



## **AgriConnect**













## **AgriConnect Year in Review 2024**

**New Years Message from** AgriConnect Programme Manager and CEO, theSOFTtribe, Mr. Tetteh **Antonio** 

As we begin a new year, I wish vou all first and foremost the very best and hope that you stick to the resolutions that you made at the end of 2024 and even if did not make you anv resolutions, may 2025 bring all things good - good health, success, fulfilment and joy.

As I look back on 2024 and what we were able to collectively



achieve - our main development partner, the Mastercard Foundation, AgriConnect participants, the administrators of the 10 participating institutions, our implementing partners and my team, I say thank you. Your support, commitment and sheer enthusiasm in AgriConnect cannot go unnoticed and must be complemented and encouraged. We started 2024, with much anticipation, wondering if students would be not only interested but enthusiastic about AgriConnect. Registration, your contributions, participation in AgriConnect events and the fact that you saw value in the supplemental courses and began to take them in earnest made us proud of the future generation of leaders in Ghana. In fact, we targeted 10,000 students and by the end of 2024, students that registered to participate in AgriConnect far exceeded that

number. Over 9,000 students received laptops in 2024, and many of our participants completed 1, 2 or all of the supplemental courses with more than half of persons receiving laptops registering for the courses. Much of these early successes of AgriConnect could not happen without the support of the deans, faculty and administrators of the 10 participating institutions – your support and guidance to help us navigate this space was phenomenal and we thank you. Working hand in hand, with the intention to do more for our students and youth, made a significant contribution to the good we see emanating from AgriConnect. We are pleased that each person that received a laptop interacted with one or more members of the AgriConnect Team!

We launched the AgriConnect internship Programme in 2024 and whilst it only afforded a few students to participate, we are encouraged that this pilot could eventually be expanded and bring much more benefits to our students.

Sadly, in the last quarter of 2024, we lost our Chaiman, Mr. Herman Chinery–Hesse, who was a strong believer in the potential of Ghanaian youth, and the power of technology to transform not just Ghana to be globally competitive, but indeed our entire continent. Following his death and to honour his strong beliefs in you our next generation, AgriConnect launched the Herman Kojo Chinery–Hesse Community of Practice for Future Generations of Young Professionals and Agri Innovators, in late November 2024, inviting you to participate and engage with each other and exchange ideas that will advance our development.

As we face 2025, let's be energized, enthusiastic and engaged... let us strive for good for self, community, and country. To our students, we encourage you to capitalize on your opportunities. See AgriConnect as an opportunity to support your own growth and development. We wish all success in 2025.

This issue of the AgriConnect Insights Newsletter takes us back through the 12 months of 2024, highlighting some of the many moments that we are truly proud of.



# 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout 2024 AgriConnect was focused on delivering on its mission to empower Ghanaian youth...Investing in them... advancing sustainable futures





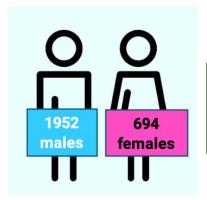
## Main Highlights

 Students began registering for AgriConnect. By the end of January 2024, a little over 1,000 students had registered to participate in AgriConnect via the AgriConnect digital learning portal.



- AgriConnect developed a laptop (device) distribution plan and
  - continued the configuration of the first 5,000 laptops which arrived in the country in November 2023.
- The AgriConnect website <a href="https://www.agriconnectghana.com/">https://www.agriconnectghana.com/</a> went live.
- A whiteboard video on AgriConnect was developed which was used throughout the year at the sensitization and laptop distribution sessions.
- The Digital Literacy course was completed and approved for uploading to the AgriConnect online learning platform.
- AgriConnect rolled out the e-baseline study in the 6 agricultural colleges/TVETS - Damongo, Ejura, Kwaadaso, Ohawu, Pong Tamale and Wenchi to collect information on the target students such

as demographics, their current access to technology, their readiness to enroll in the AgriConnect Programme. The study also collected information related to gender and safeguarding to understand the gender and intersectional issues faced by the eligible female students so that strategies could be advanced to ensure that females had unfettered access to the benefits of the AgriConnect Programme. These sessions also allowed the team to sensitize students to the AgriConnect Programme.



