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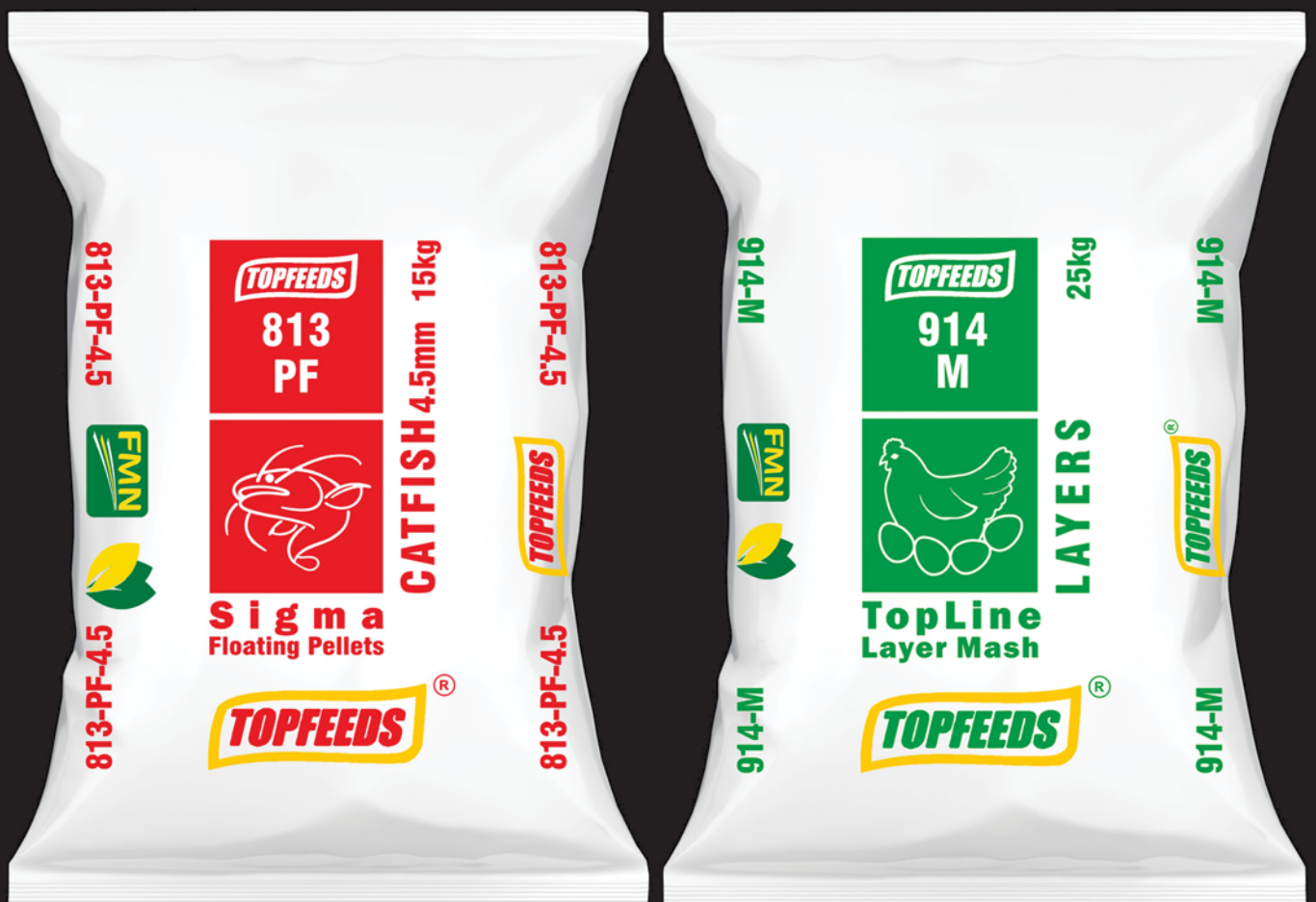
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E-MAIL: agricnews32@gmail.com, nigerianfarming@yahoo.com
nigerianfarming1998@gmail.com
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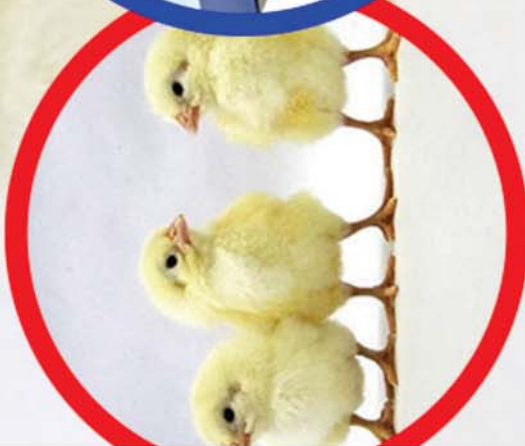
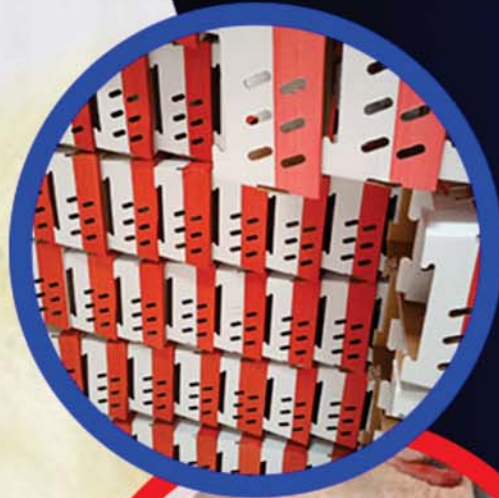
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US bans poultry products from Botswana

THE US Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service agency recently confirmed that the US had decided to prevent the entry of poultry meat, live birds and all poultry by-products from Botswana or transiting through that country, in order to prevent the introduction of the disease to US poultry farms.

In a statement announcing the ban, the agency said it had added Botswana to the list of countries not allowed to export poultry produce and live birds to the US, following confirmation of an outbreak of the disease.

"The US Department of Agriculture is advising the public that we have added Botswana to the list of regions affected with HPAI."

The agency said it had received notice of the HPAI outbreak from Botswanan veterinary officials and had thus been forced to ban poultry imports from Botswana. This was due to the seriousness of the disease, which required a rapid response as it was highly contagious and often fatal to chickens.

A researcher at the Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr John Moreki, said that while Botswana had become self-sufficient in poultry production, the industry was faced with many problems.

He added that disease outbreaks were among the major challenges affecting the industry.

"The outbreak of avian influenza in some parts of Botswana has a negative impact on the movement of poultry and poultry products," Moreki said.

In response to the US ban, the acting deputy secretary in the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry, Gideon Mmolawa, indicated that

Botswana would be addressing the matter.

Botswana exports poultry meat to the US market under the African Growth and Opportunity Act. This is a trade preference programme providing duty-free access to the US market for qualifying exports from eligible sub-Saharan African countries.



Saving wildlife, livelihoods amid climate challenges in Kenya

THE degradation of the land had forced their livestock to compete with local wildlife for the fast-diminishing water supplies and grazing.

Thinking the rent would bring in much-needed extra income, the families found instead that the agreement only made the problem worse.

This resulted from the farmer clearing some of the land to grow crops and later to raise cattle, which shrunk the area of available pasture even further, driving out the wild animals.

However, **Reuters** reported that the farmer and the families then came up with a solution by converting some of the farmland "into sustainably managed rangeland to create a wildlife conservancy where cattle and wild animals can co-exist, and eco-tourism provides jobs for local people".

Situated just outside the Maasai Mara National Reserve, the Enonkishu Conservancy was thus established in 2009, and has since grown into an almost 2 430ha project.

Community liaison officer Daniel Nampaso told Reuters that herders grazed their animals according to regulations

that had been designed to have a minimal impact on the environment. These restrictions included a ban on crop farming and the erection of permanent structures such as fences or houses, as well as limitations on the number of livestock allowed into the area at any one time.

Following seasonal patterns to prevent overgrazing ensured that there were always areas of pasture available where wild animals could graze.

As a result, wildlife had returned to the land, while the herders' livestock were thriving, according to Nampaso, who was among those who donated land to the project.

"Since we started grazing management, our members have never experienced a shortage of pasture and water," he added.

According to the UN Environment Programme, the global food system was the primary driver of the loss of biodiversity.

The organisation said in a statement that the International Union for Conservation of Nature had identified agriculture as a threat to more than 85% of the 28 000 species at risk of extinction.

"Expansion of



agricultural areas has been a key factor in the degradation of nature, including forest habitats," Claudia Ringler, deputy director of the environment and production technology division at the International Food Policy Research Institute, said.

However, the Enonkishu Conservancy was helping to slow down deforestation because the pastoralists no longer needed to make ends meet through logging or charcoal production, Rebekah Karimi, manager of the conservancy, said.

Reuters reported that the pastoralist landowners still received rent from their farmer partner, who managed the land, as well as a share of the revenue earned from tourism. In addition, local villagers worked as wildlife community

scouts, spreading the word about conservation, and reporting animals that strayed into villages or onto farmland to the Kenya Wildlife Service, which then returned them to the protected area.

Before the conservancy was established, many of those animals would in all likelihood have been killed, Karimi said, adding that lions, elephants and other large animals often wandered into the surrounding villages in search of food and water, attacking livestock and destroying crops in the process.

Villagers retaliated by killing any animal that came near, Karimi said, adding that the frequency of such incidents had fallen dramatically since the launch of the conservancy.

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Our 'Milk Mission' to raise dairy sector – VP Olam food

THE Vice President of Olam Food Ingredients, OFI, Dairy in Nigeria, Paulsamy Praveen, has revealed that its 'Milk Mission', encapsulates its absolute commitment to raising the productivity level in the dairy sector while engendering a performance scale that would push the sector towards fulfilling its economic contributory potential.

Outspan Nigeria Limited, a subsidiary of ofi (Olam food ingredients) is stimulating growth, generating valuable employment opportunities as well as tackling long-standing issues in the sector.

The local dairy sector has a strong potential to contribute extensively to the national economic growth considering around 1.3 billion tons of milk are consumed in the country annually.

However, nagging issues such as low productivity level, poor cattle health, the dearth of wider cold chain services, inefficient logistics systems, and low exposure to modern agronomic practices among smallholder dairy farmers continue to stifle the sector's potential.

Outspan set out to address these issues through its 'Milk Mission' initiative which combines a robust public-private partnership (PPP) strategy and unyielding focus on the Federal Government's sectoral development agenda to reposition the sector.

Paulsamy Praveen spoke during the commissioning of a newly procured cold truck for its Milk

Collection Centres, MCCs, recently.

There are four MCCs located close to smallholder dairy farmers in Kano state. The centres are equipped with adequate cooling systems that are powered by off-grid equipment.

Outspan has also provided transportation and cooling systems to ensure the quality of the raw milk produced in the region is preserved and optimized for industrial use.

Speaking on the MCCs, Dr Suleiman Musa Suleiman, a veterinary doctor and a dairy consultant expatriates on Outspan's growing impact.

He revealed that Outspan Nigeria Limited is providing solutions to the various challenges in the value chain. The business is investing in locating milk collection Centre's (MCC) closer to the dairy farmers in the different clusters.

According to him, "I happened to be part of the beginning of this whole partnership between

Outspan Nigeria Limited and the Kano Dairy & Livestock Husbandry Cooperative Union (KADALCU); I even partook in the MoU signing process. To be honest with you, I am impressed. I am impressed in the sense that they made a promise, and they are fulfilling it. We have not had to start running after them to perform what they promised."

He continued, "We started with the challenges of milk collection; they have addressed the challenges by providing many Milk Collection Centres (MCC) and a modern bulking centre that is well equipped with modern

facilities, including solar-powered energy solution, which is good for rural, remote areas that are typical of a dairy settlement."

He added that Outspan's intervention programmes are helping smallholder dairy farmers address wastage which had consistently hampered output. The business also conducts training for the farmers to bring them up to speed with useful modern dairy farming techniques.

Also, Alhaji Usman Abdullahi Usman, the chairman of the Kano Dairy and Livestock Husbandry Cooperative Union (KADALCU), said the collaborative efforts ingeniously framed for the development of the key agriculture sector are yielding positive results.

Citing the positive impacts of the PPP framework in the Kano dairy sector, he said, "One of the goal of the union is to generate direct and indirect employment opportunities for the youth.

With the intervention of Outspan Nigeria Limited, we have been able to secure motorbikes and tricycles which have been issued out to the youth vendors to go to the Fulani clusters and collect the milk for processing at the milk collection centres."

As part of its support for farmers' children with educational materials during the commemoration of the 2022 World Milk Day (WMD), the business' HR team invited children of employees for a full day of fun and learning tagged 'Kids' Fun Day', at their Corporate Office in Lagos.

The Kids' Fun Day is an engaging, entertaining, immersive, and inspiring

event that features a guided facility tour, games, arts, and crafts, and lots of healthy foods to eat and drink for the kids and their parents. The event combines learning with lots of fun as kids learn about Olam Agri and its business across Nigeria.

Speaking about the event, Ibironke Alabi, General Manager, Learning and Development, Olam Agri Nigeria, said, "There was no better way to wind up the summer break than to get our kids together for a fun and learning event."

"We are conscious of the dual role employees will continue to play and, on our part, ensuring smooth integration of work-life balance to sustain team engagement and high performance. Every prospective employee would love to work for a company like Olam Agri, where employees feel supported in every area of their life," said added.

CRIN Reinigorates Cocoa, Cashew Research Culture

Crises hampering progress have been resolved –Executive Director

The Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) has emerged from the glooms of inactivity, industrial unrest and dwindling research activities foisted on it by a number of factors in over one decade.

Various administrations of the institute have been distracted by internal industrial unrests, agitations amid dwindling research culture and poor funding.

The impact also reflects on the cocoa productivity in the country.

However, indications

have shown that internal industrial crises and demotivation have been overcome as the new administration has adopted some collaborative strategies in the last two years. Hence, industry stakeholders expressed optimism that this would affect the value chain positively.

"Our gates are continually opened for collaborations towards the empowerment of various stakeholders and nation building," Executive Director, Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN), Dr. Patrick Adebola, told journalists recently.

CRIN has collaborated with more stakeholders in the last two years on skill acquisition, extension workshops for stakeholders on best practices and knowledge transfer, especially on grafting, fermentation, drying platforms, packaging and farm maintenance, among others. These are expected to impact on quality and quantity of cocoa produced in Nigeria and minimize rejection in the global market.

As crude oil economy gradually becomes unsustainable for the country, cocoa is one of the crops being promoted by the government to diversify the economy.

This necessitates CRIN's collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture on skill acquisition, technology development and transfer to farmers and other stakeholders.

The institute has also partnered with the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC), Ibadan Export Assistance Office, to train farmers to produce cashew juice at Yaku

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Our 'Milk Mission' to raise dairy sector – VP Olam food

Continued from Page 11

Village, in Ogbomosho, Oyo State. Most farmers were only interested in the sale cashew nuts, while the cashew apples got wasted.

Over 70 participants from Ogbomosho, Saki, Kisi and some other cashew-producing local government areas in the state were encouraged to go into mass processing of cashew apples into juice.

Also, a workshop on cocoa, in collaboration with the South-South Region of NEPC, was organised for farmers and extension workers in Bayelsa State from April 21 to 22, 2022, in Yenagoa and 50 participants were trained.

On international collaboration, CRIN and German Industry and Commerce in Nigeria (DGIC) have also partnered on cashew education and training project following the establishment of the dual vocational education system, an approach which offers an excellent skills development in Germany education system, which seeks to provide a platform for stakeholders to strengthen market for vocational education and training (VET) in Nigeria. The endorsements opened discussions between DGIC and CRIN to achieve the objective of the organization for cashew value chain development in pilot states in Nigeria.

As part of its corporate social responsibility in human capital development, 15 students on internship with the CRIN were trained on the production techniques of cashew milk on September 6, 2021. The scheme was anchored by the Value Addition Research Department with Mr Mokwunye Chukwuma, Assistant Head, Processing Division of the Department, as the trainer.

Apart from that, the institute organized training on chocolate and soap production with cocoa pod husks for interns to transform wastes to wealth and empower the youth.

