ResearchGate

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336058390

Overcoming the Challenges of Food Importation and Agricultural Development in Nigeria This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License Science and Ed...

Article · January 2017

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.570294

CITATIONS
0

READS
13

5 authors, including:



Adesina Wahab
Kwara State Institution
9 PUBLICATIONS **3** CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:

Maize Improvement View project

delination of irrigation field based on selected soil properties View project

All content following this page was uploaded by Adesina Wahab on 26 September 2019.

The user has requested enhancement of the downloaded file.

CONTINENTAL J. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Ashaye *et al.* (2017) 8 (1): 33 – 54 DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.570294

Review Article

Overcoming the Challenges of Food Importation and Agricultural Development in Nigeria

Ashaye, W.O[1], Wahab, A.A[3], Samaila, R.S[1], Daramola, R.B[1], Kupoluyi, O.O.[2]
[1]National Centre for Agricultural Mechanization, (NCAM) P.M.B. 1525, Ilorin, kwara State.
[2]Ministry of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State.
[3]Kwara State University (KWASU), Malete, P.M.B. 1530, Ilorin, Kwara State.
Corresponding Author: ashayewasiuoladele@yahoo.com

Abstract

The reversal of the fortunes of the Nigerian economy from sole dependence on oil exports to a more diversified economy where agriculture plays the leading role has become not just necessary but mandatory. This is more so in the light of the sharp drop in oil price in the international market coupled with the depressed demand for this cheap oil because of recent oil discoveries in many parts of the world especially in Africa. Agricultural imports in the country reached an all-time high in the year 2011 when Nigeria's food imports bill rose to N 1.1 trillion (about one-quarter of the country's annual budget. Concerted efforts by the immediate past Government of President Goodluck Jonathan spearheaded by the erstwhile Minister for Agriculture, Dr. Akinwunmi Adesina yielded some positive results. This paper however looks into ways of achieving more, by moving beyond food security and food sufficiency to making Nigeria's agriculture a major export earner's and contributor to the annual GDPs. The main challenges were identified to include a criminal neglect of the agricultural sector as a whole by past administration; rapid population growth, defective agricultural policies and poor execution of such policy. To overcome these challenges, a holistic approach to agricultural development, research, extension services and use of improved technologies was advocated and outlined. Finally, appropriate policies to cater for main aspects of the agricultural sector that will encourage exports as well as strengthening of existing institutions were recommended.

Keywords: food imports, agricultural policies, export promotion, food security and agricultural development.

Received: 12/11/16 Accepted: 11/02/17

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

Introduction

Poverty reduction, food security and wealth or employment generation are the key issues which reasonably developing nations are addressing. In the last three decades, little or no attention was being given to the agricultural sector because of the discovery of the crude oil, until the advent of the rural transformation policy which is the bedrock for the actualization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Vision 2020 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2030). However, the transformation of agricultural sector of the Federal Government which involves improvement in the supply of inputs/ materials, mechanization, increased in the output of commodities for internal/ income generation, foreign exchange earnings, and a strong coordination for development of agricultural businesses cannot be over-emphasized.

Nigeria, like some other developing countries is principally an agrarian nation who still face an ever increasing food crisis as the level of food production is yet to keep pace with its demand. There is worsening food insecurity, even with massive food importation as evidenced by rising food import bill (Okoye *et al*, 2008). Akinsanmi (2009) reports that Nigeria is one of the worst hit countries globally given her unprecedented level of acute food shortage and its accompanying ravaging malnutrition. Though, endowed with vast expanse of arable land for crop production and fresh waters for fish breeding, reports still show that Africa's largest country cannot produce food crops for her population which requires and had thus been depending on food importation to meet her domestic demands (Adepoju and Awodunmuyila, 2008). Chinaka *et al*. (2013) also reported that half of the people in developing countries like Nigeria live in rural areas; 2.1 billion people live on less than 2 US dollars a day and 880 million on less than 1 US dollar a day. Majority of these people considered poor depend on agriculture either directly or indirectly for their livelihoods (World Bank, 2007). In agriculture-based economies like Nigeria and even Nsukka agricultural zone of Enugu State, agriculture generates an average of 29% of the Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and employs 65% of the labour-force (Dimelu *et al*., 2012; Ubulua and Chukwu, 2008).