2,646 students from the 6 TVETs participated in the baseline study. 36% of students participating in the survey were young women.

 While the development of the course content for the value chains supplemental course began in late 2023, 4 validation meetings with academia and industry experts, were organized to obtain feedback on the content of the 9 value chain supplemental courses being proposed to ensure the content being developed were both accurate and relevant. These were led by Knox Consulting - the agriculture knowledge partner on the AgriConnect Team.



A cross section of the 63 academia and industry experts that participated at the value chain supplemental course content validation workshops





The AgriConnect Team launched its Masterclass series on July 8th at the University for Development Studies. The 3-day Masterclass series focused on Digital Literacy allowing participants to receive instruction in the following modules of the mandatory sections of the Digital Literacy Course as follows:

- Lecture 1: Module 2: Digital Literacy and the Digitalization of the Agricultural Sector
- Lecture 2: Module 4: Digital Health and Well-being
- Lecture 3: Module 5: Computer Fundamentals
- Lecture 4: Module 6: Troubleshooting and Problem Solving
- Lecture 5: Module 8: Online Safety and Security
- Lecture 6: Module 10: Email and Communication

To complete the Digital Literacy course all participants are required to take the 10 modules contained in Sections 1- 3 of the Digital Literacy Course. Students were also provided with a bonus Lecture – A Glimpse into the World of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is one of the supplemental sections under the Digital Literacy course

## Main Highlights

 The team began to distribute laptops to students. Laptop distribution sessions were accompanied by sensitization sessions about AgriConnect and the supplemental courses. Both students and faculty often attended these sensitization sessions.



- We produced, published and distributed flyers and other materials about AgriConnect such as the AgriConnect Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). We also developed the guideline document, "Tips and Tricks to Navigate Online and Self-Paced Learning".
- The course content for the 9 value chains were completed, and included training manuals, PowerPoint slide decks, videos, and assessments and these were uploaded to the digital learning platform. The 9 value chains for which content was developed were:
  - Agri-Journalism 0
  - Greenhouse 0
  - Mango 0
  - Poultry 0
  - Rice

- Nursery
- **Piggery** 0
- **Pineapple** 0
- Vegetables 0









## AGRICONNECT **Pineapple Value Chain**





 AgriConnect social media channels were launched – Instagram, X, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn.

## **AgriConnect's 10 Participating Institutions**

Damongo Agricultural College... Ejura Agricultural College... Kwadaso Agricultural College... Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology... Ohawu Agricultural College... Pong Tamale Agricultural College... University of Cape Coast... University of Development Studies... University of Ghana School of Agriculture





One of the many sensitization sessions held at the schools.

## Main Highlights

- The AgriConnect team continued to visit the 10 participating institutions to sensitize students and staff about AgriConnect.
- Laptop and MIFI distribution continued.
- Students started to register for either the Digital Literacy Supplemental course or the Value Chain Development course – both of which were upload to the online digital platform.
- As a gender responsive programme, we celebrated International Women's Day on March 8th, under the theme "Invest in Women, Achieve Progress".



development prospects, lead enterprises, influence public



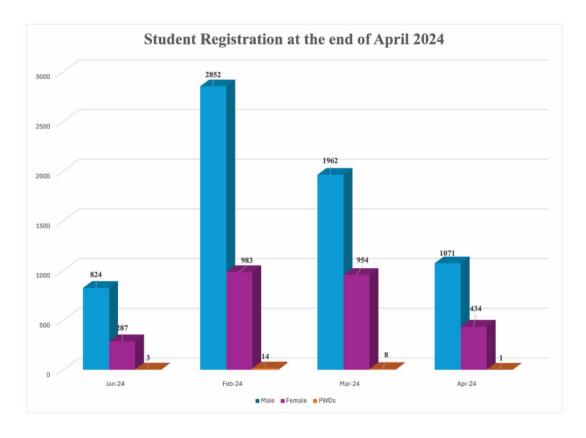




## Main Highlights (A Stocktaking Month for AgriConnect)

April was the month in which the AgriConnect Team took stock of progress being made, assessing the movement of the Programme towards achieving its targets.