To revive old plantations and establish new ones, CRIN, in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), has distributed more than 300,000 hybrid cocoa seedlings.

Adebola expressed optimism that CRIN would meet the target of yearly distributing 500,000 seedlings to accelerate cocoa production, and said his efforts are centred on human capital development as a means of helping the institute to realise its core research mandate.

Again, CRIN and Agro-processing, Productivity Enhancement and Livelihood Improvement Support Project (APPEALS), a World-Bank assisted project, have also partnered towards the actualisation of the project, a capacity building on "Good Agricultural Practices for Sustainable Cashew Production in Kogi State," organised for cashew farmers by the coordinating office of APPEALS project, Kogi State, in Kogi East, Central and West Senatorial districts from April 5 to 15, 2021.

A total of 568 cashew farmers, including youths and women, were drawn from 11 clusters across eight local government areas of the state.

It was a great task of rebuilding and repositioning the institute considering the deep-seated animosity and stagnation that embroiled the system following unpaid debts, moribund infrastructure, withheld funds and aggrieved staff whose morale was on the lowest ebb.

Part of the frequent industrial disharmony in CRIN before now was delayed promotion. However, the institute conducted promotion interview for the senior staff on February 14, 2022 and 142 staff, across all designations, were involved.

It was also gathered from staff that promotion examination was organised on May 24, 2022 for the staff in the junior cadre.

The Board, led by Alhaji Abdulahi Jao, admitted that because members of staff were getting their promotions as and when due now, industrial harmony had been restored. Promotion and other arrears owed by the past administrations were being paid.

As well, payment of overdue staff entitlements, including resettlement allowances, first 28 days of staff transferred to substations where there are no staff

quarters, repatriation allowances (year 2013 to 2020), deceased staff arrears (2013 to date), training arrears (year 2013 to 2020) and unpaid vouchers (year 2017 to 2020) to the tune of N26,191,459.27 have been approved.

"Before I assumed office, there were crises in CRIN, and it was known for labour unrest. This reduced the gains of previous administrations. But since I came in, with the help of the CRIN Board Chairman, Alhaji Abdulahi Jao, and members, I have been able to unite stakeholders and brought stability to CRIN. In terms of labour, the present management has been able to work hand-in-hand with all the three in-house labour unions and I think I have won their support," Adebola explained.

Meanwhile, sources of internal revenue have been revived. The apiculture unit of CRIN has yielded fruits as honey is being harvested from the fully colonised hives. The plantations at the zones provided the enabling environment for the deployment of the hives. The unit is coordinated by Director Cashew, Dr. Olufemi Ibiremo.

The production of CRIN sachet water began again on the 18th June, 2021 after it stopped for more than a year. The Pure

Water Factory was handed over to the Director in charge of the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR), Mrs. P.A. Ubebe in February 2020, but the factory stopped production in March 2020 due to shortage of materials. On resumption of office by the ED CRIN, Dr Patrick Adebola, promised that he would do all he could to revive the factory.

The bakery unit, again, commenced production on June 7, 2022. Adebola equipped the bakery with modern facilities and ensured that production commenced, managed on Public Private Partnership (PPP) approach with the Institute's Cooperative Investment and Credit Society (CI&CS).

Adebola explained that one of the major items in his agenda is to revive the culture of research, which had been de-emphasised as a result of crises and poor funding.

"Now, research activities have started coming up. We are able to do that through change in leadership positions and reorganisation of various programmes, and re-appointments of capable and knowledgeable leaders for research programmes," he said.

The management has also facilitated a World Cocoa Foundation/African Cocoa Initiative Phase II (WCF/ACI II) sponsored

third Flavour Quality Laboratory (FQL) at CRIN. The grant was to support the hosting country (institution) by supplying the equipment and fund the training and activities of the laboratory for two years, while the host will provide adequate laboratory space. A visit by journalists to the institute revealed that there were ongoing structural transformations in the institute. They cut across road construction, laboratory, conference hall, electrification, training centre, perimeter fencing, furniture and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), among others.

The interactions of CRIN with NEPC has also yielded a N50 million grant. The NEPC offered the grant to support the production of cash crop, particularly cocoa and cashew.

According to Ibiremo, the programme leader, Cashew Programme, the institute embarked on capacity building of the stakeholders at Ogbomosho and Kabba (Kogi State). The other component of the grant is the establishment of a polyclonal seed garden, and CRIN successfully procured two hectares of land at Ilero (Oyo State) and Kabba College of Agriculture (Kogi State) for the purpose. About 1600 grafted seedlings of

Civil Society Advocates Improved Agricultural Extension Service Delivery for Smallholder Farmers



POVERTY, inequality and improving the livelihood of citizens. Bassey noted that Nasarawa and Bauchi were the two states chosen to benefit from

CISLAC's support in the area of agriculture due to their agricultural endowment.

He said, "Agriculture is one of the sectors that can generate job opportunities for people

at the grassroots, particularly for women and youths. "CISLAC is in the state to support agricultural activities that will reduce poverty and inequality in reflection of its core mandate."

Research Institute Releases Two New Rice Varieties Capable of Producing 10 Tonnes per Hectare

AS part of efforts to bolster food security in the country, the National Cereals Research Institute (NCRI), Badeggi, Niger State, has released two new rice varieties capable of producing up to ten tonnes per hectare to Nigerian farmers.

The Executive Director of NCRI, Dr. Aliyu Umar, who disclosed this during a media briefing in Badeggi on Monday, said the new varieties are; TEGGOLD and 6444GOLD. According to him, each of the new varieties can produce 10 tonnes per hectare higher than the 5-6 tonnes per hectare yield of the old varieties. Umar said the development was in fulfillment of the mandate of the Institute, adding that the new varieties were developed by improving on the local varieties producing between 1.2 to 1.5 tonnes per hectare.

Also, the executive director informed of the release of two new varieties each of Acha and castor seed to the farmers across the country. The NCRI boss named the new varieties of Acha and Castor Seed as NCRIAH1 and NCRIAH2, and

NCRICAS1 and NCRICAS2 respectively.

His words: "These major research breakthroughs are expected to boost the yield of farmers and further boost food security."

"Each research institute in Nigeria has a mandate to conduct cost effective research for improved rice, sugarcane and benniseed. "Castor seed was recently added

to the institute, because of our output in stevia crop which is also a sweetener crop just like sugarcane. "Since we came on board, our first breakthrough was the inauguration of the NCRI mouth piece in the form of a research journal." Umar, therefore, called for more support in attaining food security for the nation, in line with the mandate of the institute.



Untapped Potentials in Nigeria Agriculture Can Help Food Security, Economic Growth

THE Deputy Mission Director USAID/Nigeria, Sara Werth says untapped potential in agriculture can help in achieving food security and economic growth in the country.

Werth said this at the Launch of the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP) on Friday in Abuja.

He said that agriculture was strategically important to the growth and development of the Nigerian economy, adding that in 2020, agriculture contributed over 25 per cent to the gross domestic



product.

The USAID Deputy Mission Director said that the new policy was a deliberate effort by the Government of Nigeria to deploy knowledge and good agricultural practices to fast-track the development of

agriculture.

Werth said that it would provide a roadmap for some of the most pressing challenges the agriculture sector was facing. He added that the policy outlined opportunities to attract public and private investments into agriculture and agribusiness to modernize the industry.

According to him, together, this coordinated approach will lead to a diversified economy that guarantees access to nutritious food, growth, and employment opportunities.

He said that the policy came at a critical time as Nigeria and the world

were facing the worst food security crisis seen in years.

"Food, fuel, and fertilizer prices have risen sharply over the last year. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is exacerbating the issue, and we are now seeing indications of a growing global food crisis", he said.

Dr. Bedru Balana, Acting Chief of Party, Feed the Future Nigeria Agriculture Policy Activity and Research Fellow International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)-Nigeria said the policy would guide efforts to improve food and nutrition security in Nigeria.

Five New Cassava Varieties Released to Farmers in Last 18 Months



THE Project Manager, NextGen Cassava, Professor

Egesi Chiedozie, has said five new cassava varieties have been released to farmers

across Nigeria in the last 18 months. Speaking on NextGen Cassava at its Annual meeting in Abuja, Chiedozie explained that the project was all about improving cassava varieties to enhance food security, while increasing income for farmers in Nigeria.

The Project Manager said NextGen is the largest cassava breeding network located in four continents, and currently working with 20 partner organisations across the world. Also, Chiedozie informed that NextGen accommodates gender responsive breeding to ensure that the voices of women are heard. "So, we do not just go to scientists to give us new breed varieties, but to the village woman who

plants cassava and prepares garri or fufu from it," he added.

Also, the Director General, National Agricultural Seed Council (NASC), Dr Phillips Ojo, said the distinct role of NextGen in the development of breeding capacities in cassava had changed the face of the commodity seed system in Nigeria. Represented by the Director, Seed Coordination and Management Services, Zidafamor Jimmy, the DG noted that the project was building and transforming practices of stakeholders in the cassava value chain, and enhancing the farm-level productivity of smallholder farmers. According to him, the new improved cassava varieties released in the country were expected to have significant impact

on food security, enhance farmer income, improve agro-industrialisation and create jobs.

Ojo recalled that over the last four decades, researchers have released 54 improved varieties of cassava in Nigeria. "This is a significant feat as we now have varieties that are fit for purpose and economically viable to encourage large scale participation," the DG added. On his part, Acting Executive Director, National Root Crops Research Institute, (NRCRI) Umudike, Dr. Godwin Asumugha, said the NextGen meeting would strengthen commitments to deploy technology, innovative and global best practices to improve cassava for economic diversification.

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Full Page Color	N160,000.00	892	640,000.00	3568
Half Page Color	N80,000.00	510	320,000.00	2040
Quarter Page Color	N60,000.00	318	240,000.00	1272
Earpiece Size Color (Front Page)	N60,000.00	318	240,000.00	1272
Front Cover strip	N260,000.00	1520	1,040,000.00	6080
Strip inside page color	N30,000.00	270	120,000.00	1080
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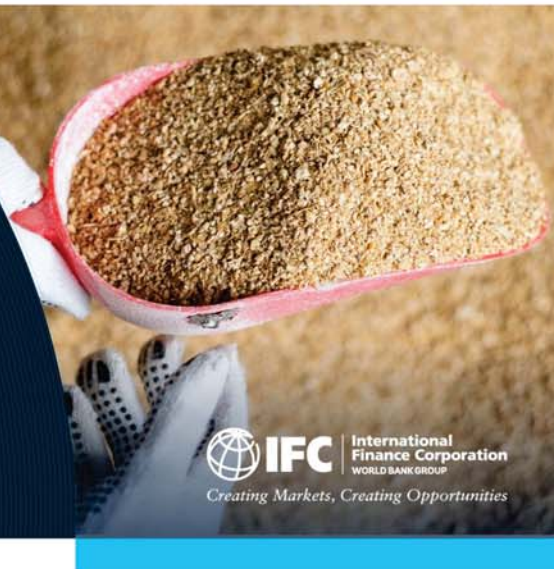
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IFC Financing to Support Bar Magen to Expand Sustainable Livestock Production in Nigeria

IFC'S SUPPORT TO AGRO BAR-MAGEN NIGERIA WILL CONTRIBUTE TO STRENGTHENING NIGERIA'S LIVESTOCK SECTOR.



LAGOS, Nigeria, September 5, 2022—To support the growth and sustainability of Nigeria's livestock industry, IFC today announced a partnership with the Nigerian subsidiary of Bar Magen LTD, Agro Bar Magen Nigeria (ABMN), a livestock feed manufacturing company operating in Nigeria since 2009, to increase production of livestock feed and the development of feed storage facilities in the country.

IFC's \$4.5 million financing package, supported by the Private Sector Window of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), will support Bar Magen to expand production of livestock feed additives such as vitamin & minerals premixes in Nigeria and to build the country's first salt & mineral block licks production facility, thereby improving smallholder farmer access to these critical animal feed nutrients. Salt & Mineral blocks licks are essential

nutritional components for ruminant animals such as cattle, goats, and sheep.

The project will also support the company to expand its warehouse capacity to store feed raw materials, helping to prevent supply shortages and reduce reliance on imports.

Livestock is a priority sector for Nigeria due to its contribution to inclusive economic growth and food security, contributing around 8 percent of the national GDP. With nearly 70 percent of the operational costs of most poultry and other livestock operations going to feed, managing feed quality and cost is critical for Nigeria's sustainable livestock production.

"Agribusiness remains a significant contributor to the Nigerian economy. IFC's support is essential to help us respond to challenges resulting from the rising costs of importation and supply chain bottlenecks of livestock feed. This partnership will help increase local manufacturing and distribution of feed additives, and develop the animal feed

processing operations in Nigeria," said Rami Bergman, Founder and President of Bar Magen.

"IFC's partnership with Bar Magen will strengthen sustainable food systems in Nigeria and significantly contribute to food security and nutrition by supporting a more sustainable livestock sector. In addition to supporting the country's agriculture sector, the project will contribute to further developing Nigeria's manufacturing base for animal feed processing," said Kalim M. Shah, IFC's Senior Country Manager for Nigeria.

IFC's partnership with Bar Magen reiterates its broader work to support sustainable agriculture practices, develop regional value chains and markets, as well as expand job opportunities and economic inclusion in Nigeria.

About IFC

IFC—a member of the World Bank Group—is the largest global development institution focused on the private sector in emerging markets. We work in more than 100 countries, using our

capital, expertise, and influence to create markets and opportunities in developing countries. In fiscal year 2021, IFC committed a record \$31.5 billion to private companies and financial institutions in developing countries, leveraging the power of the private sector to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity as economies grapple with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, visit www.ifc.org.

About Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP)

The Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) is a global effort that pools donor resources to fund programs focused on increasing agricultural productivity as a way to reduce poverty and increase food and nutrition security. The Private Sector Window, administered by the IFC and supported by the governments of Australia, Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States, provides long- and short-term loans, credit guarantees, capital and technical assistance to private sector companies and financial intermediaries. It links smallholder farmers to markets by improving their access to finance, technology, expertise, and inputs.

About Bar Magen and Agro Bar Magen Nigeria

Founded in 1984, Bar Magen is involved in the development, manufacturing, and marketing of livestock feed vitamin premix, concentrate and additives. It is headquartered in Israel, with a subsidiary in Nigeria ("Agro Bar-Magen Nigeria" or "ABMN") which started its operations in 2009. The Nigeria facility has a premix and concentrates facilities, warehouses, offices, and a quality assurance / control (QA/QC) laboratory. ABMN produces high quality vitamin and minerals premixes and imports a wide range of additives and raw materials for the Nigerian feed industry.



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Cellulant Imbroglia: Bolaji Akinboro Vindicated

BOLAJI Akinboro, former CEO and Co-Founder of Cellulant Corporation, an Africa-based fintech organization has been declared innocent of allegations of financial misconducts that led to his resignation in 2020. Cellulant was founded by Akinboro in 2004, alongside Ken Njoroge from Kenya.

The company in 2018 received the largest investment in the history of FinTech companies in Africa. In August 2020, Akinboro was accused of misconducts that led to the exit of about 48 members of staff of the organization, as well as Mastercard Foundation, who had made a sizable grant investment, in the business. Dare Nana, CEO of Gold Forth Ltd., an integrated agricultural production, supply processing and exporting company, who has followed the 'integrity tussle' notes that Cellulant paid a particularly heavy price on account of overzealous steps taken by the company. In his words, "the company's handling of the matter was particularly strange and resulted in serious credibility concerns and nobody can blame investors for backing out". Cellulant on Tuesday after two years of what was dubbed "internal compliance reviews" announced that it has now come to a mediated settlement that puts an end to all litigation and claims between it and Akinboro.

Concerns had initially been raised about irregularities and funds receipts on the Agrikore platform – a subsidiary business led by Akinboro which was eventually shut down. The Agrikore platform upon its establishment became a distinct product line of Cellulant's broader diversified payments business. Known as Agrikore Marketplace, it supported millions of farmers across Nigeria and guaranteed the supply of raw agro-commodities. Following a compliance review on the

Agrikore Platform, Cellulant revealed that by his action of promptly stepping aside from his co-CEO role, Bolaji allowed the company's forensic review and internal investigation to proceed unimpeded. "We are pleased to announce that neither of these has resulted in any findings of financial misconduct or personal impropriety on the part of Bolaji.

