WOMEN AGRI-FOOD ENTREPRENEURS TO COMPETE FOR $300,000 GRANT

BY PROSSY NANDUDU

Ugandan women causing a positive change in the agri-food sector have been advised to take advantage of the 2026 Women Entrepreneurs of the Year Award to get funds that could grow their businesses.

This follows a call for application that was issued by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) as part of celebrations to mark this year's International Women's Day, that took place in Maputo.

The AGRA president, Alice Ruhweza, said women make up nearly half of the agri-food workforce in Sub-Saharan Africa, with more than three-quarters of employed women working within agri-food systems, managing farms, leading farmer organisations, building agribusinesses and developing solutions that strengthen food security and economic resilience.

Despite their contributions, structural barriers continue to limit women's access to finance, markets, land and productive resources.

To mark the 2026 International Women's Day, AGRA, through its VALUE4HER, is calling for applications for the 2026 VALUE4HER Women Agripreneurs of the Year Awards (WAYA).

The award is aimed at highlighting the role of women as innovators, entrepreneurs and decision-makers within Africa's agri-food systems.



Prudence Ukkonika Busingye (left), who adds value to different fruits to make wine, is an example of women who can compete for the WAYA awards. Winners will get grants of up to $300,000 (sh1.1b)

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, if women farmers had the same access to productive resources as men, their yields could increase by 20-30%, potentially reducing global hunger by up to 17%.

"Women are not just participants in Africa's agri-food systems, they are innovators, entrepreneurs and leaders driving transformation across the value chain. Investing in women's agency, leadership and access to opportunities unlocks growth not only for women-led businesses, but for Africa's food systems and economies," she said.

Ruhweza said WAYA is a flagship initiative of the VALUE4HER programme that recognises and awards exceptional women agripreneurs demonstrating innovation, leadership and business excellence across agricultural value chains.

Launched in 2021, WAYA has become a cornerstone platform spotlighting women-led agribusinesses and their transformative roles in Africa's food systems.

She explained that winners will walk away with grants of up to $300,000 to scale their enterprises and expand their impact in September, at this year's Africa Food Systems Forum, which will take place in Kigali, Rwanda.

Other women innovators were awarded last year after showcasing innovations in value addition, ag-tech, community leadership and sustainable farming across countries including Benin, Burkina Faso, the DR Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

The call for applications will close on May 8, 2026, with the awards being open to women-led agribusinesses across Africa. Interested women should Visit the AGRA or VALUE4HER social media pages for details on how to apply.