Food security goals are often pursued by most developing economies through imports, especially when growth in domestic food production is not adequate with the needs of

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

the ever growing population and consumer's preference at least in the short-term (Nnamerenwa, 2006). In so doing, countries usually embark upon trade mostly in those commodities that they enjoy a comparative disadvantage in production in other to attain global welfare. Imports form a core part of international trade and Nigeria is one of the major food importing countries of the world (Nnamerenwa, 2006). The farmers' incomes from export will therefore be static at best, if not dropping; hence, it becomes fairly difficult to sustain food production (World Bank, 2006).

Agricultural sector remained the mainstream of most developing countries. In addition, Agricultural enterprises should advance from agribusinesses to farmer's income; investors drive to value-chains of public-private partnership (PPP) with government and it shows tremendous growth potentials in labour intensive, and employment opportunities.

Agricultural sector is an engine room for sustaining growth of Nigerian economy (Olagunju, 2005). This sector remains significant in the Nigerian economy despite the strategic importance of the oil sector since 1970s.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP, 1995) about 215 million (43%) of Sub-Saharan African (SSA) population was chronically undernourished and projected to reach 315 million by the year 2010 (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, DESA, 2000). Therefore, by 2020; it can be safely assumed that this figure may be in the regions of 450 million. However, it has become relevant to pay more attention to food production than importation issues.

If food production is to keep pace with rapid population growth and demand for food, a new and creative approach to agricultural development must be developed. In a country where millions of people are not adequately fed, Nigeria's unexploited food resources must be unearthed and utilized. The rural farmers constitute the backbone of the Nigerian agricultural sector producing about 80 percent of the total national agricultural output (Fayinka, 2004) by using traditional methods under rain-fed conditions.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

It is important to emphasize that despite the potential benefits stemming from the expansion of the agricultural sector through various government efforts, its overall productivity remains low and the poor performance of agriculture is most clearly evidenced by the low standard of living of these rural farmers (Dogon-daji, 2005).

This was evident in the growing advocacy for improving Nigeria agricultural production so as to achieve sustainable food security. A lot of effort has been directed at finding appropriate institutions for organizing millions of small scale farmers towards achieving food security (Eze, 2009) through increased food production and agricultural cooperative society which has been described as the appropriate vehicle for harnessing and polling the resources of millions of small holder farmers, processors and producers together in other to enjoy the benefit of large scale production.

Most socio-economic development in Africa is mainly agrarian with about 70 percent of the labour force and 80 percent of its poor people which are directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture, live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for livelihood (NEPAD, 2004). Agriculture still remained the mainstay of the economy of most African countries, yet current estimates indicates that some 200 million or about 28 percent of Africa's population are chronically hungry (Iheke, 2008). High population growth rate which leads to increase in the demand for agricultural products, natural and human disaster (drought, flood, land degradation, etc.) as well as civil conflicts in some parts of Africa contributes to this alarming situation and accounted for high imports and dependence on food aids by most African countries thereby posing huge problem of food insecurity (NEPAD, 2004).

A number of studies have indicated that agricultural production in Nigeria is still characterized by small farm holders (Onugu, 2008; Obinyan, 2000; Ijere and Mbanasor, 2000). Perceptibly, the socio-economic characteristics of the small farm holders have crucial ramification on agricultural production. Food production could be affected by the farmers age, access to credit, gender, farm size, educational level, farming experience etc. it is on record that 50% of world's population is dependent on subsistence agriculture (Guy, 2001; Obinyan, 2000; Olujenyo). Considering the prime importance of agricultural production to achieving food security and its crucial role in the nations socio-economic

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

transformation in terms of its contribution to the GDP and the fact that domestic supply has not been able to meet up with domestic demand, there is therefore the need to examine those socio-economic factors that influenced agricultural production so as to step up food supply as its demands rise daily.