- By the end of April, over 9,000 students had registered to participate in AgriConnect
- Between February and April, over 5,000 laptops and MiFi's were distributed to students. All 10,000 laptops were purchased by the end of April.



- AgriConnect continued to engage students and invite them to sensitization sessions.
- The three supplemental

fully courses were developed, and students began taking the Digital Literacy and Value Chain Development courses. These courses – Digital Literacy, Value Chain Development and Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship were designed to complement students' current courses of study and enhance their own competitive advantage, providing them with opportunities to better meet the needs of the labour



The 3 AgriConnect Supplemental Courses that students are required to take, once they sign up to participate in AgriConnect.

market. Each course has a training manual, PowerPoint slide decks, videos and other learning aids.

- We started the process to develop the AgriConnect Business Challenge Game to enable students to learn through play by putting the theory they learn into practice. This simulation game mimics reallife decision making in agriculture.
- AgriConnect's first newsletter AgriConnect Insights was published.
- AgriConnect hosted a webinar on Girls in ICT Day, April 25, 2024 as part of efforts to better engage women in the programme and to excite and encourage them about the possibilities that exist in agriculture and ICTs. The idea was also to enable these girls to hear firsthand from women who have achieved and are leaders in the fields of agriculture and ICTs.



422 female AgriConnect students participated in the Girls in ICT Day Webinar held under the theme, "Empow Hering Leadership in the Digitalization of the Agriculture Sector"

203 of the participants were from rural schools and 219 from urban schools







Scenes from the making of the Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship podcast – an aspect of the training materials developed under this supplemental course.

## Main Highlights

 Each participating university was allocated 15 laptops (each) and the TVETs, 10 each, totaling 120 laptops. This was done to enable administrators, coordinators and faculty to better support students with course completion.

The Agribusiness and
Entrepeneurial Podcast
developed in four
languages ... English, Twi,
Dagbani and Ewe

- Agribusiness and
   Entrepreneurship, the 3<sup>rd</sup> AgriConnect supplemental course was uploaded to the online learning platform and students began registering to take this course.
- Students continued registering to take the 3 supplemental courses with some students completing courses.
- The AgriConnect Team completed a podcast around the Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship supplemental course in 4 different languages - English, Twi, Dagbani and Ewe. This multilingual approach makes the content more accessible to a broader audience. The podcast is available in both audio and visual formats. The podcast introduces some of the content of the 4 modules of the Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship training course.





AgriConnect female participants that attend Ejura Agricultural College

## Main Highlights

The AgriConnect impact and footprint by the end of June:



- Students continued registering for courses and taking courses and the team continued with laptop distribution.
- The 2nd AgriConnect newsletter, "AgriConnect Insights", was produced and distributed to various stakeholders, including students, academia and the private sector among others.
- AgriConnect hosted a webinar to celebrate World Environment Day on June 5, 2024, under the theme "We are #GenerationRestoration."
   World Environment Day 2024 placed focus on land restoration, desertification and drought resilience under the slogan "Our land. Our future".





The AgriConnect and the Mastercard Foundation teams led an engagement with students and faculty at the University for Development Studies on July 15, 2024. The objective of the engagement was to hear firsthand from students and faculty about their experiences with

## AgriConnect, including:

- Their views and perspectives of the Programme
- Assessing whether AgriConnect is meeting the needs of the students and the university
- Issues and challenges that are being faced and how these are being addressed
- How AgriConnect may be contributing to students achieving their future goals
- Perspectives on the way forward for AgriConnect
- Capturing any best practices or lessons learned as well as recommendations on the way forward for AgriConnect
- Capturing testimonials from students and faculty may be useful to inspire others.