We welcome this

development as it cleared the way for an amicable end to the disputes between the parties" Fielding questions from AgroNigeria, Akinboro who had moved on to set up Vorian Corelli Ltd., a company offering similar services as does Cellulant, was very terse. His words: "Cellulant has done the right thing by issuing a statement that clears my name". He added that his spokesperson will issue a

comprehensive statement, in the near future. BOLAJI AKINBORO SHARE up to oversee and manage the farm and its activities."

Speaking on the development, the Chief Executive Officer of Ellah, Chuka Mordi said, "Today is a great day for the company, and we have achieved yet another of our set milestones for 2022."

He said the company is

ready to commence the management and turnaround of the fortunes of Adarice Farms.

It intends to begin the cultivation and processing of rice, soybean and cassava.

"Ultimately, the plan is to turn the entire area into a Staple Crop Processing Zone & bring economic growth and prosperity to the entire subregion," he said.

Promising prospects for citrus exports from Zimbabwe



CITRUS exports to the EU grew 30% between September 2021 and March 2022, compared with the same period in 2020/21, amounting to about 1.7 million tons of fruit, according to a recent report in *The Zimbabwe Mail*.

According to the report, citrus production in the Mazowe Valley could be traced back to around 1914 with the establishment of the first commercial citrus estate in Zimbabwe. In later years (1970 to 1980) commercial production began in the Chegutu area. Nowadays, citrus was also produced in the Beit Bridge, Chegutu and Mvurwi areas.

In addition, new orchards were also being established in Mashonaland and the Midlands provinces, bringing the total area planted to citrus in that country to 3 000ha.

According to zwnews.com, Zimbabwe's Horticultural Development Council recently called on producers to increase citrus plantings to enable them to meet the

expected demand from China.

Zimbabwe and China

signed a protocol last year that paved the way for citrus exports to China in the near future. Zimbabwe was only the fifth African economy to receive approval for fresh fruit exports to China.

It was expected that the Chinese market could create demand for oranges, mandarins, lemons, limes and grapefruit.

Once one of Africa's largest citrus producers, Zimbabwe was trying to regain the markets it lost after its controversial

land reform programme during the 1980s, *The Zimbabwe Mail* said.

In addition to the increase in exports to the EU and the protocol signed with China, Zimbabwe was also pursuing new export avenues such as markets in Asia and the Middle East.

Zimbabwe exported horticulture products to the value of R1,01 billion in 2021, according to the Zimbabwean Trade Information Portal, ZimTrade.

Development Naïve, Ignorant – NFGCS



THE Nigerian Farmers Group and Cooperative Society (NFGCS) has described those who ridicule agriculture as a foundation for national development as naïve and ignorant about real national economic growth.

The group urged Nigeria to prioritise adding value to what it can locally produce, warning that no place would be safe if the country continues to play with hungry and angry people. The National Coordinator, NFGCS, Mr. Reston Tedheke, who stated this in Abuja, on Tuesday said there must be a different approach to tackling economic challenges for Nigeria to work. Tedheke identified localization, industrialization and sustainable economic strategy as central to any

approach aimed at reversing Nigeria's economic challenges.

According to him, the focus must be on productivity, processing, warehousing, rural stability and vocation manpower development that is focused on maize, cassava, yam, soy beans, palm trees, sesame, date palm, coconut, cattle, goats, sheep, fish, pigs among others. His words: "Our population is mostly not employable except in the art of farming. When a population is as uneducated as we are, we look for the low hanging fruits to get us rolling and working in large numbers even with machines. Our people, particularly in rural Nigeria, need to be engaged in large numbers before they engage us violently with devastating consequences.

"Our effort must be on

how to add value to what we can produce locally; it must be on extra jobs; it must be focused on nothing but managing the evolving rural Nigeria quagmire and turning what is currently becoming a curse to blessing. "The problem of Nigeria is Nigerians.

Our failure as a country is our fault as a people. The USD is not coming down soon. Our hunger is not going away. We cannot import everything and expect our people to be free from the challenging economic mess we face. "There are no immediate solutions outside maize and cassava.

No place will be safe if we continue to play with a hungry and angry uneducated population. Lagos is working even if slowly and steadily. Nigeria will work.

"Holland makes about \$5 billion annually from exporting flowers and \$100 billion annually from agriculture and agribusiness. Those who ridicule agriculture as the only foundation for national development are naïve and ignorant about real national economic growth."



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ANALYSIS: Does Africa gain from WTO's landmark fishing subsidies deal?

AFTER 21 years of talks, an agreement has been reached that prohibits harmful fishing subsidies – a leading factor in the plunder of global fish stocks.

This could be a major development for Africa where the fisheries sector, which provides livelihoods and food security for over 400 million people, is vulnerable to exploitation.

According to the African Development Bank, around seven million tons of fish are caught in Africa annually.

Population growth projections say that fish supply must increase to 13 million tons by 2030 to feed 1.7 billion people and to 19 million tons by 2050 to feed 2.5 billion.

However, coastal states are not catching enough fish to meet Africa's requirements. At least 35 countries on the continent are operating on a fish production deficit and are highly dependent on imports.

As global fish demand is expected to increase by 30 per cent by 2030, the sector faces tremendous pressures that require urgent, global responses. One such response is the 17 June adoption of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies. It provides the impetus for African countries to prioritise fisheries governance, sustainable ocean governance and food security for a rapidly growing population.

To make the landmark deal work for Africa though, the capacity of governments to control and monitor fishing activities in their waters will need a significant boost. And cooperation between agencies responsible for fisheries management must improve.

As the exploitation of marine resources increases, fish stocks are facing a collapse in several regions globally. Many governments subsidise unprofitable industrial-scale fishing fleets to cover rising fishing costs and growing consumer demand. The WTO estimates that global fisheries subsidies range from US\$14 billion to \$54 billion yearly.

Not all subsidies are bad, and removing government financial support for artisanal fishers in most African

countries would do more damage than eliminating illegal fishing. The subsidies that should be stopped are those enabling the large-scale plunder of fish stocks. This includes financing vessels to acquire sophisticated equipment to catch more sea life while operating far from their home ports and markets.

These unsustainable approaches exacerbate insecurity in Africa, particularly in coastal communities. With an estimated value of US\$24 billion and providing jobs for over 12 million people, the fisheries industry is fundamental to the continent's blue economic vision and the African Union's Africa Blue Economy Strategy.

Addressing harmful fishing subsidies is one of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala says this is the first time WTO members have 'concluded an agreement with environmental sustainability at its heart.'

The agreement focuses on three aspects of harmful subsidising. First, it prohibits subsidies for the fishing of overfished stock. This should support conservation efforts in coastal states, especially where maritime governance is poor. Second, it prohibits subsidising fishing on high seas in areas not covered by regional fisheries management organisations. This aims to protect the most sought-after large fish stocks, which migrate in and out of the jurisdiction of multiple states whose enforcement capability can be variable and lacking.

Finally, the agreement prohibits subsidies to fishing vessels and operators engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. When negotiations began in 2001, it was understood that subsidies contributed to overfishing and were linked to increased illegal fishing. In West Africa, research suggests that long-distance industrial fleets, many of which are the primary subsidy recipients, are also the main culprits of overfishing.

The agreement compels countries to temporarily discontinue subsidising a

vessel or operator if a coastal state, a flag state or a regional fisheries management organisation determines that they have engaged in illegal fishing. The subsidising state will determine the duration of the prohibition based on the nature, gravity and repetition of the infringement.

The agreement's effectiveness relies on several issues. While it restricts the use of subsidies and provides conditions for their withdrawal, the WTO deal does not ban harmful subsidies outright. Progress will depend on the willingness of subsidising states to work with coastal states to address illegal fishing. This is a risk considering that several subsidising states ignore harmful activities attributed to their country's fishing fleets, flags, and crews.

The WTO dispute system will be the primary vehicle to enforce the agreement if coastal and subsidising states should clash. But the system may be difficult for developing states to use effectively because they lack the bargaining power and resources of more powerful countries.

Another problem is the lack of transparency in the fishing sector – a major factor in illegal fishing. For instance, as part of its sustainable fisheries partnership efforts, the European Union (EU) has negotiated numerous agreements with non-EU states. But although these deals are rooted in sustainability, they have been criticised for loopholes that allow EU vessel owners to hide their ownership and avoid responsibility.

To prevent illegal fishing, global instruments such as the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing should be strengthened. The plan doesn't specify sanctions, but countries apply them. This suggests that illegal fishing should be regulated as an administrative matter rather than a criminal one.

The ability of African governments to patrol and inspect at sea also needs support. Given the scarcity of resources, research is needed to inform fisheries management policies, particularly on the

deployment of patrol vessels. Capacity and training for evidence collection to detect offenders are also essential. If this is accompanied by greater international transparency on fishing data, these countries could use their limited patrol assets better.

African countries often struggle to engage profitably in commercial fisheries. They can use the WTO agreement's special treatment provisions to negotiate support for scaling up small-scale fisheries and empowering local fisher communities. The WTO has a US\$20 million rolling fund to help developing countries improve capacity and management skills for sustainable fisheries governance.

The new subsidies agreement is a notable achievement, but it won't immediately help African countries effectively patrol their exclusive economic zones and prevent the plundering of fish stocks. But it does bolster ongoing multilateral efforts to tackle illegal fishing, which threatens Africans' present and future human security.

Namibia's record white maize harvest could rein in imports



A record white maize harvest is expected for Namibian farmers in the 2021/22 production season.

By the end of July, about 95 000t of the grain had already been delivered to the country's milling industry, constituting between 70% and 80% of the total harvest.

Bertha Iyambo, economist at the Namibia Agricultural Union (NAU), said the good white maize harvest would make Namibia significantly less dependent on imports from neighbouring countries such as South Africa.

White maize was predominantly used for human consumption in Namibia, while yellow maize was imported for animal feed.

"During the previous production season, just over 66 640t of white maize was produced. Given the fact that this year's white maize harvest is estimated at about 150 000t and the demand is just over 203 000t, imports are set to

decline markedly.

"White maize is a staple food in Namibia, and has therefore been a declared controlled product," Iyambo told *Farmer's Weekly*.

Gernot Eggert, the immediate past chairperson of the Namibian Agronomic Producers' Organisation, previously told *Farmer's Weekly* that the bulk of that country's white maize requirement was imported from South Africa.

"The demand for white maize depends on the size of the [pearl millet] harvest, which is another staple grain in Namibia. The larger the harvest, the less maize we need to import and vice versa," he added.

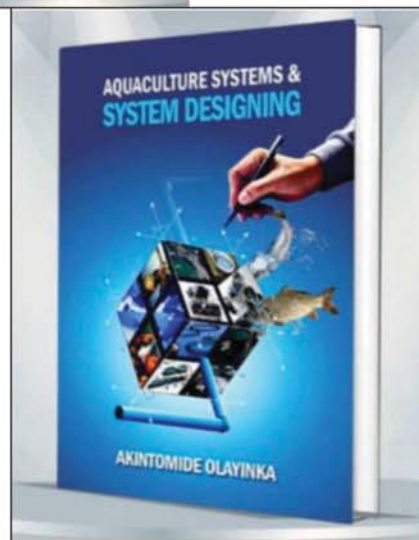
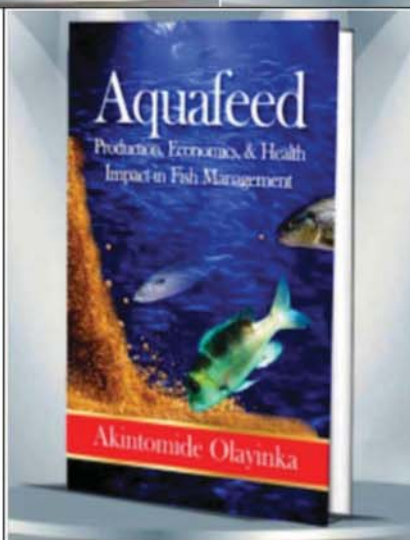
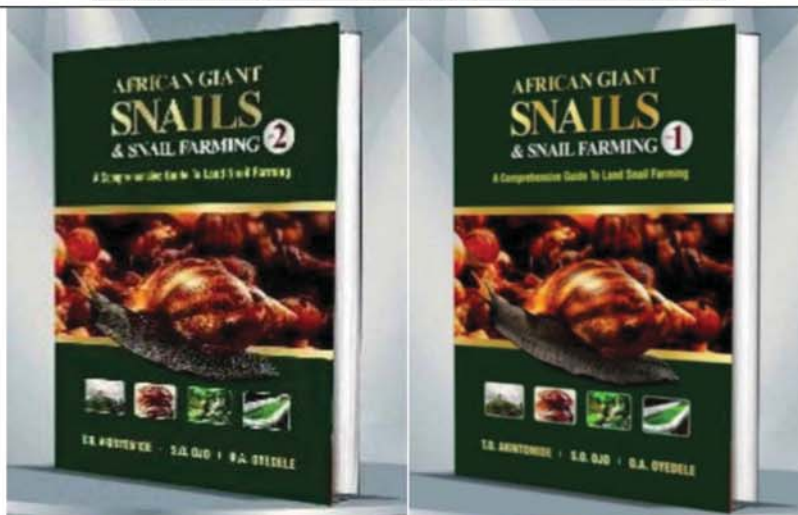
According to an NAU statement, white maize was increasingly being produced under irrigation, with up to 50% of the total harvest during the 2021 production season being irrigated.

However, for the country to become fully self-sufficient, the average annual production needed to be increased even further, the statement said.

Namibia's irrigation areas included the Hardap Irrigation Project, government-administered projects along the Kavango River and the Omusati region, as well as a number of commercial farms in the eastern production areas of the country.

According to the Namibian Agronomic Board, dryland maize production was mainly undertaken in the maize triangle, the Zambezi region, and the eastern production area in the summer down region.

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Poultry farmers' association loses president

PRESIDENT, Poultry Association of Nigeria (PAN), Ezekiel Ibrahim Mam, is dead, this was announced Sunday by the Director-General of the association, Onallo Akpa.

He stated: "Mr. Ibrahim Mam was confirmed to have died on Saturday afternoon after some months' long struggle with his health."

Ibrahim, from Borno State, was the association's national vice president, North-East. He took over from Ayoola Oduntan in 2017 as president.

The deceased had over 30-years' experience in the industry and was the founder of EL Ibrahim Enterprises.

Akpa said the association would be in touch with the deceased's family on the burial arrangements.



Pandagric Novum Expresses Commitment to Redefine Future of Agriculture in Nigeria

INTEGRATED feed and food manufacturing company, Pandagric Novum, has reiterated its vision to contribute to supporting the delivery of Nigeria's food security objectives and strengthening the agriculture value chain in country using an integrated approach.

Bruce Spain, Managing Director, Pandagric Novum, said the agriculture company is poised to redefine the future of agriculture in Nigeria through its innovative farming practices that have been developed to guarantee increased yields and food sufficiency.

"As a company, we have developed crop cultivation and management protocols for achieving the highest yields. We have invested heavily in testing and trials over the years and have discovered improved crop nutrition practices to get the best growth and yield results.

This was the major thrust of a media briefing with the theme 'Redefining Agriculture in Nigeria for the Future', as part of pre-event activities in the run up to the official commissioning of the company in Nasarawa State.

The commissioning is under the auspices of the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA), the premier investment institution of the

federation, and Signature Agri Investment, an investment portfolio agency based in The Netherlands.

In 2018, NSIA and Signature Agri Investments executed a Joint Venture agreement to establish an agriculture focused fund for the development of large-scale integrated projects across Nigeria. Pandagric Novum is the flagship project under this joint venture and has been developed as a platform for diversification and a path to enhancing Nigeria's protein consumption per capita.

Uche Orji, Chief Executive Office & Managing Director, NSIA in his remarks said, "Agriculture is a key focus sector for the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority and an important sector for the Nigerian economy, with high potential for employment generation, poverty alleviation and ultimately food security."