Climate change also affects agriculture in several ways; including its direct impacts on food and livestock's production. Available evidence shows that climate change is global, likewise its impacts; but the most adverse effects will be felt mainly by developing countries, especially those in Africa, due to their low level of coping capabilities (Nwafor 2007; Jagtap 2007). Climate change, which is attributable to the natural climate cycle and human activities, has adversely affected agricultural productivity in Africa (Ziervogel *et al*., 2006) and Nigeria is one of these developing countries (Odjugo, 2010).

Consequently, farmers who constitute the bulk of the poor in Africa, face prospects of tragic crop failures, reduced agricultural productivity, increased hunger, malnutrition and diseases (Zoellick, 2009). It is projected that crop yields in Africa may fall by 10-20% by 2050 or even up to 50% due to climate change (Jones and Thornton, 2003) because African agriculture is predominantly rain-fed and hence fundamentally dependent on the vagaries of weather.

This study was informed by the declining food production in Nigeria. It examines how agricultural policies adopted by various government in Nigeria to address various agricultural practices, under-development problems, inequality, high poverty incidence, foreign earnings, policies and unemployment have fared. The insignificant impact of these policies constitutes a threat to Nigeria's vision of becoming one of the twentieth strongest economies by the year 2020 and by extension sustainable development goals by 2030. This philosophy of overcoming food importation policies and practices as recommended by policy makers and other stakeholders in agriculture cannot be over-emphasized.

There is therefore the need for concerted efforts toward tackling this menace of food importation and overdependence on foreign products.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

Overview of Food Importation Practices and Policies

As the people of Africa strive to overcome poverty and advance economic growth, this phenomenon threatens to deepen vulnerabilities, erode hard-won gains and seriously undermine prospects for development (WBGU, 2004: Zoellick, 2009).

Nigeria, like some other developing countries is principally an agrarian nation who still face an ever increasing food crisis as the level of food production is yet to keep pace with demand. There is worsening food insecurity, even with massive food importation as evidenced by rising food import bill (Okoye *et al*., 2008). Akinsanmi (2009) reports that Nigeria is one of the worst hit countries globally given her unprecedented level of acute food shortage and its accompanying ravaging malnutrition. Though endowed with vast expanse of arable land for crop production and fresh waters for fish breeding, reports still show that Africa's largest country cannot produce food crops her population requires and had thus been depending on food importation to meet her domestic demands (Adepoju and Awodunmuyila, 2008).

Agricultural practices and food production are inseparable concepts. Agriculture contributes greatly to the Nigerian economy in various ways is a settled debate. Agricultural economy was the basic economic feature of the long and short distance traders who traded substantially across the trans-Saharan trade routes. Nigeria could not boast of sustainable local food production which was essentially subsistence alongside the cash crop production among its contemporaries after trade liberalization. The major issue here was that subsequent government's administration whom does not favour agriculture and local contents although, in part, has disarticulated and disorientated the local agricultural and food production philosophy, and eliminate the primary objectives of food production (Adebowale, 2013).

On September 17th, 2011, the Governor of Osun State in the South-West of Nigeria, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola claimed that statistics reveals that over 80 percent of the foods in the state are imported (The Nation, 2011). In fact, Nigeria, as the greater part of the African continent imports foods. Though, this experience appears worrisome. Nigeria which was known for surplus agricultural and food production in the early 60's is now deficient in production and other line of food postharvest handling. A country that was

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

at a time able to point to a history of food sufficiency even in the colonial era appears to continue to pay lip services to the dreadful problems of food shortages, scarcity, hunger and undernourishment.

As a result, there is a growing advocacy for improving Nigeria agricultural production so as to achieve sustainable food security. This was in line with Eze (2009) who said a lot of efforts has been directed at finding appropriate institutions for organizing millions of small scale farmers towards achieving food security (through increased food production) and agricultural cooperative society which has been described as the appropriate vehicle for harnessing and polling the resources of millions of small holder farmers and producers together to enjoy the benefits of large scale production.