106 students – 70 males and 36 females from agriculture and agriculture adjacent departments at the University participated in the 4-hour engagement. The engagement was structured into 5 sessions as follows:

- Session 1: Welcome and Opening Remarks
- Session 2: Conversation with Students, the Mastercard Foundation and AgriConnect
- Session 3: An Engagement and Conversation with the Young Women of AgriConnect and the Mastercard Foundation
- Session 4: An AgriConnect Masterclass in Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Session 5: A Dialogue with UDS Admin and Faculty

In her opening remarks on behalf of the Mastercard Foundation at the event, Dina Randrianasolo, Acting Director for Strategic Partnerships and Innovation at the Mastercard Foundation, shared the following:

## Main Highlights

- The Mastercard Foundation led an engagement with students and staff of the University for Development Studies (UDS). The objective of the engagement was to hear firsthand from students and faculty about their experiences with AgriConnect, including:
  - Their views and perspectives on the Programme
  - Assessing whether AgriConnect is meeting the needs of the students and the university
  - Issues and challenges that are being faced and how these are being addressed
  - How AgriConnect may be contributing to students achieving their future life goals
  - Perspectives on the way forward for AgriConnect
  - Capturing best practices or lessons learned as well as recommendations on the way forward for AgriConnect
  - Capturing testimonials from students and faculty
- Some highlights of the Mastercard Foundation engagement at UDS are presented below:

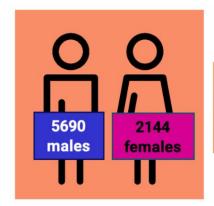


This was a panel discussion in which students sought to "Tell their Stories and Connect the Dots between AgriConnect and their Lives". – Here Dina Randrianasolo, (2nd left) Director for Strategic Partnerships and Innovation at the Mastercard Foundation listens intently as a young man from UDS shares that "I heard about AgriConnect from my class rep and heard a lot about the courses and the courses offered me the opportunity to learn more and do more. I am very interested in the value chains. I have an interest in producing groundnuts but very interested in how to process groundnuts and add value to agriculture products".



Here a young lady and AgriConnect participant shares her views on the gender responsiveness of the AgriConnect Programme. Maame Serwaa Dzamesi, Program Partner at the Mastercard Foundation at left listens intently.

• By the end of July, laptops distributed since the start of the laptop distribution in February were 7,834. 5,690 students or 73% of those receiving laptops were male, and 2,144 or 27% were female.



Within 6 months of the AgriConnect laptop distribution process over 7,800 students were in receipt of laptops.

By the end of the quarter ending July 31, 2024, 12,537 students had

- registered to participate in AgriConnect, surpassing the 10,000-student registration target. 70% of these students, or 8,822 were male and 3,715 or 30% of registered students were female.
- The AgriConnect Team conceptualized and began rolling out masterclasses in July 2024 to increase student enrolment and completion of the three supplemental courses. The AgriConnect Masterclasses were designed to increase student engagement with the courses and enable some aspects of the supplemental courses to be delivered either face-to-face or virtually.



Photo taken following the 1-day masterclass in digital literacy at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) e-learning week.

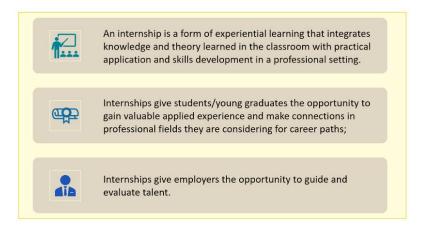
• A 3-day face-to-face AgriConnect Masterclass in Digital Literacy at the University for Development Studies (UDS) was held.