Uche said though the sector has largely been dominated by subsistence farming in the past, "the NSIA strongly believes that with improved modern methods, seedlings and better weather forecasting methods, agricultural yields can continue to grow."

The NSIA as an investment institution of the Federal Government has a mission to play a leading role in driving sustained economic development for the benefit of



all Nigerians.

The agency aims to develop the Nigerian agriculture sector enough to ensure increase production towards the satisfaction of local demand, as well as the development of requisite infrastructure to ensure improved product quality, facilitate import substitution and provide a driver of foreign exchange earnings from the exportation of agriculture produce. Reiterating how Pandagric Novum is redefining the future of agriculture through increased crop yield, Bruce hinted that the goal of the company is "to achieve over 10

tonnes per hectare in the coming few years.

"However, if we can double our national average of maize from 1.5 tonnes per hectare to 3 tonnes per hectare using good genetics and farming practices, then we will double our national output. Nigeria very quickly will become a net exporter of maize and create food security.

In addition, we will reduce the negative environmental impact associated with opening and farming more land. We aim to get these practices into the farming communities and start to see yields and agricultural output rise in Nigeria".



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Potato Farmers Advocate Improved Technology to Preserve Perishable Foods



NATIONAL President, Potato Farmers Association of Nigeria (POFAN), Mr Daniel Okafor, has said food security can be achieved in the country through technologically improved measures of preservation of perishable foods.

According to him, agricultural

commodities are not only perishable, but time bound, unless there is effort towards food preservation either in processed form or fresh form, food security cannot be achieved.

He noted that agro commodities were known to be relatively cheap during harvesting season because of availability, but only to be out

of reach shortly after season.

"If the commodities are well preserved during rainy season, then processing or storing of such agro commodities will not only ensure availability all year round but add value to such commodities for more economic gain."

Okafor said POFAN was the foremost agricultural commodity Association that had worked hard to develop her value chain in potato.

"POFAN has developed potato bread, flour, buns, doughnut, chin-chin, chips, custard, organic soap and cream.

"POFAN has also written two books which are meant for training of farmers on potato production and value chain development initiative.

A lot of advocacies were made in the books on how best to secure Nigeria food wise," he said.

He added that the association had done so much to promote

the production, processing, utilisation and marketing of potato products both at local and international markets.

He however appealed that there should be a budget on potato to help accommodate further value chain development of the crop

"It is our prayer also that potato flour be made mandatory to be included in our confectionery, including bread, to curtail the effect of wheat scarcity due to Russian/Ukrainian war," he added.

Participants during the opening ceremony of a five-day training and empowerment programme for farmers in Ife Federal Constituency, Osun State on mechanised cassava and yam businesses put together by Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service (NAQS) in collaboration With Hicoti Consulting Limited, held at at National Museum Hall, Ile-Ife, Osun State, on Monday.

FG Commissions ARMTI Facility, To Fast-Track Agric Techniques, Boost Production

THE Minister Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr. Mohammad Mahmood Abubakar has said that the Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute (ARMTI), Regional Facilitator's Offices and Hostel Facility would fast-track agricultural techniques, boost production and generate foreign exchange by providing requisite training for stakeholders in the Agricultural Sector.

The Minister made this statement during the Commissioning Ceremony of the Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute (ARMTI), Abuja Regional Facilitator's Offices and Participant Hostel Facility on Friday 9th September, 2022, Apo – Gudu, Abuja.

Dr. Abubakar stated that the Institute would help the Ministry in achieving its mandate to ensure food security in crops, livestock and

fisheries, hence stimulate agricultural employment and services.

He added that the facilitators of the institute would be provided with work space which has the ambience required to imbue knowledge in the Participants.

Abubakar revealed that the institute has been building fast-growing networks and collaborations with local and international agencies in the area of capacity building in the Agriculture and Rural Development.

According to him: "the Institute has signed Memoranda of Understanding with organizations such as the Washington State University (WSU) on capacity building in Organic Agriculture, Commonwealth of Learning, Canada, on capacity building of various categories of stakeholders in the Agricultural Sector".

He pointed out that, there was need to build more mutual benefiting networks and grow



with relevant stakeholders in the agricultural and rural management capacity building sub sector for greater impact in the sector.

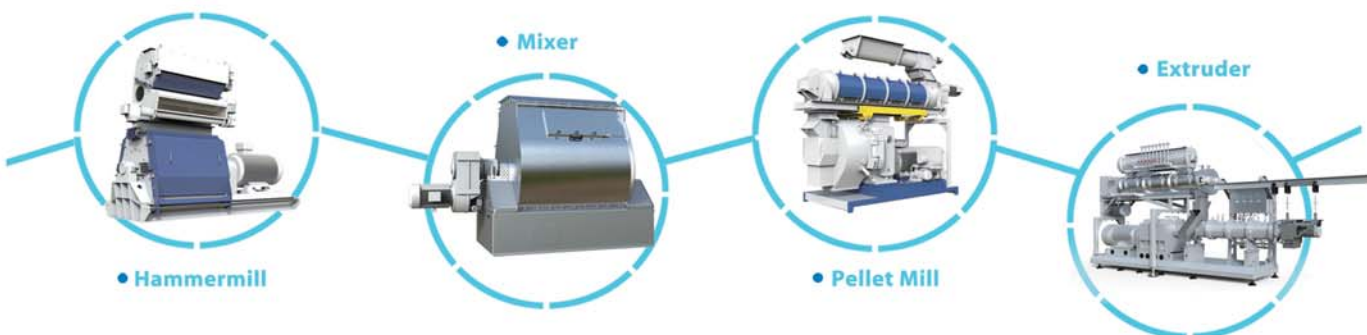
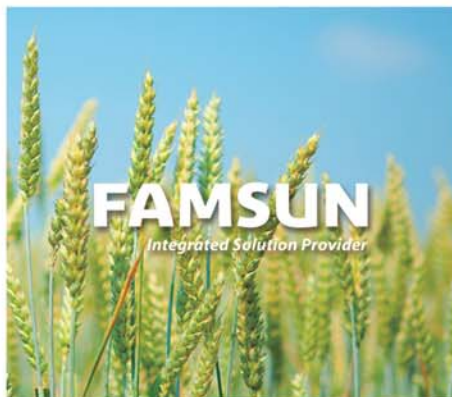
The Minister lauded the Management of the institute for capacity development and empowerment of thousands of Smallholder Farmers as well as other actors along agricultural commodity value chains especially extension agents, aggregators and exporters.

He, therefore, advised the Management of the Institute to ensure regular and consistent maintenance of the facility for its sustainability.

In his welcome address, the Executive Director, ARMTI, Dr. Olufemi Oladunni revealed

that: "The development of the Abuja Regional Training Centers (RTC) of the institute was done in phases, the first phase of 30 Room Hostel complex, the second phase – training /event hall, classrooms, office spaces, Video Conferencing facility, kitchen and restaurant and third phase a fully furnished 27 room staff quarters and participants' hostel complex".

He added that "the Abuja RTC was very strategic in the pursuit of the institute's mandate. Given its location in the heart of FCT and direct connection to the rest of the world, a very good number of our partners and collaborators in the sector prefer Abuja RTC for their programmes.



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Insecurity, Low Mechanisation, Flooding Limiting Agricultural Productivity –AFAN

LOW mechanization of agricultural practices and flooding have identified as major factors limiting agricultural production across states in Nigeria.

The All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), in a statement signed by its Acting Public Relations Officer, Salisu Mukhtar noted that there is a global food system crisis sprouting from shocks ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic, drought, flooding, insecurity and poor policy implementation in some countries including Nigeria.

It urged the Federal Government to set up a task force to reappraise the national food system strategy to improve performance. Also, the association knocks the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) over the ongoing National Council on Agriculture and Rural Development (NCARD) Meeting in Jos, describing the five-day meeting as a waste of time and resources.

According to the release, NCARD meeting was ill-timed and ill-conceived, questioning the rationale behind hosting the meeting designed to implement annual agricultural plans in the middle of the rainy season, describing the ideology as largely due to inexperience and or an obvious yawning deficit in institutional memory. The statement read, "There is a global food system crisis sprouting from shocks ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic, drought, flooding, insecurity and poor policy implementation in some countries including Nigeria and yet needed resources are being expended to convene meetings designed to implement annual agricultural plans in the middle of the rainy season largely due to inexperience and or an obvious yawning deficit in institutional memory.

"The reality of an annual National Council

on Agriculture (NCA) in Nigeria is that it is normally convened before the onset of the rainy season to get state governments, especially across party lines, to key into the Federal Government's plan for the forthcoming planting season as an avenue designed purely for agenda setting and reappraising milestones.

"Due to obvious inefficiencies in the system in Nigeria currently we are seen to be launching an agricultural policy and convening the annual national council on Agriculture in the months of August and Mid-September (12th – 15th) respectively during which time a significant percentage of our Smallholder Farmers (SHFs) across the country are looking forward to harvesting

some of their crops.

"While we can have compelling reasons to convene the annual NCA in odd times such as now but the case today leaves some of us in complete awe.

"The annual NiMET weather forecasts and the annual flood warnings from the National Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) always come at the right time for the farmers to prepare for the planting season, the annual NCA this year is being convened in September in Jos, Plateau State, simply and evidently to expend budgetary allocations by the FMARD since it is pretty too late in coming

"The insecurity situation in many states, the low mechanization in the whole country and devastating flooding in so many states are

enough shocks to production and productivity to warrant setting up a task force to reappraise the national food system instead of convening mere ceremonies that will not add any significant value to agriculture or the Nigerian farmers.

"It is not too late to call off this waste of time and resources on the Plateau where it is still raining cats and dogs daily and

the threat of flooding is looming.

"The arrant disregard for the crushing shocks to food production in Nigeria by some people appointed to assist Mr. President in the good work he has been doing in the entire agricultural space must be interrogated in the time remaining for this administration, otherwise all the gains made will be lost."



**ALL FARMERS
ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (AFAN)**

Cocoa Group Support Local Farmers With N17m Worth Of Premium Offers

A group, Barry Callebaut Nigeria, has kickstarted an initiative to reward and celebrate farmers who have demonstrated a high level of commitment in supporting sustainable cocoa farming.

Under the programme, Management of Barry Callebaut is giving out a premium payment worth 17 million Naira for cocoa supplied in the 2021-2022 season in Ondo and Cross River states.

This significant initiative is in line with Cocoa Horizon objectives, the company's program aimed at improving the livelihoods of cocoa farmers and their communities through the promotion of sustainable, entrepreneurial farming, improved productivity, and community development.

Through Cocoa Horizons, Barry Callebaut continues to

relate closely with local farmers on how to improve their yields, shun cocoa farming activities in protected areas and support "Zero Child Labour" programmes. Recently over 1,000 farmers were sensitized on critical issues surrounding Child Labour to let farmers know that they have a moral responsibility to stop children from working in cocoa plantations.

Managing Director of Barry Callebaut in Nigeria, Adriaan Verbeke, affirmed the company's commitment to continue supporting cocoa farmers in every Nigerian region where families' well-being is based on their cocoa activities.

He said: "We are very appreciative of the farmers who have engaged in our Cocoa Horizons program and look forward to supporting them further to improve their livelihoods and their communities. We plan to extend the Cocoa



Horizons programme to farmers in other regions of Nigeria in the coming 2022-2023 season starting in October 2022.

"Barry Callebaut is demonstrating its long-term commitment to the Nigerian cocoa sector, its farmers and local buying agents through this program. Together we can grow the sector and improve the livelihoods of the farmers and other stakeholders in the cocoa supply chain."

The group's initiatives of premium and farm input distribution to farmers are part of the strategy to make

sustainable chocolate the norm by 2025 and help ensure future supplies of cocoa and improve farmer livelihoods.

Barry Callebaut had previously trained over 1500 cocoa farmers in Akure, Ondo State and Ikom, Cross Rivers on good agricultural practices with strategic plans of measuring the impact of the training. Certificates, farm inputs – like spraying machines, rain boots, cutlasses, wheelbarrows and many more will be given to the best farmers who excel from the training sessions.

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ANALYSIS: Trafficking could make African grey parrots become extinct

Online and physical smuggling networks operating between Central and East Africa are decimating the parrot population.

THE African grey parrot population in the wild is dwindling at a rate of 21 per cent every year. Found in West and Central Africa, the birds are sold by illegal wildlife traders as exotic pets, and their natural habitat is being destroyed. Licensing policies and practices regulating ownership of the parrots are not widely known and rarely implemented.

The birds face extinction in Ghana, with almost the entire population lost to trafficking. In other countries, numbers have decreased by over 50 per cent. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – the parrot's last natural habitat – poachers are trafficking the last of them. In April this year, a Congolese smuggler was arrested in Uganda with 122 parrots and sentenced to seven years in prison.

In 2017, the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) moved the African grey to the list of species threatened with extinction, which prohibits trading except under exceptional circumstances.

Before this CITES relisting, pet keepers in some East African countries had to register parrots with the wildlife authorities, but this was rarely enforced. Since the CITES change, Kenya, Uganda and the DRC established procedures for registering parrots and offered amnesty to those who had bought them irregularly.

In Kenya, the annual licence to keep a parrot costs \$100 (KES12 000). Some pet keepers buy trafficked parrots but skip the licence payments, while others are unaware that the certificates have been mandatory since 2017.

Law enforcement agencies in East African countries have focused on intercepting the growing illegal trade through online markets. Meanwhile, the physical sale of parrots between the DRC and other East African markets continues apace. An active network operates from the DRC to Kenya, with Uganda as a transit point, according to a

licensed parrot keeper and a law enforcement officer who spoke to ENACT.

Poachers from the DRC capture juvenile birds from their nests in forested tree canopies. They also use large woven cages to catch parrots on the ground. The eastern DRC conflict has made some locals turn to poaching birds rather than working in the illegal timber or minerals trades, which are controlled by armed rebels and pose a risk of violence.

Poaching is also attractive because payment is in cash, with each parrot selling for around \$10. The healthier the bird, the higher the price, as healthy parrots can tolerate long journeys even in infancy.

Brokers in the DRC source the African greys from poachers and transport them to Kampala in Uganda via bus networks connecting major cities in eastern DRC, such as Goma and Bukavu, to Kigali in Rwanda and on to Kampala. Cargo trucks are also used. Birds are stored under the bus or truck in dark cartons with no ventilation – sometimes beneath other luggage. They risk death from fumes, thirst and hunger on these long trips, the shortest of which is two days.

Once in Kampala, brokers are instructed by agents in Mombasa, Kenya to transport the birds there or deliver them to buyers in Kampala. Kenyan law enforcement officers believe a kingpin trafficker in Mombasa controls the entire network.

The agent sells the parrots to pet keepers for \$100-250 (KES12 000-30 000) each, using a complex word-of-mouth referral system. His identity is unknown to buyers, and police are unaware of how his trading system works, according to the licensed parrot keeper who spoke to ENACT. The East African criminal chain may also be working with other networks trafficking the birds to the Gulf, especially the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Intercepting smugglers that use online markets is worthwhile, and organizations such as the World Parrot Trust and Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized



Crime are building knowledge about this practice. But countries must take action against the often-hidden physical trafficking of African greys. Coordination between the wildlife authorities, border officials and those working in the transport sector in Central and East Africa is also essential.

In October 2021, police chiefs from the two regions and their respective ministers signed an

agreement on police cooperation and criminal matters, supported by ENACT policy advice and technical assistance. The deal comes into force once ratified by the parliaments of the 21 member countries. It could – bolstered by intelligence gathered on the virtual trading of African greys – be a platform for government and other agencies to bring down traffickers.

Maharashtra doubles input subsidy for farmers, citing extreme weather events

Continued from page 36

Maharashtra, affecting 800,000 hectares of land across 24 districts of the Marathwada region. The rains, measuring 326 millimetres according to India Meteorological Department data, damaged crops like banana, tur, corn, cotton, soyabean, paddy and other vegetables.

The government notification stated that farmers applying for the input subsidy will be verified with inspection and necessary help will be provided accordingly. The state government has allocated a fund of Rs 98.58 crore for the cause.