A number of studies have indicated that agricultural production in Nigeria is still characterized by small farm holders (Onugu, 2008; Obinyan, 2000; Ijere and Mbanasor, 2000). Perceptibly, the socio-economic characteristics of the small farm holders have crucial ramification on agricultural production. Food production could be affected by the farmers age, access to credit, gender, farm size, educational level, farming experience etc. it is on record that 50% of world's population is dependent on subsistence agriculture (Guy, 2001; Obinyan, 2000; Olujenyo). Considering the prime importance of agricultural production to achieving food security and its crucial role in the nations socio-economic transformation in terms of its contribution to the GDP and the fact that domestic supply has not been able to meet up with domestic demand, there is therefore the need to examine those socio-economic factors that influenced agricultural production so as to step up food supply.

In order to boost food production, concerted efforts on (medium and long terms) had been made by successive governments. This is evidenced by the establishment of many institutions, parastatals and agencies. Some of which includes the establishment of the Federal Department of Rural Development (FDRD) in 1976; this has metamorphosised into Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) to coordinate, integrate rural and agricultural development and also to initiate and develop appropriate strategies on special projects which will help to increase agricultural productivity and create employment opportunities in the country.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

Since 1972, the Nigerian states and its successive government have come up with programmes and policies aimed at promoting agricultural practices and food production. These programmes and policies are basically infrastructural, financial and structural in orientation. These are listed below in 1972, National Accelerated Food Production Programmes (NAFFP) was established but it was largely financed by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This also explains the possible limitation of the programme. In 1975, it was Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) while in 1976, the country embraced Operation Feed the Nation (OFN). 1980 saw Green Revolution Programme (GRP). From 1977 to 1991, it was Rural Banking Programme (RBP). Community Banking Programmes of 1991 – 2007. Root and Tuber Expansion Programmes (RTEP) in (2000). Between 2000 to 2016 (FMARD), Nigeria also witnessed several policies aimed at addressing and resolving problems in agricultural practices and food production, e.g. Microfinance policy, Presidential Initiative on Agriculture, 2002; Presidential Initiative on Cassava Production and Marketing Reports, 2003; Preferred Sector Allocation of Credit, Seven- Point Agenda, Civil Service Reform, Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA-2013), Transformation Programmes such as (Agricultural Transformation Agenda Support Programme (ATASP 1&2), The Single Treasury Accounts (TSA), Whistle-blowing and Zero tolerance for Corruption of the present Administration.

Challenges Posed by Import Dependency on Agricultural Development in Nigeria

Lynn (1989), in reviewing agricultural development in Africa, noted that a quarter of a century after independence, few would dispute that the African industrial sector was in crisis. His survey showed that 343 factories in over 16 countries, spanning sectors as diverse as beverages, textiles, pulp and paper, flour milling, sugar refining and cement, 23 percent of the companies were found to have ceased production and a further 57 percent were functioning at less than 70 percent of nominal capacity-well below their break-even point. It appears that no African country has been spared.

Hence, this picture of steady decay explained why a formerly sufficient continent in food production now imports almost all its food to prevent hunger and starvation among its poor people. Nigeria is not excluded from this general picture of backwardness, policy somersault, local content and steady decay in food production, importation and industrialization.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

Over the years, previous Nigerian government have attempted (through various programme initiatives and policies), to address the challenges facing agriculture and to ensure its development. This Okuneye (1995) posited in his inaugural lecture titled "Nigerian agriculture on the run: yet refuses to move", reported that it is paradoxical to note that with its abundant resources, Nigeria still exhibits high levels of food insecurity. The number of hungry people in Nigeria is put at over 53 million which is about 30 per cent of the country's total population of roughly 150 million. Consequently, the incomes of most families are not adequate for the basic sustenance of life. Also, according to the International Food Policy Research Institute, Global Hunger Index classified Nigeria's hunger situation as "serious". It posited that Nigeria is also one of the five countries with half of the world's malnourished children (IFPRI, 2010). Adewumi *et al*. (2010) also mentioned that in 2009, about 6 million children are said to be malnourished in Nigeria. They further highlighted that malnutrition is a major cause of child mortality, which tends to reduce labour availability for farm work. This in turn leads to low farm output causing higher food prices. The yearly loss of about 6 million children may reduce the number of farmers in our villages, since majority of the rural dwellers in Nigeria are not poor but uninformed about their nutritional status. Despite huge resources from oil, Nigeria is characterized by hunger, high rate of youth unemployment, job cuts and high food imports with the attendant result that more than 50 percent of the population is living below the poverty line of $1.75 per day. Hunger and malnutrition continues to plague the Nigerian population. During the period 1970-1979, the average annual deficit in per capita daily calories intake was 24.4 per cent. This declined to 23.58 per cent within 1980-1989. By 2006, it fell to as low as 11.34 per cent (CBN, 1993; ADB, 2007).