- The AgriConnect Team organized a virtual peer learning and feedback session for students involved in the AgriConnect Programme in the six TVETs. During the session, students shared their experiences with the value chain content on the portal. They discussed how the courses had enhanced their knowledge by adding a practical aspect to their studies.
- The AgriConnect pilot Internship Programme was launched in July 2024, inviting students who had completed all 3 of the supplemental courses to apply for paid internships. Many students applied. 10

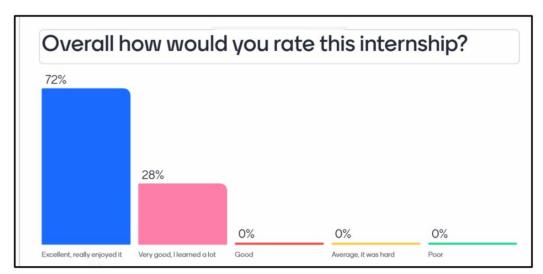
private sector organizations expressed interest in participating in the internship programme and being host organizations.

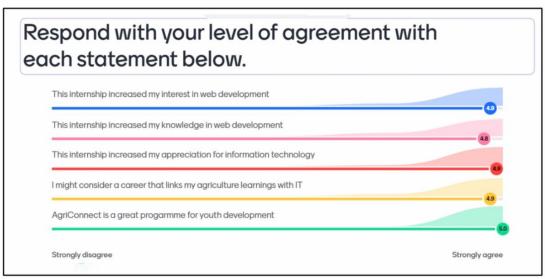




## Main Highlights

 The first set of 20 interns were selected and started their internship at theSOFTtribe – the main implementing partner. This first batch of interns focused on expanding their knowledge of information technology and website development. At the end of the 6-week internship which ended in September, each intern had developed a website. Their overall rating of the internship is presented below:





 A secure space on the AgriConnect website was created to enable faculty to assess the training materials that were developed for the 3 supplemental courses – training manuals, PowerPoints, videos and other supplemental materials.





## Main Highlights

- During September, the AgriConnect online portal began distributing certificates automatically to students once they completed and passed their courses. Students were then able to download their certificates.
- The 3rd AgriConnect newsletter, "AgriConnect Insights", was produced.
- Virtual and face-to-face masterclasses were conducted over the month for all courses. Numbers for course completion continued to rise as the year came to a close, indicating that supporting students through masterclasses and other interventions were working. By the end of September, students registering and completing courses were as follows:

Course	Total Number of Students	Enrolled Students by Gender		Total Number of Students	Students Completing by Gender	
	Enrolled	Male	Female	Completing Courses	Male	Female
Digital Literacy	4,402	3,178	1,224	671	510	161
Value Chain Development	4,075	2,916	1,159	854	662	192
Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship	2,135	1,521	614	545	411	134

## OCT

## To every girl out there:

Trust in the power of your voice and the solidity of your vision. You are leaders, innovators, and catalysts for change with infinite dreams.

You are entitled to a world where you are protected, empowered, and have access to all the opportunities, healthcare, and education necessary for success.

Your potential is boundless—seize it with assurance and bravery! Girls, the future glows brightly because you harbor grand dreams and set lofty goals.

May your vision illuminate the way to a world where every girl can ascend, prosper, and be a beacon of change.
Continue to radiate; the world is watching.

Written by: Pearl Amoah Ntumy and presented at AgriConnect webinar on International Day of the Girl Child, October 11, 2024

Pearl is a student of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

## Main Highlights

• By the end of October, 12,933 students had registered to participate in AgriConnect, surpassing the 10,000-student registration target.