The central government has also categorised the pest attack as natural calamity. The beneficiaries will be shortlisted and the monetary amount will be deposited directly in their bank account.

However, farmers are skeptical about the announcements and are taking it with a pinch of salt. Kailash Tawar, district

president of the Shetkari Sanghatna, a farmers' union in Maharashtra told *Down To Earth*: "The state government has announced many farmer-oriented schemes recently. But none have accrued to actually benefit them."

Tawar said Chief Minister Eknath Shinde recently announced the release of about Rs 900 crore for the construction of irrigation canal in Paithan, about 30 km from Aurangabad. But he did not speak about the planned investment while addressing a gathering September 14.

Tawar said the scheme was initiated in 2015 by the Devendra Fadnavis government, but farmers were skeptical as to whether it would actually help improve their lives. "It is also important that the inspections are done fairly and the financial assistance is received on time before the sowing for the rabi season begins," he added.

Nigeria Commences Production of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food to Fight Malnutrition in Children

THE Federal Government said Nigeria has commenced the production of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) to fight malnutrition, particularly in children.

The Director, Family Health, Federal Ministry of Health, Dr Salma Anas-Kolo, disclosed this in her address at the ministerial bi-weekly news conference on COVID-19 response and other developments in the health sector, in Abuja on Tuesday. Anas-Kolo observed that not too long ago, the country was importing RUTF through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). According to her, Nigeria now exports RUTF, saying the food is critical in the treatment of



children with severe and acute malnutrition. She said, "RUTF is a life-saving essential supply item that treats severe malnutrition in under-five children. 'It is a paste made of powdered milk, peanut butter, vegetable oil, sugar and a mix of vitamins and minerals.

"We are currently implementing an accelerated reduction of malnutrition in Nigeria, particularly in 12 states that have the highest burden of nutritional disorders," the director added. Anas-Kolo noted that nutrition related disorders were common

in Nigeria, saying 50 per cent of deaths in under-five children resulted from malnutrition. Her words: "Nutrition as well as a balanced diet is very important for children. Mothers are encouraged to observe exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months in the lives of their babies. 'Thereafter, they can introduce complementary feeding using locally-available foods. 'For protein, they can use crayfish, dried fish and other readily available sources.' Furthermore, Anas-Kolo explained that a balanced diet contributes to children's physical and brain development, informing that to produce healthy, intelligent children that would make meaningful contributions to the future of Nigeria, proper feeding must begin

as soon as they are born. Also, the director disclosed that the ministry is working with National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) to ensure fortified fats are avoided. Speaking on fortified fats, she explained "Fortified fats are hydrogenated to solidify them; they are harmful and can cause heart problems. 'They are unhealthy fats mostly related to high cholesterol. Most business marketers, especially those in the food sector, use trans-fat in bread baking, in cakes and in several other snacks. 'We encourage Nigerians to avoid trans-fat. The common one is margarine which is so common; it is trans-fat and we should avoid it as much as we can," Anas-Kolo noted.

Plant treaty: Ways to benefit custodians of agricultural biodiversity in focus

THE ninth session of the governing body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) began September 19, 2022 in Delhi.

Making this treaty truly universal will help ensure that agricultural diversity is saved, shared and cared for, FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu said in a recorded message at the inaugural session of the meeting hosted by the Government of India. "We must conserve this treasure for our descendants, the food security of current and future generations, the improved resilience and preservation of our planet."

The parties to this treaty have come together after nearly three years to discuss governance of agricultural biodiversity and global food security.

The theme of the meeting is 'Celebrating the Guardians of Crop



Diversity: Towards an Inclusive Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework'. The discussions here would inform the deliberations on global biodiversity governance in December 2022 at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in Montreal, Canada.

The issue of access and benefit-sharing is among other subjects that would be discussed at the governing body meeting. While this subject was discussed extensively at the eighth session of the Governing Body too, the

group was unable to reach consensus on measures to enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System.

To discuss the subject further, the parties agreed to hold a series of informal consultations. The outcome of these meetings would be considered during the discussions over the next week — the governing body meeting would end September 24, 2022.

The multilateral system supports agricultural research and development as well as global food security by providing each member access to

important food and forage crops. Under this system, a global pool of plant genetic resources has been created and made available to all members.

A total of 64 crops species are included in this pool and these account for as much as 80 per cent of global food required.

As many as 1,000 samples of plant genetic resources are exchanged each day. Just like CBD's Nagoya Protocol, the International Treaty also guides access and benefit-sharing that may arise from the commercialisation of plant genetic resources.

The benefits can be both non-monetary and monetary in nature. These include both monetary and non-monetary benefits.

In case of monetary incentives, any person or institution that commercialises a new crop or variety using the genetic resources needs to pay a share to the benefit fund. In situations where the new variety developed is not made available to others

(for example, due to patents), the breeder / developer has to pay a share of profits to the Benefit-sharing Fund. The rate of compensation is 0.77 per cent of gross sales.

The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations November 3, 2001.

The International Treaty is the first legally-binding international instrument to formally acknowledge the enormous contribution of indigenous people and small-holder farmers as traditional custodians of the world's food crops.

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Maharashtra doubles input subsidy for farmers, citing extreme weather events

Maharashtra farmers skeptical about doubling of input subsidy by state government; say benefits hardly accrue to them

THE Maharashtra government announced an increase in input subsidy costs for the upcoming sowing season in a notification September 14, 2022. The decision aims to bring relief to farmers affected by extreme

weather events such as heavy rainfall, floods, cyclones and other natural calamities.

The input subsidy for rain-fed agriculture has been increased to Rs 13,600 per hectare from Rs 6,800 per hectare. The financial assistance for irrigated land has been



raised to Rs 27,000 from Rs 13,500.

The assistance offered to

farmers taking crops throughout the year via canal or other perennial

irrigation systems has been increased to Rs 36,000 from Rs 18,000. All financial help for the scheme is limited to two hectares.

The notification mentioned that the heavy rains in July affected farmers. Moreover, districts like Latur, Osmanabad and Beed in the Marathwada region experienced snail infestation during the ongoing kharif season.

On July 11 and 12, incessant rains lashed

Continued on page 32

Our mission remains upscaling, making Nigeria net exporter of maize – Pandagric Novum

ABUJA – THE Nigerian agricultural sector is set for a boost to become a major global player in food production, processing, packaging, and export as an agricultural giant, Pandagric Novum, Friday, disclosed plans to upscale and make Nigeria net exporter of maize with state-of-the-art technologies and techniques.

This was made known by the Managing Director, Pandagric Novum, Bruce Spain, during a media briefing in Abuja.

Spain who was optimistic of the capacity of his company to galvanize Nigeria's agricultural sector, explained that Pandagric Novum is poised to redefine the future of agriculture in Nigeria through its innovative farming practices that have been developed to guarantee increased yields and food sufficiency.

He said: "As a company, we have developed crop cultivation and management protocols for achieving the highest yields."

"We have invested heavily in testing and

trials over the years and have discovered improved crop nutrition practices to get the best growth and yield results.

"This was the major thrust of a media briefing with the theme 'Redefining Agriculture in Nigeria for the Future', as part of pre-event activities in the run up to the official commissioning of the company in Nasarawa State."

He further stated that, "The commissioning is under the auspices of the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority, NSIA, the premier investment institution of the federation, and Signature Agri Investment, an investment portfolio agency based in The Netherlands."

"In 2018, NSIA and Signature Agri Investments executed a Joint Venture agreement to establish an agriculture focused fund for the development of large-scale integrated projects across Nigeria."

"We Pandagric Novum is the flagship project under this joint venture and has been developed as a platform for diversification and a path to enhancing Nigeria's protein consumption per capita."

Reiterating how Pandagric Novum is

redefining the future of agriculture through increased crop yield, he (Spain) hinted that the goal of the company is "to achieve over 10 tonnes per hectare in the coming few years."

"However, if we can double our national average of maize from 1.5 tonnes per hectare to three tonnes per hectare using good genetics and farming practices, then we will double our national output."

"Nigeria very quickly will become a net exporter of maize and create food security."

"In addition, we will reduce the negative environmental impact associated with opening and farming more land."

"We aim to get these practices into the farming communities and start to see yields and agricultural output rise in Nigeria."

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority, NSIA, has thrown its investment weight behind boosting crop production, and to increase agricultural production, tackle food crisis.

The Chief Executive Office and Managing Director, Uche Orji, Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority, NSIA, explained about its interest, "Agriculture is a

key focus sector for the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority and an important sector for the Nigerian economy, with high potential for employment generation, poverty alleviation and ultimately food security."

However, Uche pointed that Nigeria's agricultural sector has largely been dominated by subsistence farmers and farming over the years, "The NSIA strongly believes that with improved modern methods, seedlings and better weather forecasting methods, agricultural yields can continue to grow."

"The NSIA as an investment institution of the Federal Government has a mission to play a leading role in driving sustained economic development for the benefit of all Nigerians."

"The agency aims to develop the Nigerian agriculture sector enough to ensure increase production towards the satisfaction of local demand, as well as the development of requisite infrastructure to ensure improved product quality, facilitate import substitution and provide a driver of foreign exchange earnings from the exportation of agriculture produce."

Pandagric Novum is an

integrated feed and food manufacturing company situated in the Panda development area in Karu Local Government area in Nasarawa state and specializes in the manufacture and distribution of poultry feeds called Supreme Feeds.

The company is committed to building a world-class agricultural and manufacturing business, fostering commitment and dedication in all interactions including delivering quality products on a consistent basis and supporting local economic growth.

With an investment value of over 10 billion Naira and it is positioning as one of the top poultry feed producers in Nigeria, Pandagric's stake in transforming Nigeria's agricultural future is grounded.

This transformation easily benefits Nigeria's agricultural sector and the labour market as in the wide reach of their value chain integration.

The company also produces micro-packs for farmers who mix their own poultry feed. They continually invest in feed technologies and own a State-of-the-Art feed mill that has been installed to meet the demand for their products.

FG Urged To Reduce Usage of Highly Toxic Pesticides Among Farmers By 50%

AGRICULTURE stakeholders have appealed to the Federal Government to develop a safe sustainable food production strategy that will reduce usage of highly toxic synthetic chemical pesticides by 50 per cent by 2030. This was stated at a 2-day National Stakeholders Consultative Meeting on the 2023 Agriculture Budget in Lagos, on Tuesday. The stakeholders called for policies and legislation that will ensure that most toxic pesticides were prohibited and phased out of the Nigerian market.

They said, "To achieve this, the government needs to develop a safe sustainable food strategy that reduces the use of highly toxic synthetic chemical pesticides by 50 per cent by 2030; 25 per cent by 2040, a maximum of 5 per cent by 2050 and strong support to be given to farmers in their transition towards agro-ecology." On his part, the Executive Director of the National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS), Professor Emmanuel Ikani, advised state governments to develop their own agriculture investment plan, saying it will enable efforts at the state and local government levels to be recognised in the overall determination of the country's commitment to the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) and enable accurate data for the Biennial Review Reporting. Ikani, further, observed that late release of funds to relevant agencies in the agriculture value chain has continued to limit the capacity of federal and state governments to drive socio-economic development, including food and nutrition security, within the policy thrust of diversification of

the economy towards agriculture.

Also, the Chairman Senate Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, Sen. Bima Muhammad Enagi, noted that Nigeria's food import bills were increasing every year, saying huge amount of money goes to food importation at the expense of post-harvest losses estimated at N3.5 trillion annually in the country. According to him, despite efforts at providing an enabling environment for more public/private partnerships in Nigeria's agriculture sector, smallholder women farmers' access to government interventions across the country remained below 27 per cent. Agriculture stakeholders have appealed to the Federal Government to develop a safe sustainable food production strategy that will reduce usage of highly toxic synthetic chemical pesticides by 50 per cent by 2030. This was stated at a 2-day National Stakeholders Consultative Meeting on the 2023 Agriculture Budget in Lagos, on Tuesday.

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Weekend: Mostly dry weather to turn showery from Sunday

Acloudy and rather damp start in the northern, central and eastern areas with outbreaks of rain or drizzle is expected today (Friday, September 9), according to national weather forecaster, Met Eireann.

It will be largely dry elsewhere with some bright spells developing along with the odd shower, while rain and drizzle in the north and east will ease during the afternoon to leave sunny spell and scattered showers across the country.

Tonight, will stay mainly dry with clear spells but areas of mist

and fog will form as winds fall light with lowest temperatures of 9° to 12°.

Weekend weather
Tomorrow (Saturday, September 10), is set to be a mostly dry day with a mix of cloud and sunshine, the best of which is expected across the north and east of the country.

Despite a few well-scattered showers mainly confined to the southwest, the day will be warm with highest temperatures of 18° to 22° in moderate east or southeast winds, according to Met Eireann.

Saturday night will stay mostly dry at first, however cloud will thicken from the south and outbreaks of rain will spread across Munster

and Connacht before dawn. Lowest temperatures of 11° to 14° in a moderate southeast breeze are expected.

There will be further outbreaks of rain overnight with the continued potential for spot flooding, and rather humid and mild temperatures of 13° to 16° at the lowest.

Next week
Outbreaks of rain will gradually ease and clear on **Monday** (September 12), with dry and bright periods developing at maximum temperatures of 17° to 22°, warmest in the south.

Monday night will stay mostly dry with clear spells along with just the odd shower and lowest

temperatures of 8° to 12°, and a moderate northeast breeze developing, according to current indications by Met Eireann.

Sunny spells and mostly dry weather is expected on **Tuesday** (September 13), however a few showers are possible in the east and south. Highest temperatures of 17° to 22° in moderate to fresh northeast breezes will be reached.

Early indications suggest it will be rather breezy on **Wednesday** (September 14), with outbreaks of rain in parts of the south. Elsewhere, it will be mostly dry with sunny spells and maximum temperatures of 17° to 20°.

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Stockbrokers Seek Agricultural Development to Grow Nigeria's Economy

THE Chartered Institute of Stockbrokers (CIS) has said it is exploring the connection between the agriculture sector and the capital market as drivers of employment and economic growth to restore Nigeria to the path of double-digit growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through agricultural development.

Specifically, the institute noted that its annual conference would discuss policies affecting agriculture and Nigeria's economy in general.

A statement by the Institute revealed that its 26th annual stockbrokers' conference with the theme: "Capital Market and Agricultural Development in Nigeria: Issues and the way

forward," would be held in Benin City from Wednesday, 7th September, 2022 to Friday, 9th September, 2022. According to CIS, the 2022 theme was approved to provide a platform to enable experts to advise the Federal Government on how it can leverage the commodities market to grow the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), provide food security, guarantee employment, eliminate banditry and terrorism, among others.

The institute also informed that the Executive Governor of Edo State, Godwin Obaseki, who is also a Chartered Stockbroker, is expected to declare open the conference to set a new agenda for agriculture and economic development in Nigeria.

The statement read in part,



"The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) says agriculture is the foundation of the Nigerian economy, employing about 35% of the country's population. The sector also contributes approximately a quarter of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) despite the presence of crude oil. "Consequently, agriculture is a sector that has been of topmost priority to the Nigerian capital market.

Two companies in the agricultural sector, Okomu Oil

Palm Co PLC and Presco PLC, have ranked among the highest price gainers on the NGX in recent times. "It is on this basis that the 2022 Annual Stockbrokers Conference beams its searchlight on agriculture, exploring the nexus between the sector and the capital market as drivers of employment and economic growth, and proffering effective strategies to restore Nigeria to the path of double-digit growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through agricultural development."

Youth Engagement In Agribusiness, Asset To Food Security —NSPRI

NIGERIAN Stored Products Research Institute (NSPRI), Ilorin, Kwara state has trained selected 50 serving corps members in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) on value addition and post-harvest management of agricultural crops.

Speaking at the opening of the eighth edition of one-week capacity building workshop for the corps members in Ilorin, the Kwara State capital recently on Wednesday, the executive director of the institute, Dr. Patricia Pessu, said that youth engagement in agribusiness, as being practised in some developing countries, is a crucial asset to achieving sustainable food security.