Against this background, the growth of Nigerian economy with reference to agriculture has been import-driven rather production-driven. The challenge that is currently confronting Nigeria's agriculture is related to the problem of low productivity in production resulting from inefficient use of resources and crude implements.

Aside petroleum exploration, agricultural productivity is a major component of the nation's gross domestic products. The sector contributed 41.59% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Nigerian economy in the second quarter of year 2011 (CBN, 2011).

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

On the average, the trends in the sector's contribution to the nation's GDP hovered around 35% between 2010 and first quarter of 2015.

Munack, (2002) also reported that in the world today, the demands on agriculture was imposed by different groups are numerous:

The society asks agriculture for competitiveness, protection of the environment and social compatibility.

The consumer wants qualitatively excellent products at low prices, all over the year; palatable, healthy and nutritious foods (Spore, 2006); landscaping with no disturbance by noise or odour.

The industry demands are: high-quality, low-cost food and raw materials; renewable resources; pharmaceutical products.

The farmers demand increase of income; labour safety and reduction in working time; clear and reliable legal principles for future development of the farm.

Although survey statistics showed a slight increase in per capita daily calorie intake with decline in the proportion of undernourished people from 13 per cent in 1990-1992 to 9 per cent in 2000-2002 and 7 per cent in 2002-2004 (FAO), 2005; IFPRI, 2006). The fact however remains that domestic production of most food commodities, urbanization, inflation and demand from neighboring countries are among some of the factors that continued to affect food availability and accessibility to most Nigerians (Vision 20:2020, 2009). The noted improvement could therefore be traceable to the continued dependence of the country on importation. Also, All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) South-West also reported that over $ 6 billion dollars are used to import fish and frozen chicken annually, this is very sad for 'giant of Africa' (Anonymous, 2015). Also, in the last quarter 2016, there was a report that Nigeria spends an estimated 125 Billion Naira importing fish every year. However, Nigerian farmers can therefore decide to be a major player in the farming sector (Agro-Info, 2015).

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

This situation explains part of the problems facing poor households in Nigeria. The cost of inadequate diets to families and nations are considerably high. These include increased vulnerability to diseases and parasites, reduced strength for tasks which requires physical efforts, reduction of the benefit from schooling and training programmes and general lack of vigour, alertness and vitality. The outcomes of these are reduction in the productivity of people in the short and long terms, sacrifice in output and incomes, and increasing difficulties for families and nations to escape the cycle (Omotesho *et al*., 2006).This is because the modern practices can only be embarked upon by a post-colonial revolutionary government and a truly sovereign state that can engender progressive but sovereign policies for the annexation of domestic development energies backed up by policies flowing from the same basis.

The Agricultural sector must not only be seen to grow but must match the per capita needs of the population of that society (Weblow, 1997). These concerns were further aggravated by the global economic downturn of 2008 which led to the collapse of many developed and developing economies.

Overcoming Food Importation through Holistic Agricultural Development

Agriculture still remained the mainstay of the economy of most African states, yet current estimates indicates that some 200 million or 28 percent of Africa's population are chronically hungry (Iheke, 2008). High population growth rate which leads to increase in the demand for agricultural products, natural and human disaster (drought, flood, fuel, food scarcities, land degradation) as well as civil conflicts in some parts of Africa which contributes to this alarming situation and accounted for high imports and dependence on food aids by most African countries thereby posing huge problem of food insecurity (NEPAD 2004), fuel and food scarcities.