71% of these students, or 9,198 were male and 3,735 or 29% of registered students were female

- The online platform was expanded to accommodate a community of practice (COP). The Community of Practice, titled. "The Herman Kojo Chinery-Hesse Community of Practice for Future Generations of Young Professionals and Agri Innovators", was opened to all students that completed and successfully passed the three AgriConnect supplemental courses, including students that may have already graduated from their respective academic institutions. The COP was named after Herman Kojo Chinery-Hesse, the founder and Chairman of the SOFTtribe who passed in September 2024. The COP is designed under 5 core thematic areas or communities:
  - Women in Agriculture
  - 2. Agripreneurs and Advancing Ghana's Competitiveness in Agriculture
  - 3. Agriculture and Climate Change
  - 4. Food Security, Food Sovereignty and Value
  - 5. The 4th Industrial Revolution: Exploring Technology and

## **AgriConnect Bespoke Digital Learning Platform**

The bespoke digital platform allows for several key activities under AgriConnect to be undertaken, including student registration, payment, enrolment, onboarding, coordination of training, access to the three supplemental courses, generation and distribution of certificates, and hosting of the community of practice (The Herman Kojo Chinery-Hesse Community of Practice for Future Generations of Young Professionals and Agri Innovators) and the AgriConnect Business Challenge Game.

- AgriConnect launched its Train=the-Trainer Programme and hosted 5 training sessions for lecturers, faculty and coordinators of the 10 participating institutions. The main objectives of the train-the-trainer sessions were to: prepare faculty and coordinators that are supporting AgriConnect to present/lecture on the content of the 3 supplemental courses effectively, respond to student questions, and support the delivery of training to enable all AgriConnect beneficiaries to complete the three supplemental courses; and, enable faculty and coordinators to direct and support students to register for courses and use the learning platform efficiently and effectively as well as to support students as needed to navigate the PowerPoints, supplementary resources and reference materials.
- A second cohort of interns began their internship. In total 41 students participated in internships.
- AgriConnect selected its first 4 AgriConnect Ambassadors and Youth Representatives to support activities under the Community of Practice, support their colleagues with course completion and to share their perspectives on areas of the Programme that could be improved.
- Starlink was installed at the 6 TVETs and the University for Development studies to help resolve connectivity issues on the campuses, and the issues related to connectivity provided to students by the connectivity partners.



Starlink being installed at TVETs.

- The AgriConnect Business Simulation Game was completed. The business simulation game will enable students to: test their assumptions and understanding of factors that affect agricultural production; obtain realistic simulation results that are comparable to what would happen in real life given similar conditions; experience the realities of supply and demand, including the impact of supply and demand on their production yield, their margins and the profitability of the business ventures; know that they can go out of business if they make poor decisions or experience environmental factors beyond their control that negatively impact their business activities; and be either winners or losers in a dynamic fashion from one season of the simulation to another season, depending on their decision-making during a season.
- Virtual and face-to-face masterclasses were conducted over the month for all courses. By the end of October, students registering and completing courses were as follows.

Course	Total Number of Students Enrolled	Enrolled Students by Gender		Total Number of Students Completing Courses	Students Completing by Gender		% Change between Sept & October - Course Completion	
		Male	Female		Male	Female		
Digital Literacy	4,908	3,519	1,389	1,433	1,041	392	113.6%	
Value Chain Development	4,584	3,243	1,341	1,572	1,159	413	84.1%	
Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship	3,124	2,198	926	1,352	987	365	148.1%	



## Main Highlights

 Virtual and face-to-face masterclasses were conducted over the months of November and December for all courses. Towards the end of the year into mid-January 2025, students registering and completing courses were as follows.

Course	Total Number of	Enrolled Students by Gender		Total Number of Students	Students Completing by Gender	
	Students Enrolled	Male	Female	Completing	Male	Female
Digital Literacy	5,930	4,197	1,733	3,020	2,143	877
Value Chain Development	5,693	3,987	1,706	3,093	2,203	890
Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship	4,773	3,330	1,443	3,010	2,122	888

By the end of 2024, 2,106 students had completed the 3 supplemental courses, this represents a little over 21% of all participants.

