

**AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: THE VAGARIES OF
CLIMATE AND POST-HARVEST CHALLENGES: A SYMPOSIUM OF**

THE AGRICULTURE-VETERINARY COMPLEX,

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA.

COMMUNIQUE

The symposium with a Theme “AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: THE VAGARIES OF CLIMATE AND POST-HARVEST CHALLENGES” organized by the Agriculture-Veterinary Complex, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, took place at the Mamman Kontagora Square, ABU Main Campus on 29th March, 2021.

Participants at the symposium were drawn from Government (Local, State and Federal), academic and research institutions, other non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, research scientists from agricultural research institutions, staff and students of ABU Zaria among others (see attached attendance list).

The Vice Chancellor, ABU, Zaria, Prof. Kabir Bala, was the Chief Host. The Convener of the symposium was Prof. A.K. Mohammed, Chairman of Agric-Vet Complex and Executive Director National Animal Production Research Institute (NAPRI), ABU Zaria. The Chairman of the occasion was Prof. Sani Miko, the Country Director, SASSAKAWA-Global. Papers were presented by three distinguished personalities. The first paper titled “**Global Trade Policies and the Nigerian Agricultural Development Agenda**” was presented by Prof G.B. Ayoola (Chairman, Voices for Food Security).

The second paper titled **“Revitalization of Livestock Industries: A Critique of the National Livestock Agenda”** was presented by Dr. Junaidu A. Maina (Former Director, Federal Department of Livestock and Pest Control Services).

The third paper titled **“Need for a Paradigm Shift in Agricultural Research as a Panacea for Attaining Optimum Economic Diversification”** was presented by Prof. M.F. Ishiyaku (Executive Director, Institute for Agricultural Research, ABU Zaria). Discussants at the event were Dr. Samaila Ilu (Former Executive Director, National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services - ABU, Zaria; Prof. C.A.M. Lapkini (Former Director, NAPRI – ABU, Zaria); Prof. S.Z. Abubakar (Deputy Vice Chancellor, Administration, ABU Zaria); Dr. Punja Umar (Department of Livestock, Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria; ARCN).

The main goal of the symposium was to promote academic discussions on Nigeria’s agricultural development and economic growth under prevailing global climate changes and post-harvest losses. The specific objectives of the symposium are to:

- i. Explore opportunities provided by global agricultural commodity trades as a strategy to promote the export of crops, animal products and by-products.
- ii. Draw the attention of the policy makers to focus and direct policies and resources towards enhanced national crop and livestock productivity.
- iii. Identify ways of enhancing agricultural research and development towards improving plant and livestock breeding by research institutes and promoting agricultural mechanization.
- iv. Advocate for improved agricultural research funding and continuity in Government’s National Agricultural Development Programmes.

Key observations from papers presented

1. Despite the fact that Nigeria has developed first, second and third National Agricultural Plans since independence, the country has not grown to be among the leading agricultural producing countries in the developing world.
2. Nigerian agricultural policies and programmes over time were not favourable to the country, since food self-sufficiency was not achieved and food importation was not reduced.
3. Nigeria over the years did not benefit optimally from global agricultural trade that had the potential to ensure food security, as a fundamental human right of its citizenry and growing its agricultural exports to support its economy.
4. Pastoralism is still the main livestock production system in sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria. Policies and investments in the country have not impacted positively towards transiting from pastoralism to a more productive and sustainable livestock production system.
5. The abolition of cattle tax has weakened the bond between herders and the government.
6. Pastoralism would not be practicable in the near future as land is becoming less available due to development and increased ownership of land by individuals and changing lifestyles.
7. Herders-Farmers clashes have become frequent and dangerous resulting in loss of lives, property and food production.
8. Earlier attempts at ranching failed partly due to its requirement for large area of land, heavy capital, low economic returns due to inappropriate marketing systems and lack of local expertise for establishment and management of ranches.

9. Ranching is still the way forward for improved cattle productivity in terms of meat and milk production.
10. Nigeria is blessed with vast resources among which is the fertile and vast expanse of land and water resources for Agriculture yet agricultural productivity is low.
11. New technologies such as improved varieties of crops, livestock and fishes have been generated by national agricultural research efforts. Despite these efforts, progress on domestic production of crops, livestock, and fish and forest products has not kept pace with domestic demand talk less of exports.
12. Agricultural research is marred by low funding where only 10-20% goes to research from the Federal Governments' budgetary allocation to Research Institutes therefore hampering progress in research results generation for use in driving technological advancement in food production and security.

Recommendations from the Symposium

1. Governments' philosophical orientation should be geared towards improved agricultural production and food security as a fundamental human right of its citizenry.
2. Government should enact good policies, provide good governance, improve capacity building in monitoring National trade policies, participation in world trade and component linkages, and revamp/revitalise rural infrastructures to enable increased food production and security.
3. Individuals and State Governments should establish workable and sustainable ranches, using carefully designed concepts and models for increased livestock production, food security, improved livelihoods and reduced herders-farmers clashes. Strategic key recommendations for establishment of ranches are:

- a. There should be access to land which should be made available by states or purchased by prospective individual ranchers or groups.
 - b. Ranches should be stocked with genetically improved varieties of dairy cattle, beef cattle, sheep and goats and other livestock to ensure higher productivity and profitability.
 - c. National breeding policy that will provide policy guidelines on selection and development of National breeds and crossbreeding with exotic breeds should be implemented to promote ranching.
 - d. Commercial pasture production to make forage available year-round for livestock.
 - e. Increased cereal production for grains and crop residues for improved nutrition of livestock.
 - f. Capacity building of all stakeholders involved in ranching and research to address emerging challenges associated with ranching.
 - g. Structured livestock markets should be developed for bulk purchase of livestock production inputs, products and by-products that will ensure traceability and animal welfare.
 - h. Government should develop mechanisms that will facilitate access to finance for the purpose of ranching through commercial banks and other financial institutions to boost livestock production.
 - i. Government should also create enabling environment through a comprehensive policy with timeline, evidence-based advocacy and lobbying to counter the current negative narrative on animal production that will promote ranching.
4. The ARC/N, the supervisory body coordinating agricultural research in Nigeria need to strengthen research quality assurance, establish research standards, set

bench marks for directing and assessing achievements made by all National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs).

5. The Federal Government should provide adequate funding critical to research, develop human capacity in deploying modern scientific tools and methods of conducting advanced research. The proposed National Agricultural Development Fund should be urgently approved and applied to finance agricultural research in the country.
6. The government should re-organize the National Research Agenda such that the three tiers of government would adequately conduct their various functions to eliminate the lacunae caused by the federal government taking over the functions and activities of the state and local government in agricultural policies, funding and implementations.
7. Farmers should be encouraged to form cooperative societies to enable them have access to loans, adopt mechanized farming, use of improved varieties of crops and livestock.

Acknowledgements

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National Animal Production Research Institute

National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services

Institute for Agricultural Research

Division of Agricultural Colleges

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Veterinary Teaching Hospital

Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria

Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development