In Nigeria, Food production rate is far lower than population growth; as it creates a wide gap between the demand and supply of food. This was evident in the observed food deficit and the upward trend in the prices of food stuffs in the market over the years (Igwe and Esonwune, 2011; ADF, 2005; CBN, 2002). The resulting effect of this imbalance

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

between demands and supply of food is malnutrition, poverty and deteriorating living conditions (Igwe and Esonwune, 2011; Nadozie and Ibe, 2000; Eze, 2009).

However, for agricultural development to be meaningful and impactful, it must of necessity be holistic and sustainable. Without be-labouring the fact, the bulk of Nigerian imports are on agricultural commodities. For this trend to be reversed and to turn Nigeria to a net exporter of agricultural commodities, urgent action must be taken on several fronts to ensure a quantum leap in agricultural productivity.

The Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA-2011) of the immediate past administration is a laudable initiative, whose potential have been tampered with by the perennial Nigerian factor syndrome. Being that as it may, giant strides have been made to jump-start development in the agricultural sector. Contributions of this sector to the GDP, as earlier noted, have increased appreciably. The numbers of jobs created under this agenda (about 58 million) have been massive; even though the actual numbers may not be as claimed. However, President Goodluck E. Jonathan noted that the country's food production has expanded by 21 million metric tons within three years. It also reported that a food import bill has declined from N1.1 trillion in 2009 to N634 billion by 2013 and continues to decline. It should be recalled that before now, Nigeria with over 84 million hectares of arable land was spending billions of naira importing basic food items which it can produce. Of recent, the number of seed companies has increased from 11 to 134 within the past three years, making high quality seeds available to farmers. The fertilizer sector is booming accordingly (former President Jonathan) with N900 billion naira ($5 billion dollars) of new investments that can make Nigeria self-sufficient in fertilizer and turn us into a net exporter of fertilizer. The price of fertilizers is expected to decline and farmers will be able to afford more fertilizers to boost their food production since more private sector investors are into fertilizer production. Within the past three years, over 14.5million famers have been reached through the Growth Enhancement Scheme (GES) program (Tribune, 2015). This GES arm of the ATA of the former administration has major positives that should be supported and promoted. It is a holistic approach to providing inputs to farmers at subsidized and affordable rates compared to others.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

Also, State government partnerships with foreign investors must be encouraged and monitored to give the desired objectives. For example, Taraba state is in partnership with US investor-Dominion Farms to produce rice on 30,000 ha of land; Ekiti, Enugu, Kaduna, Rivers and Ogun States are also in partnership with Agricultural Companies (AGCO) the manufacturers of Massey Ferguson in an investment worth over $100 million in new tractor assembly plants, (tractor parts) and supply services (Olomola *et al*., 2014).

Partnerships between FMARD and states that have promoted the development of both crops and livestock's under the growth enhancement support (GES) scheme which needs to be fostered and encouraged. The cooperation of these three tiers of government in the area of value chain development of fruits concentrates which are produced in Benue and Cross River States; while Tomatoes and sorghum processing plants are in Kano and Jigawa States respectively. This value addition cooperation if well sustained and up-scaled across the country it will encourage import substitution and invariably increases production (Olomola *et al*., 2014).

The momentum must be sustained and even increased in other to achieve more of the several targets set under the ATA initiative.

Conclusively, cassava, maize and rice sub-sectors have particularly enjoyed massive investment which if sustained, will in the not too distant future drive down the import bills incurred by the country on food by about 70% with government commitment to world food supply and inputs to agriculturally standard.

In view of these, Matanmi (1991) advocated that the main problem facing the developing world today particularly Nigeria, is not the lack of efficient technologies and scientific discoveries needed for economic growth and rural change but that of their effective utilization for the social and economic transformation of the country. This, he contended would depend to a great extent, on the speed with which the technology is transferred from the source (Agricultural Universities, Research Institutes, Technologies Development Centre's and Extension Agencies) to the ultimate users so that they clearly understand, accept (adopt) and apply it in their day-to-day agricultural practices. However, with the very high population growth trends in the country (about 3.5% per

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

annum) coupled with the crude agricultural production methods employed, there is the fear that the resultant low productivity cannot match the food demand of the nation. This situation may worsen in the nearest future if drastic measures are not taken immediately to arrest the imminent food crisis or insecurities.

