in continuous improvement.

Bor:

It is important for governments to change up their policies regarding technology, especially biotechnology. I'm urging our government to change its policy and allow the free importation of GM products and farmers in more enlightened, more developed countries need to support farmers in the developing countries to improve their production.

Giraud:

We need science to achieve human being demands for farmers – knowledge, science, experience, collaboration – also the right policy support and the opportunity to have always a farmer sitting in high-level discussions.