The NSPRI boss, who said that agriculture is no longer an act, but rather a business enterprise, added that value addition to agricultural products is a viable and trendy aspect of agribusiness that creates job opportunities, increases farmers' income, ensures abundance of food and loss reduction.

The institute, which promised to support corps members with approved business proposal with start up seed money, said that it supported three corps members with the sum of N2 million each as startup seed money following the verification of their business proposals after their service year from Kwara and Oyo states' editions.

"Like many African countries, youth employment is a critical policy issue that directly affects national food security and in Nigeria today about 40 per cent of youths are unemployed.

"Take as an illustration, in the

first quarter of 2021, a report published by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on its website noted that Nigeria's Unemployment Rate has risen from 27.1 per cent in the second quarter of 2020, to 33 per cent.

"Aside from making it the second Highest on Global List, the NBS report, going by analysis, shows that 'more than 60 per cent of Nigeria's working-age population is younger than 34. The number of people looking for jobs will keep rising as population growth continues to outpace output expansion.

"Nigeria is expected to be the world's third-most-populous country by 2050, with over 300 million people, according to the United Nations. The present development demands youth engagement in agribusiness as it is been seen practised in some developing countries as a crucial asset to achieving sustainable food security.

"Recognizing this, the Nigerian Stored Products Research Institute (NSPRI) becomes a dependable partner for the youth corps members to boost their skills and improve networks for the next generation of Nigeria's agricultural entrepreneurs by harnessing the potentials in the postharvest value chain of agriculture.

"NSPRI with over 60 years of postharvest research delivery has developed various technologies and appropriate techniques for handling, processing and storage of different categories of agricultural commodities suitable for Nigerian market and export.

"It is expected that upon completion of your service year, this training would have equipped you not only with the knowledge of exciting



opportunities in postharvest handling and value addition to agricultural commodities but more importantly with the requisite skills to transport ideas into sustainable agribusinesses".

Also speaking, the NYSC state coordinator, Francisca Olaleye, represented by assistant director of the scheme, Orangun Adegboyega, said that the programme is capable of solving food problem in the country.

The NYSC boss, who appreciated the institute for the training programme, said that the programme is capable of turning the beneficiaries to employers of labour, "as there is no longer white collar jobs".

NIGERIA'S former president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, said that the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has introduced new vocabulary into the nation's political discourse....

THE second term bid of Governor 'Seyi Makinde of Oyo State received a massive boost on Friday, as the Council of Obas in

the state declared its support for the governor, stating that the good works being done by the administration across the state should continue beyond 2023.....

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Is Guanidinoacetic acid (GuanAmino) a viable solution to reduce feed costs ?

THERE has been a sharp rise in global feed prices in recent months paired with high volatility and unreliability. According to analyst predictions, feed prices will stay high mainly because of low global stocks of grains and oil seeds.

On top of that meat prices do not rise proportionally and could stay low, especially considering the reduced consumer demand caused by Covid-19 restrictions in many regions. This means animal producers are facing increased costs and equal or decreased revenues. Therefore, the task for animal nutritionists and producers is to reduce feed cost once again, while maintaining animal performance and meat quality.

So, what to do?

Since energy is the most expensive part of broiler feeds, one approach is to look for products that improve energy utilization efficiency such as guanidinoacetic acid (GAA). This compound is a naturally occurring precursor for creatine, which has a vital role in cellular energy metabolism. A deficiency of creatine reduces the efficiency of energy transport and utilization within the cells.

Combining the results of different papers, it is estimated that only two thirds of the total daily creatine requirement can be met by the endogenous creatine synthesis, whereas the remaining 33% must be supplied by the feed. Plant-based feed ingredients do not contain any GAA or creatine and therefore cannot meet the creatine needs. On the other hand, animal byproducts contain GAA, creatine, and creatinine, but the contents are variable, either due to the high variability of the feed quality itself or due to heat treatment of the feed resulting in degradation of the labile creatine. By supplementing feeds with GAA, the creatine gap is closed; and energy efficiency is increased.

A series of experiments over the past 10 years has demonstrated the increased energy efficiency when GAA

was added to the diets of broilers. Previous data has even shown that the broiler performance can be maintained when energy in the feed was reduced by 50 to 100 kcal/kg below breeder recommendations and 0.06% GAA was supplemented. Therefore, it is known that GAA has an energysparing effect which means we can confidently ascribe an energysparing value to GuanAMINO® (the innovative GAA source from Evonik; ≥96% GAA). A simple calculation can be done to explain the energy contribution of GAA when considering the before mentioned possible energy-reductions in the feed to GAA. By dividing either 50 Kcal or 100 Kcal by the percentual inclusion of GAA we can deduce that the energy contribution of the product lies between **83,000 and 166,000 kcal ME/kg** (e.g. 50 kcal/0.06% GAA inclusion ≈ 83,000 kcal).

Additionally, the endogenous synthesis of GAA requires glycine and arginine. Therefore, when GAA is supplemented to the feed both amino acids can be spared for other metabolic processes and a potential arginine supplementation can be reduced. More trials are conducted to evaluate the arginine-sparing potential of GuanAMINO®. A conservative estimate suggests that arginine can be spared at least in the amount of 77% of the supplemented GAA. The average of available data shows up to now a **potential arginine-sparing of about 100%**. With these information nutritionists are advised to add GAA using the matrix shown in the table below.

Table 1: Matrix values of GuanAMINO®

Nutrient	Matrix value
Guanidino acetic acid (GAA)	96%
Standardised ileal digestibility	100%
Crude protein	221%
Arginine sparing potential	≥77% ¹
ME sparing potential	≥347 MJ/kg (83,000 kcal/kg) ²

77% Arginine-sparing represents the least number of available trial data (Khajali et al., 2020) at inclusion of 600 g/ton. 347 MJ (83,000 kcal) ME/kg product equals 0.21 MJ (50 kcal) ME/kg compound feed at inclusion of 600 g GuanAMINO/ton.

The latest research suggests that GAA can provide at least 83,000 kcal ME/kg with additional broiler performance improvements. This means that a standard inclusion of 600g per ton of broiler feed can provide at least 50 kcal ME per kg feed.

The benefits of supplying GAA in broiler feeds can be illustrated by the study conducted by Malins et al. (2017) with Ross 308 broilers raised from 1 to 42 days of age. The authors could show that there was a

statistically significant reduction of weight gain in the negative control (NC = PC -50 kcal) compared to positive control (PC), confirming that NC was indeed deficient in energy, and NC+GAA. Furthermore, the supplementation of 0.06% GAA (83,000 kcal ME energy-sparing value) to an energy deficient diet (NC + GAA) proved to be effective in maintaining weight gain at the same level of PC and even slightly higher (see figure 1). The parameter FCR was only numerically improved for the NC+GAA treatment compared to the other two groups (see figure 1). Additionally, the European Poultry Efficiency Factor of the NC+GAA treatment was significantly improved compared to the NC treatment (see figure 2).

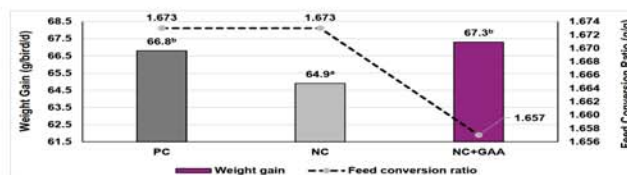


Figure 1: Effect of different energy-levels and guanidinoacetic acid (GAA) supplementation on growth performance of broiler chickens from 1 to 42 days of age (Malins et al., 2017). Positive control (PC: recommended ME levels of 3000, 3100 and 3150 kcal/kg feed in starter, grower, finisher diets), negative control (NC = PC -50 kcal), NC + GAA (NC + 0.06% GAA).

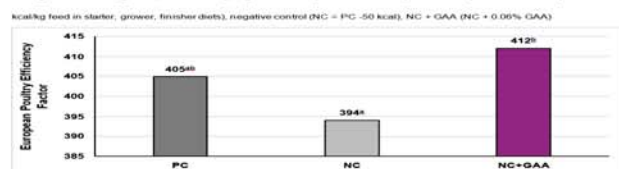


Figure 2: Effect of different energy-levels and guanidinoacetic acid (GAA) supplementation on the European Poultry Efficiency Factor (PEEF) of broiler chickens from 1 to 42 days of age (Malins et al., 2017). Positive control (PC: recommended ME levels of 3000, 3100 and 3150 kcal/kg feed in starter, grower, finisher diets), negative control (NC = PC -50 kcal), NC + GAA (NC + 0.06% GAA). PEEF: averaged grams gained per day ÷ survival rate (%) ÷ feed conversion ratio ÷ 10.

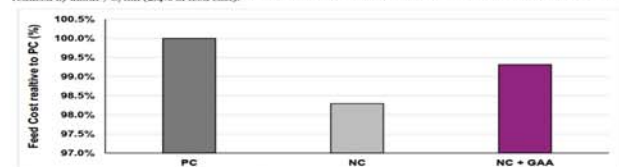


Figure 3: Feed cost calculation based on the diets from Malins et al. (2017) (wheat and soybean meal based) with current feed prices. Feed cost is expressed as a percentage to the feed cost of the PC. Positive control (PC: recommended ME levels of 3000, 3100 and 3150 kcal/kg feed in starter, grower, finisher diets), negative control (NC = PC -50 kcal), NC + GAA (NC + 0.06% GAA).

Although energy reduction itself promoted the greatest reduction in the cost of feed in NC relative to control, performance in NC was not satisfactory (Figure 1) indicating that energy reduction alone may not be optimal to maximize income over feed cost. The data shows that the usage of GAA with its matrix values leads to reduced feed costs (Figure 3) while maintaining or even improving animal performance (Figure 1). Taking the effects of GAA supplementation on feed cost and animal performance together, the income over feed cost (IOFC) improves by 3% compared to the PC and by 2.6% compared to NC treatment (see figure 4).

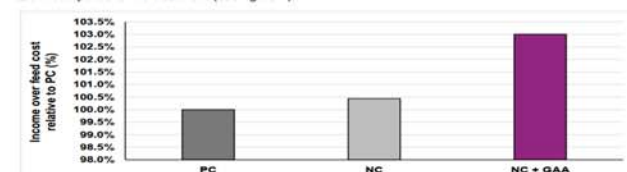


Figure 4: Income over feed cost (IOFC) calculation based on the diets and performance data from Malins et al. (2017) (wheat and soybean meal based) with current feed prices. IOFC is expressed as a percentage to the IOFC of the PC. Positive control (PC: recommended ME levels of 3000, 3100 and 3150 kcal/kg feed in starter, grower, finisher diets), negative control (NC = PC -50 kcal), NC + GAA (NC + 0.06% GAA).

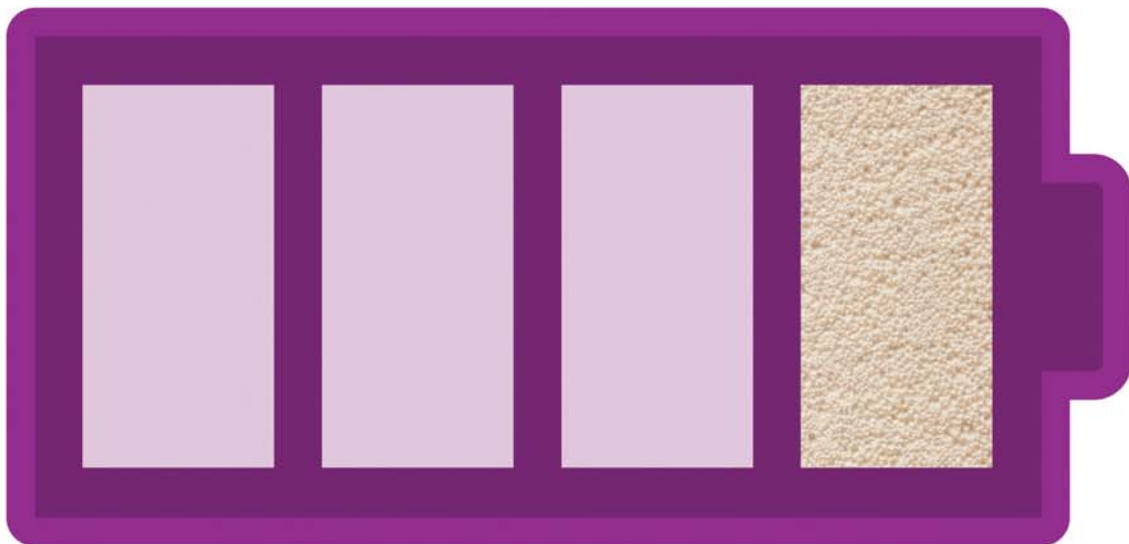
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Nigeria, Poland Sign Pact on Agriculture, Others



TO cushion the effect of global food insecurity occasioned by the conflict in Ukraine, Nigeria and Poland have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on agriculture.

The President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari and his Polish counterpart, Andrzej Duda, signed the MOU to strengthen collaboration between both countries in areas of agriculture, energy and defense.

Briefing journalists at the front porch of the presidential villa shortly after a closed-door session with the Nigerian leader in Abuja, on Tuesday, Duda stressed that the MoU became necessary as a result of the food crisis brought about by Russia's aggression in Ukraine.

According to him, Poland is supporting affected states and its partner countries to boost agricultural yield, adding that in the energy dimension, Nigeria, being rich in gas, will ensure a

steady increase of supply to Poland and the rest of the European Union. "I hope we're going to see some fruit in this memorandum we have signed," he pointed out. On his part, Buhari noted that both countries have reached agreements to increase collaboration in agriculture, energy and defense. According to him, the partnership would be a win-win for the two countries, especially in the context of limiting the effect of global food insecurity, among others.

Varsity Introduces Compulsory Practical Course on Farming for Students

TO prepare youths for the future and contribute to efforts towards economic diversification through agriculture, the management of the Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science

and Technology Ikere-Ekiti (BOUESTI) has introduced a compulsory course on practical farming.

The management revealed that the two-unit course 'Practical Skills in Agriculture' was designed for 200-level students to plant and nurture crops in



the institution's farm for hands-on knowledge on farming and to encourage them to embrace agriculture after their graduation to boost the economy.

Speaking on the development, a supervisor in the Department of Agriculture, Pius Ogunjobi explained that the initiative was conceptualised for students to have basic knowledge in farming and prepare them towards making a living for themselves.

He said, "The school is looking in the direction of the government towards making agriculture attractive, guaranteeing food security and boosting the economy." On his part, the Vice-Chancellor of BOUESTI, Professor Victor Adeoluwa noted that the university was determined to produce graduates that would compete favorably in the labour market, armed with needed skills across all sectors of the economy. According to him, the farming course was necessary to ascertain graduating students are empowered not to be job seekers.

"The time has gone beyond certificates in education but acquiring skills in order to survive in the labour market. "All we are doing is to encourage students that they can make a life for themselves through agriculture and be self-reliant. We want them to be employers of labor and farming is a potent tool to achieve this."

FG Draws Out Plan to Stop Ban On Agriculture Exports From Nigeria

THE Federal Government has disclosed that it is working out plans to ensure Nigerian agricultural produce are accepted in the international market. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (FARMARD), Dr Muhammad Abubakar, made this known during a briefing by the Standing Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee (SIMTC) on Agro Zero Reject Initiative in Abuja, on Thursday.

Speaking, Abubakar expressed optimism that the ban on Nigeria's agricultural commodities by the European Union and the United States of America, would soon be lifted. The Minister, who noted that Nigeria's potential for agricultural commodities export is large, said Nigeria's Integrated Export Control Plan (IECP) should be put together



meticulously. His words: "There is no doubt that Nigeria cannot realise its potential unless we do the right thing; work together first of all, and also realise and understand dealing with other agencies, private sector and governments across the world. "It is not an easy task doing export business, there are a lot of regulations, and unless you start by putting your own home well, you will not be able to work outside."