## Learning through Digital Play... We Developed and Launched the AgriConnect Business Challenge!!!!!!



The AgriConnect Business Simulation Game was launched and will be enabled

for all students on the AgriConnect online platform. The game consists of a set of business decisions (technical, sales, marketing, etc.) that each player must take. Each player therefore steps through different decision nodes as they progress through the game. Students will be taken on different routes in the process depending on the decisions they take. Decision options have scores assigned to them, and so a student accumulates scores as they play until they get to the end of a game.

## Your Views and Feedback ...

Feedback from you has been like a gift to us!



Your views and perceptions of AgriConnect have been key to helping us assess the changes we needed to make along the way or how we could serve you better. We were very heartened by your responses to several of our surveys and other platforms used throughout the Programme that allowed us to receive some feedback.

"I applied for the Mastercard Foundation AgriConnect e-learning program to gain knowledge and skills in agribusiness, digital literacy, and value chain management. This program aligns with my life goal of becoming a successful entrepreneur and contributor to the agricultural sector's growth. The most valuable aspect of the program so far is the community. Interacting with like-minded entrepreneurs, sharing experiences, and learning from each other's challenges and successes has been incredibly enriching and motivating."

## Freda Kwakye Addo, Diploma 3, Ohawu Agricultural College

"AgriConnect has helped me a lot. When I got to Level 400, I was wondering how I would get a laptop to do my project work. Because of the actual costs of laptops, it would not have been easy for me to get one. Fortunately, AgriConnect popped up. When I heard about AgriConnect, I said, "wow, this is a big opportunity for me. I also did not have access on how to use a laptop and internet etc. and the courses, I think my knowledge and work has improved. I have been using the laptop to do my project work and that has helped me a lot. "Without AgriConnect, I do not know what I would have done".

## Male Student, UDS

"We want AgriConnect to stay and expand".

"You have made the have nots have".

"AgriConnect has saved a lot of poor families".

"AgriConnect complements many of the university's programmes and is providing students with more marketable skills."

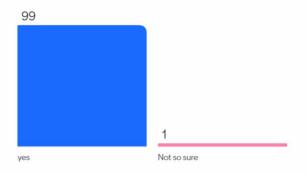
Administrators and Faculty, UDS

"My brother in UDS informed me that he has enrolled in the Agriconnect program and has received his laptop and mifi for data. In fact we did not believe this program will be real so when he got his laptop and mifi, we were both very excited. He is able to do his research and assignments easily on the laptop and has been telling me about the course content he has been going through. I am looking forward to enrolling here in Wenchi so my brother will not pass me in the learning! We will both benefit equally from the project".

## Yakubu Alhassan Mohamed, Wenchi Agric College

We were also able to collect some quantitative data using Mentimeter Surveys. These were some of your views.

### I am happy I participated in AgriConnect.



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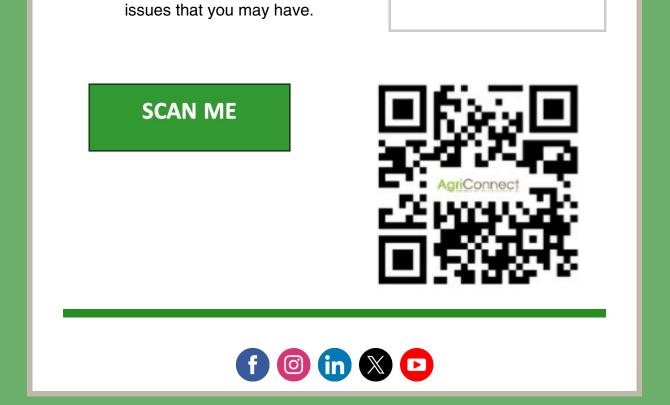
## State how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements



## Learn more About AgriConnect

- View the AgriConnect video on our YouTube Channel at: https://youtu.be/1EzmadYMqxE
- Visit our website at: https://www.agriconnectghana.co
   m/
- Download out Featured
   Publication AgriConnect FAQ
   (Frequently Asked Questions) at:
   https://www.agriconnectghana.com/publications
- AgriConnect help desk information: Contact our help desk for troubleshooting device





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