"If we want to make

headway we must come down and learn to work with one another, and that really needs to be done to achieve success. "It is not about trading but getting Nigeria out of being banned from Europe, America and other countries. "We should have seamless export transaction. We will do what it takes to do the right thing," the minister assured. On his part, the Director, Federal Department of Agriculture (FDA), Mr Abdullahi Abubakar, explained that the essence of the SIMTC was to ensure that the ban by the EU on the export of Nigerian beans was lifted. According to him, Nigeria should never again suffer any rejection of agro commodities in the export market. He said, "Before the ban, several unheeded notifications were sent to Nigerian authorities. "To lift the ban, EU wanted Nigeria to control her export and provide substantial evidence that the

necessary food safety requirements and protocols are put in place."

Speaking on IECP, the FDA director said it is a 5-year action plan for all the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agencies and critical stakeholders, to provide substantive guarantee required by the EU that the SPS bodies in Nigeria put Food Safety protocols in place in line with international standards. "Few private companies have agreed to key into the implementation of the pilot action plan that would get the ban on our beans lifted and pave way for admitting Nigeria produce for export," he added. Meanwhile, the SIMTC was inaugurated on February 28, 2021 to ensure that the ban by the European Union (EU) on the export of Nigerian beans was lifted and that Nigeria never again suffers any form of rejection of her agro commodities in the export market.

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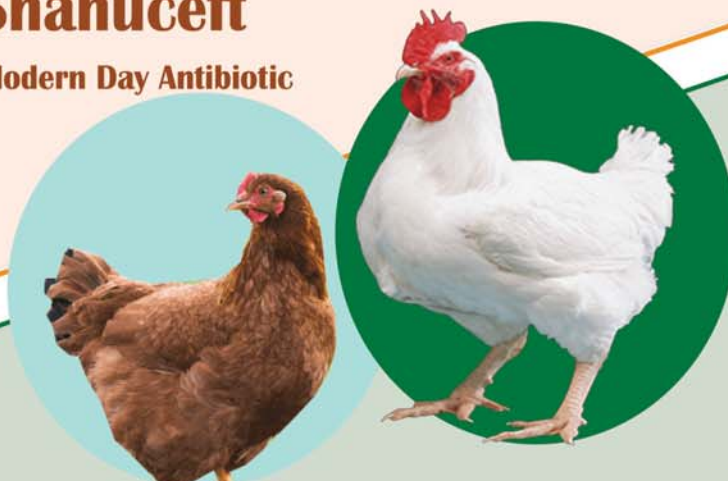
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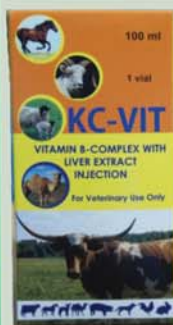
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UK Drought: Why We Need To Get Used To Wonky Vegetables



FRUIT and vegetables on the shelves will be smaller and look different as the summer's hot and dry weather hits crops, experts say.

Potatoes, onions, carrots, apples and Brussels sprouts are likely to be worst-affected.

Many areas of the UK have seen very low rainfall in 2022, and parts of England are in drought.

The National Farmers Union (NFU) wants supermarkets to accept more "wonky" produce and be flexible with growers.

In Essex, farmer Sarah Green's fields are dusty and the grass crunches beneath her feet.

Her crops are "alive, but not growing or thriving". The hot summer sun made her sweetcorn delicious, but smaller than usual and she's had to lower her prices. Other crops still in the ground, like cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and

broccoli, are stunted.

Image caption, Sarah Green has already seen her summer produce grow smaller

And in Herefordshire, farmer Ben Andrews said his "nice green" cabbage and kale were fine until a few days ago.

Now they've turned pale blue, he says. They feel leathery and tough, no longer crisp and lush.

These crops are still in the fields but soon they'll be what we buy in supermarkets.

It's too early to know how much UK produce will die due to drought, but "crop quality" will certainly be hit, Jerry Knox, professor of agricultural water management at Cranfield University,

More potatoes will be smaller, with lower quality skin and even some defects, he adds.

Vegetables this autumn and winter "may not look normal, but will taste the same", Tom Bradshaw, vice-president of the

NFU, says.

"Consumers have been conditioned to believe that a potato looks a certain way," Mr Bradshaw says. To reduce the risk of even more price rises during a cost of living crisis, "we need to be more relaxed about appearance", he adds.

A representative for the British Retail Consortium (BRC) told BBC News that supermarkets already accepted odd-shaped vegetables.

"Retailers understand weather conditions have been a challenge and have taken steps to support their farmers. This includes expanding ranges of odd-size/shape fruit and veg when needed," says Hannah Dougherty, Food Policy Advisor at the BRC.

In Essex, rain is all Sarah Green and her family talk about. This year they're measured 107mm of rainfall. Their annual average is 525mm.

Image caption, Rain could help these cauliflowers recover but they will be smaller

This dryness means vegetables in the ground can't get the moisture they need to keep growing, so they grow slower and don't become full-size. Lack of water can make the skin tougher, or cause defects as the crop is stressed.

Potatoes are very vulnerable to drought in the UK where half the national crop is fed by rain, Prof Jerry Knox explains.

Harvesting the potatoes will be a challenge because it's likely to be difficult to get the harvester into the hard ground, Sarah Green explains. It might form

big clods that damage the crop or cut it into pieces.

Carrots, parsnips, onions will be affected in a similar way to potatoes, Prof Knox says.

By this point in the summer the "damage is done", he says, and even significant rainfall isn't enough to fix the stressed potatoes.

Farmers are also worried about brassicas like cauliflowers and broccoli planted in autumn. In many areas it's feared the soil is too hard to dig and seeds won't survive in parched ground.

The last time the UK had a drought was in 2018, but rains came just in time to save most crops. But this year the Met Office is forecasting several months of dry, warm weather.

Farmers could choose to sacrifice some crops, in order to fully water others, Prof Knox says. Gathering enough water over the autumn and winter will also be crucial to stop the effects of drought spreading into 2023.

But in the long-term scientists warn that parts of England, particularly the south-east, will become much drier due to climate change.

Farmers do adapt and some have changed the crops they grow, but the unpredictability of UK weather makes that risky.

Alastair Chisholm of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management says that in the long-term, adjustments to farming techniques like regenerative farming that helps soil store water, as well as investment in storage for winter rains, can be solutions.

Industrialist Laments Global Shortage of Wheat, Grains

THE Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Slabmark Group, has attributed the global shortage of wheat and other essential grains to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, urging Nigerians and other stakeholders to prioritise agriculture.

Balogun-Kuku stated this during a public lecture programme theme d: Agriculture: 'The Surest Way to Nigeria's Socio-Economic Transformation' organised by the African Agriculture Monitor Magazine at the Federal College of Agriculture, Akure, the Ondo state capital.

The Ibadan-based industrialist who noted that the continued scarcity of grains would make citizens to experience more hardships in the months ahead unless the warring countries reach a lasting truce. He expressed his displeasure, particularly over the current scarcity and high cost of bread, which is one of the staple foods of Nigerian people saying most people in the country can no longer afford again.

Speaking on the importance of agriculture and the need to prioritise it, especially now, he said: "Agriculture has been one of



the oldest professions in the world from time immemorial. "As a matter of fact, there is nothing you can compare to agriculture."

"Even during COVID-19 period when every other business was down to its lowest ebb, it was only agribusinesses that remained afloat. So, government and other stakeholders must place very high premium on agriculture now."

He advised young Nigerian graduates to embrace agriculture, urging them to stop chasing white collar jobs and said: "I think the best thing for them now is to fully embrace agriculture."

"There are lots of opportunities in agriculture that they can take advantage of and make very decent living from. Moreover, the raw materials that we export to other countries can be processed here in Nigeria for value

addition, such that will tremendously boost the national economy."

"Look at Malaysia and Indonesia, they rely heavily on palm oil from which they generate billions of dollars annually."

"In the 70s, Nigeria used to be the largest producer of palm oil in the world. Now, we are number nine. So, we must place a very high premium on agriculture now."

He, however, stressed the need for concerted effort by the government and other critical stakeholders within the grains value chain to galvanize and aggressively drive the grains development programmes in the country.

"Grains is used in producing staple foods such as semolina, bread, noodles and pasta, which form a regular part of meals in

most urban and rural households in the country"

Speaking in the same vein, the guest speaker, Professor Taye Amos of the School of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology, Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA) harped on urgent need by both the federal and state governments to focus more on agriculture, saying: "this is the surest way for the country now".

The Senior Special Adviser to Governor Rotimi Akeredolu on agriculture, Pastor Akin Olotu, said the state government has been giving priority to agriculture in the state.

Olotu bemoaned the attitude of stakeholders who are fond of accusing both the states and federal government of not doing enough on agriculture.

He noted that: "Government is doing its best. Our training institutions need to brace up and become 21st century compliant in their researches and the quality of graduates they turn out so as to be able to have more effective implementation of government policies on agric in the field"

The African Agriculture Monitor Magazine also conferred an award of "Pillar of Agriculture in Nigeria" on Balogun-Kuku and awards on some eminent players in the Nigerian agricultural sector.

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Inside Unilorin's N600m Poultry Farm Project

AFTER years of waiting, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has commissioned the N600 million University of Ilorin (Unilorin) poultry project.

Sited on 30 hectares of land in Amoyo, Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State, the project, conceptualised under the CBN-funded tertiary Institutions Poultry Revival Scheme, is specifically aimed for tertiary institutions to design and implement viable poultry projects that would culminate into a sustainable development of the country's poultry industry.

A walk inside the farm exposes one to the huge potential of the project as a game changer in the poultry business and its agricultural value chain, especially in line with the expected benefit with the incorporating universities.

So far, the first set of birds, 17,000 layers that are already producing 25 crates of eggs daily with 500 target, 30,000 broilers, 8 broilers pens, which have the capacity to accommodate 5,000 birds, four layers pens, with total capacity of 23,000, 1000 birds per day, hatchery and a cold room with total capacity of 10 tonnes, are on ground.

Also, there is a blast chiller that can chill about 500 birds for 46 hours, a feed mill that can produce 5 tonnes per hour and a cooling van with a capacity of 6.5 tonnes. The weekly processed boiler gives about 7.5 tonnes of meat, excluding other accessories like the head, leg, neck, gizzard, heart, liver and the i

While the project has commenced with several activities and processes already taking place, there are concerns that universities coming on board, the CBN and other stakeholders need to be cognizant of.

Speaking on the project, the chairman of the Steering Committee of the Unilorin GGMax Poultry, Professor Mikhail Olayinka Buhari, said that the university had come this far is not a success story that should be taken for granted because of the bottlenecks, novelty, funding pattern and several other hurdles that were surmounted in getting the farm on track.

He said the project had been structured in such a way that "nothing is wasted as far as poultry and its value chain is concerned."

"It is an integrated commercial poultry farm owned by the University of Ilorin but funded by the CBN in partnership with Zenith Bank. After this, it will later be broadened to include polytechnics and colleges of education with the requisite manpower, skills and other resources needed to successfully put up an enterprise like this.

"We were all invited to put up a bankable proposal, but the University of Ilorin is the only tertiary institution considered for being able to actualise the vision of the CBN," he added.

For the partnership not to be business as usual, the CBN insisted that the university set up

a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). A view of the Unilorin poultry farm

On the journey to the approval by the CBN, Buhari said that initially, 12 universities were invited, adding that the only thing that sets Unilorin apart was commitment and purposeful approach.

"We quickly identified the steps to take and went all out to make sure the objective was realised. We had to knock on doors and open, as well as make leverages to ensure that we actualised the objective.

"This was new to everybody, including the CBN. The vision was there but how to actualise it was not there; and we had to blaze the trail. We got the special purpose vehicle, which was made slightly difficult because of financial regulations domiciling our school fees account in a commercial bank, with all the assurances because the CBN cannot directly lend money to you.

"The CBN is the banker and the accountant-general is firmly in charge of the shares, so we needed approval and a no-objection from the minister of finance. The only way we could guarantee that was to bring up an Irrevocable Standing Payment Order (ISPO). All these took 18 months to get, and at the end, our resoluteness was rewarded," he explained.

During the commissioning ceremony, the vice chancellor of the University of Ilorin, Professor Suleiman Age, pleaded with the CBN on the issue of the interest rate the loan was awarded, a plea the apex bank did not respond to.

Narrating the issue further, Buhari said, "We took a N600m loan at a rate of 9 per cent, but before we could process the fund, the CBN had brought down the rate from 5 per cent and extended its validity by a year – February 2022 to February 2023.

"Our appeal is for the CBN to consider extending the validity beyond February next year to allow us stabilise because so many other things we did not consider came into play, like the rise in inflation.

"It became more difficult for us to meet our obligation to the lender, and then, given the overarching objective of this project, it is actually more important to ensure its success than to focus on the recovery of funds," he noted.

For the remaining 11 universities which proposals have not been approved, and the 40 others the CBN said were still under consideration, the advice is for them to ask the right questions.

Buhari said, "I saw the good, the bad and the ugly of this country. Other institutions coming after us need to ask the right questions and persons to get over the daunting challenges the project faced.

Repayment capacity

In all of these, there are also concerns on the capacity to repay the loan. But Buhari dismissed such fears, saying the university was determined to succeed and



open another vista of opportunities that would revolutionise the education and unemployment sectors, especially in agriculture.

We are given over a year to construct and stabilise. Between now and February we have the opportunity to extend the scope. Nine per cent interest comes to about N13m monthly. But I must emphasise that processing 5,000 broilers weekly for sale without the accessories amounts to about N2m to N3m per cycle. By our calculation, we are supposed to run 8 cycles in about 40 days."

Other plans/benefits

Daily Trust on Sunday observed that there are 10 hectares of land at the back of the farm that has been used for cultivating maize and soybeans, which are direct raw materials for the production of feed. Plans are also on to use a vast portion of the over 150 acres of land in the university to grow these crops as raw materials for poultry and commercial purposes as a form of backwards integration.

Also, production of day-old chicks by December is in the pipeline and conversion and production of powdered egg during the period of glut to save losses and enable very long-time storage are on the table.

The students will be made to get involved in a grower's programme through this to afford them the opportunity to see first-hand, what they were taught in the classroom and serve as a veritable laboratory for lecturers' research. This will further ensure that the country boasts of a viable parent stock model, especially after other universities come in.

Agribusiness

In this area, the university, through the project, is looking at production of manure/organic fertilizers aided by its manure dryer on the farm, intestines as feed for fish, making feather and blood from the chicken into meals for other animals like pigs to ensure that nothing is wasted. There are also plans to explore the possibility of how the farm can possibly impact the rice sector, which is highly cultivated in the state.

N250m annual IGR for university

With over 7.5 tons of pure meat to be pushed out weekly, it is expected that the poultry would play a major role in the area of food security, which will in turn help conserve foreign exchange, generate employment opportunity for the local economy with its present employment 70 employees and contribute over N250m to the university's internally generated

revenue (IGR) annually.

Buhari further said, "There is nothing we have at present that can bring in a tenth of that amount into the university's coffers. We can use such funds for many other purposes."

Expansion/future plans

For the management of the poultry, the plan, going forward, is to use up all the 30 hectares of land and even expand. But more importantly, the eventual building and relocation of the students' dormitory and College of Agriculture of the university is the focus.

For Gawati Adedayo Olugbenga, the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Unilorin GGMax Farm, who is also a graduate of the university, private people were brought in to differentiate it from public sector arrangement.

"It has to pay back its loan, be profit-oriented and sustain itself. These are the key issues why we were brought in, having been in the private business for years. It is like giving back to the university.

"Some of the challenges are that some people here have public and public mentality and we have to try and strike a balance as everybody has one goal, which is just to succeed.

"For the price, this is a period of glut when not much is happening in terms of festivities. We don't sell live chicken, but a processed one goes for N1,800. We have a standard cooling van that moves our products to Abuja, Lagos, and we are working on Port Harcourt market," he added.

On his part, Professor Alred Adegoke, the director, Consultancy Centre, University of Ilorin, the ISPO for the project, said a limited liability company was incorporated to achieve the purpose in line with CBN's demand. He added that they had to make sure everything is in place and succeeds.

"We technically own the farm. And we are giving them a target because it is not just about working but business-oriented.

"Everything you see on this farm was done by direct labour to cut cost. We didn't have to go along with the issue of the university procurement that would slow us down. We are hoping to replicate this in other areas of the university so that we can generate funds. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has been on strike for the past seven months and the government is saying there is no money. This is a goldmine and a game changer in this country in terms of funding," if it succeeds, and I hope it does," he submitted.

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Women Inclusion in Agriculture Critical to SDGs of Poverty Eradication, Prosperity For All



To ensure Nigeria remains on track in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, experts have warned that the restriction and exclusion of women in decision making processes across the food value chain remains a major constraint to the attainment of the goals of poverty eradication and

prosperity for all.

Specifically, Director, SDGs Forum, Dr. Tayo Aduloju, gave the warning at a meeting of the High-Level Forum on the SDGs, organised by the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, in Abuja, on Tuesday. Aduloju said the forum had observed that a number of factors, including gender-based issues, high imbalance in trade and foreign debt deficits in agriculture must be addressed and actions set in top gear to realise the SDGs in the country.

According to him, a number of factors such as

cultural restriction, patriarchy, societal norms and functions, especially in the rural areas, lock women out from benefiting from certain economic functions in the agriculture value chain, saying they must be urgently addressed.

Speaking on the High-Level Forum, Aduloju described the meeting as a nexus between agriculture and food security, adding that it aims to consolidate evidence on where Nigeria stands with respect to food security as well as to proffer accelerated solutions to identified challenges. On his part, NESG's Co-chair,

Private Sector, Agriculture and Food Security Policy Commission, Mr. Omoboyede Olusanya, pointed out that chronic and acute hunger, among others, were on the rise in the country. "This increase is due to farmer-herder conflict, socio-economic conditions, natural hazards, climate change and pests, including COVID-19 pandemic which slowed down, halted or reversed the last few years' hard gains," he added. According to him, Nigeria is not on track to meet the SDGs without a sustained deliberate, decisive and collaborative approach.

Insecurity Widening Demand-Supply Gap for Food Crops, NESG Warns



THE Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) has expressed concern over the huge demand-supply gap across all food crops due to the insecurity issue in the country.

Specifically, the Chief Operating Officer of NESG, Dr. Tayo Aduloju, stated this at the Agriculture and Food Security Nexus Validation and Consolidation Meeting in Abuja, on Tuesday. NESG COO warned that with the fast-declining rate of food production by farmers, the country is finding it difficult to meet its local demand, saying there is

need for an urgent action towards food sufficiency. Aduloju, who doubles as the Project Director for

a High-Level Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals, called for a collective response to close the demand-supply gap and to possibly produce for export. His words: "Some of the jobs we are creating in agriculture remain unsustainable, we are importing more agricultural products than we are exporting. "The cultivation rate is going down.

There is an urgency to act, there are things we can do internally and externally to make things better. "This is impacting heavily on our ability to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030." On his part, the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Agriculture

and Rural Development (FMARD), Mr. Earnest Umakhihe, noted that the SDGs remained a global call to put an end to poverty.

Represented by FMARD's Director Research and Planning, Mr. Ibrahim Tanimi, the permanent secretary stressed that SDGs seek to secure the planet, and ensure that everyone lives in peace and prosperity by 2030. According to him, the newly launched National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP) 2022-2027 serves as the prevailing framework for promoting research, extension service delivery, access to finance and insurance, agricultural land productivity and rural community livelihood.

Ellah Lakes takes over Enugu-owned Adarice

ELLAH Lakes Plc. has announced its takeover of Adarice Farms and associated assets from the Enugu State Government.

The firm said this in a notice published on the Nigerian exchange website and seen

The announcement was made after a memorandum of understanding was signed between Ellah Lakes and Enugu State technical committee on privatization and commercialisation.

"Ellah Lakes is pleased to announce the take-over of the management and operations of Adarice Farms & Associated Assets from Enugu State Government," the notice said.

To extend the rice company into a Staple Crop Processing Zone, Ellah Lakes partnered with Adarice in 2021.

The development was projected to generate at least 5,000 employments in two years, and construction was set to start right away.

"Adarice Farms is a Five

Thousand Hectare farming estate located in Adani, Uzo -Uwani Local Government Area In Enugu State, that has a Diversion Dam and a 15km main canal for irrigation, it also has secondary distribution

canals, to enable farming all year round," the notice said.

"The Farm has operated sub-optimally for several years and the Adani Staple Crop Processing Zone Food Company ("Adani SCPZ") a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), has been set

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Olam Agri Appoints Ashish Pande As Country Head In Nigeria

THE Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr. Ernest Umakhihe has inaugurated the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for the 45th Regular Meeting of the National Council on Agriculture and Rural Development



(NCARD), slated for Jos, Plateau State early September with

a charge to address critical issues affecting Development and Management in the Agricultural Sector.

During the event which took place at the Ministry, the Permanent Secretary stated that Agriculture is a critical Sector that touches our livelihoods and needs all the necessary attention deserved to make it

economically efficient, effective as well as achieve food and nutrition security.

Dr. Ernest Umakhihe pointed out that the Council was expected to fully explore the possibility of using the unique platform provided by the forthcoming NCARD to develop a workable policies and strategies that will enable the

Ministry to deliver on its mandate to the Nation, with a view to creating sustainable impacts in the Agricultural Sector of the Economy.

According to him, "the Council will play important role towards enhancing the efforts of the Present Administration's Agenda of uplifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in the next 10 years and the expectations both the Government and the General populace are high".

He tasked the LOC "to ensure that everything is put in place for the seamless meeting of the Council as well as to track the implementations of the resolutions of the last year's Council meeting as one of the major priorities".

The Permanent Secretary stated that the 45th regular meeting will hold from Tuesday 13th to Saturday 17th September, 2022 at Langfield, Rayfield Hotel, Jos, Plateau State.

In his welcome address, Director, Planning and Policy Coordination Department, Mr. Ibrahim Bello thanked the Permanent Secretary for his support and contributions towards the inauguration of the committee and He pledged that the committee would work assiduously towards achieving its set objectives.

The Term of Reference of the LOC includes; Put in place necessary arrangements to facilitate successful conduct of the Council meeting, Provide adequate and efficient secretariat to guarantee smooth conduct and accurate documentation of all proceedings, Adequate supply and distribution of conference materials, efficient conduct of participants and any other activities initiated to add value to the conduct of the event, Prepare and submit to management progress reports on activities of the committee leading to and after the conduct of the event; Ensure adequate publicity for the event and full active participation of stakeholders, among others.

African Traditional Medicine Day: Nigeria to Benefit From \$19.4bn Medicinal Plants Value Chain

EXPERTS have said Nigeria can earn over \$19.4 billion (N13.58 trillion) annually from traditional medicine (TM), urging the government to maximise the value chain to boost foreign exchange earnings and healthcare in the country.

The experts, speaking on the 2022 African Traditional Medicine Day (ATMD), celebrated every 31st August, said the date was set aside to promote the important role of the continent's rich biodiversity of medicinal plants and herbs in improving the well-being of the people.

Specifically, a Professor of Taxonomy and Economic Plants, Department of Botany, Faculty of Science, University of Lagos, Prof. Dele Olowokudejo, in an interview with The Guardian explained that proper collection, harvesting and

sale of wild medicinal plants opens another source of income to rural dwellers and the government. Also, Olowokudejo stressed that the professional packaging and marketing of herbal remedies or medicines offers the country a chance to earn foreign exchange, especially at a time when demand for foreign currency outstrips supply.

"The world market for herbal remedies in 1999 was calculated to be worth \$19.4 billion (N13.58 trillion)," he informed. According to the professor, TM could be effectively used in addressing viral and infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, Monkeypox, Marburg Virus and Ebola Virus, among others, pointing out that several herbal remedies had been used to treat viral and infectious diseases traditionally for a long time and ethnomedicinal literature has documented numerous medicinal plants harboring antiviral

molecules. However, Olowokudejo warned that intensive basic and applied research is required to test for efficacy, toxicity and adverse reactions of herbal plants before usage.

"Herbal sources provide researchers enormous scope to explore and bring out viable alternatives against viral and infectious diseases," he added. Meanwhile, other stakeholders recalled that, during the conference of the Traditional, Complementary and Alternative Medicine (TCAM) in June, the Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire, informed that plans were under way to ensure traditional medicine is legally absorbed into the country's Primary Health Care System to encourage the growth and utilisation of over 10,000 species of medicinal plants Nigeria is blessed with as raw materials for pharmaceutical, food and cosmetic industries.

Farmers Association Decries Invasion, Destruction of Farms in Kogi



THE Egbe Farmers Association (ECFA) has expressed worry over the continued invasion of villages and destruction of farmland in Egbeland, Yagba West Local Government Area of Kogistate.

The Secretary of ECFA, Mr. Dapo Adeyemi, in a media chat with journalists in Lokoja on Wednesday, said the association was concerned about the

incessant attack on the farming communities in Egbe and its environs which recently resulted in the death of a farmer. Adeyemi pointed out that in the last two weeks, there have been attacks by herdsmen on Egbe M'ekun and its surroundings, saying it has continued unabated and created fears and pandemonium in the area, as well as affected farming activities. According to him, villages and farmlands have been destroyed by the

ramaging Fulani herdsmen, noting that farmers can no longer go to their various farms to harvest produce. His words: "Scores of farmlands located along the Egbe-Eruku road from Aru, Ogele, Agbare to Ofo, have continued to suffer destruction from the hands of herdsmen. "Egbe Farmers' Association reported similar incidences on Okere road; Agbara-Ibo, Ogan and Igbo-Oba farmlands. Farmers on Koro road are not spared, as those farming the fertile valley corridors of Alani and others are parking and moving back towards less fertile Oke-Igbo and Igba-Ata farmlands that are nearer home.

"Also on August 28, four Gwari settler-farmers residing at Bareke area of Egbe were attacked, while one was killed, two others escaped with machete wounds at Ogele farmland. "The two survivors (Salifu

and Isiaku) are currently receiving treatment at Egbe hospital according to reports sent to the platform by Egbe Farmers Association," Adeyemi lamented. Also, the association secretary said the affected farming communities in Egbe Mekun have lost property, grains, yam and other produce worth millions of naira in an unfortunate incident in the past few weeks.

Adeyemi, on behalf of the association, called on the security agencies, the local and state governments to, as matter of urgency, protect the people of affected communities from further attacks and destruction of their farms. Meanwhile, the Kogi State Police Command Public Relation Officer (PPRO), William Ayah, who confirmed the incident, informed that police operatives have been deployed to the area to ensure peace is restored.



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FG Rehabilitates 12 Irrigation Systems For Kano Farmers



TO promote all year-round farming, the Federal Government through the Federal Ministry of Water Resources has handed over twelve rehabilitated irrigation systems to farmers in Kano.

The Minister of Water Resources, Suleiman Adamu, at the handing over ceremony on Wednesday, noted that the recipients were farmers under the Kano River Irrigation Scheme (KRIS), saying KRIS was one of the five existing irrigation schemes being rehabilitated and expanded by the present administration.

Adamu explained that the 7,521 hectares KRIS project was executed under the Hadejia Jama'are River Basin Development Authority with funding from the World Bank-supported Transforming Irrigation Management in Nigeria (TRIMING) scheme.

The minister disclosed that 25 sector-based projects, which covered a total area of 7,521 hectares, have been completed and handed over to farmers so far. Adamu informed that in line with the principles of the TRIMING Project, Water Users Associations were supported with workers to manage the sectoral offices, for proper operation and maintenance of the irrigation systems. The development, he added, was with the intention of empowering farming communities located around all TRIMING project irrigation schemes.

According to him, consultative meetings were held severally in all TRIMING schemes to deliberate on guidelines for Irrigation Service Fee collection, in line with the

Treasury Single Account (TSA) policy. However, the minister confirmed

that some successes had been recorded on the task, saying the same would be replicated in all public irrigation schemes nationwide. Also, Adamu appealed to the River Basin Development Authorities to make certain that farmers and their associations managed the canals, drains, roads, culverts and other infrastructure put in place for them effectively.

His words: "The contribution of Hadejia-Jama'are River Basin

Development Authority's management towards the performance of the management transfer process, which is from Government controlled to farmer-managed system is impressive. "This will guide future decisions of the government in transferring the management of irrigation systems from government-owned and controlled, to farmer managed systems." On his part, Managing Director, Hadejia-Jama'are River Basin

Development Authority, Maamun Aliyu, said the handing over was an opportunity for farmers to engage in all-year round farming and contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. Also, the National Project Coordinator, TRIMING Project, Peter Manjuk, lauded the Federal Government for providing facilities for dry season farming of about 37,000 hectares in five schemes.

Industrialist Laments Global Shortage of Wheat, Grains

THE Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Slabmark Group, has attributed the global shortage of wheat and other essential grains to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, urging Nigerians and other stakeholders to prioritise agriculture.

Balogun-Kuku stated this during a public lecture programme theme d: Agriculture: 'The Surest Way to Nigeria's Socio-Economic Transformation' organised by the African Agriculture Monitor Magazine at the Federal College of Agriculture, Akure, the Ondo state capital.

The Ibadan-based industrialist who noted that the continued scarcity of grains would make citizens to experience more hardships in the months ahead unless the warring countries reach a lasting truce. He expressed his displeasure, particularly over the current scarcity and high cost of bread, which is one of the staple foods of Nigerian people saying most people in the country can no longer afford again.

Speaking on the importance of agriculture and the need to prioritise it, especially now, he said: "Agriculture has been one of the oldest professions in the world from time immemorial.

"As a matter of fact, there is nothing you can compare to agriculture.

"Even during COVID-19 period when every other business was down to its lowest ebb, it was only agribusinesses that remained afloat. So, government and other stakeholders must place very high premium on agriculture now."

He advised young Nigerian graduates to embrace agriculture, urging them to stop chasing white collar jobs and said: "I think the best thing for them now is to fully embrace agriculture.

"There are lots of opportunities in agriculture that they can take advantage of and make very decent living from. Moreover, the raw materials that we export to other countries can be processed here in Nigeria for value addition, such that will tremendously boost the national economy.

"Look at Malaysia and Indonesia, they rely heavily on palm oil from which they generate billions of dollars annually.

"In the 70s, Nigeria used to be the largest producer of palm oil in the world. Now, we are number nine. So, we must place a very high premium on agriculture now."

He, however, stressed the need for concerted effort by the government and other critical stakeholders within the grains value chain to galvanize and



aggressively drive the grains development programmes in the country.

"Grains is used in producing staple foods such as semolina, bread, noodles and pasta, which form a regular part of meals in most urban and rural households in the country"

Speaking in the same vein, the guest speaker, Professor Taye Amos of the School of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology, Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA) harped on urgent need by both the federal and state governments to focus more on agriculture, saying: "this is the surest way for the country now".

The Senior Special Adviser to Governor Rotimi Akeredolu on agriculture, Pastor Akin Olotu, said the state government has been giving priority to agriculture in the state.

Olotu bemoaned the attitude of stakeholders who are fond of accusing both the states and federal government of not doing enough on agriculture.

He noted that: "Government is doing its best. Our training

institutions need to brace up and become 21st century compliant in their researches and the quality of graduates they turn out so as to be able to have more effective implementation of government policies on agric in the field"

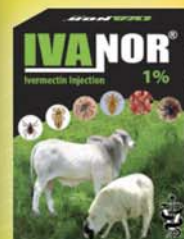
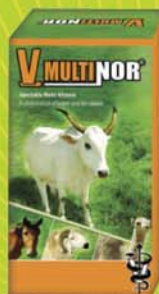
The African Agriculture Monitor Magazine also conferred an award of "Pillar of Agriculture in Nigeria" on Balogun-Kuku and awards on some eminent players in the Nigerian agricultural sector.

The United Nations has raised the alarm that no fewer than 5,000 children in war-ravaged northeastern Nigeria will die of starvation in the next two months unless the world raises the necessary funds for intervention.

RIVERS State governor, Nyesom Wike, on Friday said that his London meetings with the presidential candidate of the All-Progressives Congress (APC), Senator Bola Tinubu, Labour Party presidential candidate, Peter Obi, the presidential candidate of the People's Democratic Party, Alhaji Abubakar Atiku and former President Olusegun Obasanjo were in the interest of the nation.

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EUROPE (UK)
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ASIA (INDIA)
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