The place of agriculture in the development and growth of the Nigerian economy was summarized in the Technical Reports of the Committee on Vision20: 2020 (Vision 2020; 2009).

Firstly, the committee recognized the fundamentals of food production and the need for agricultural development.

Secondly, it was obvious that policies should be directed towards financing, irrigation, infrastructures, and inputs.

Thirdly, institutions were also created to meet the needs for the provision of surplus food to avert poverty, malnutrition and hunger.

The Tables (1, 2) and chart (figure 1) that follow shows the trend of the steady decline of the contribution of agriculture to Nigeria's GDP especially since the discovery of oil in the 70s. This downward trend was checked and the GDP hovered around 35 % for most of the years especially after year 2000.

The present realities of the dwindling oil revenues and the economic recession makes the reversal of this trend a top priority of the Nigerian government. This has been enunciated by no less a personality than President Muhammadu Buhari who stated that agriculture will be one of the main focuses of his administration since first quarter of 2016.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

Table 1: Sectorial contributions to gross domestic products (GDP) in Nigeria (1960-2002)

Sector	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2002
	←			(%)		→
Agriculture	64.1	47.6	30.8	39.0	35.7	28.35
Manufacturing	4.8	8.2	8.1	8.2	3.4	5.5
Crude petroleum	0.3	7.1	22.0	12.8	47.5	40.6
Others	30.8	37.1	39.1	40.0	13.4	25.55

Source: (CBN, 2000).

Table 2: Food production and demand with shortfalls and importation (Million Mt)

Description	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Production	86.70	89.25	93.35	95.64	98.74	100.41	102.12	103.86
Food demand	87.23	89.55	96.26	99.03	101.87	104.63	107.46	110.37
Shortfall	(0.53)	(0.30)	(2.91)	(3.43)	(3.13)	(4.22)	(5.34)	(6.51)
Food import	0.67	0.58	2.95	3.47	3.24	4.48	5.59	6.91

Source: (FOS, 2002).

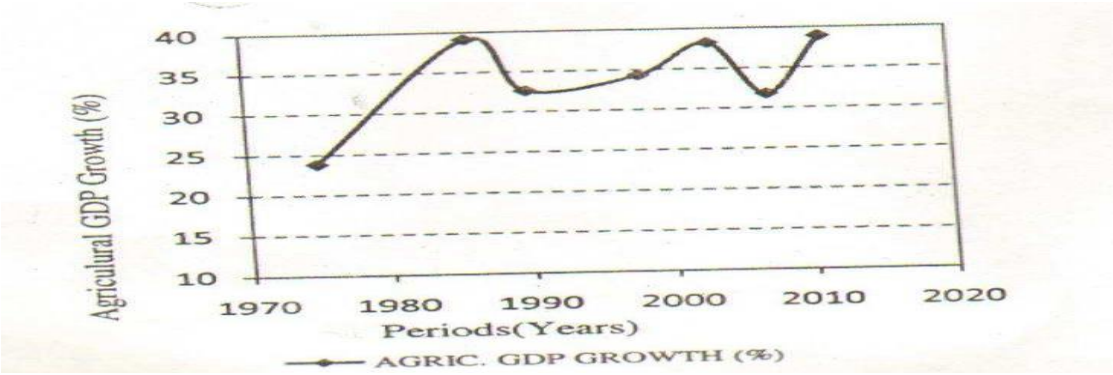


Figure 1: AGRICULTURAL GDP GROWTH TRENDS from 1970-2020

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

Agricultural Export Promotion through Policy Implementation and Institutional Support

Achieving food security as a people is priority if we are to make the needed savings on massive food imports. This will ensure that funds are available for infrastructural development needed to boost the Nigerian economy. We however, need to look beyond this and aim to promote our agriculture to a level where we become a major exporter of food and agricultural raw materials. This is achievable because we were once there.

The right combination of political will, appropriate and workable policies, as well as establishment and strengthening of relevant institutions will make this a reality. The mention of political will as the first in the right mix of ingredients of transforming Nigeria to an exporter of agricultural commodities is deliberate. It is a well-known fact that well-crafted policies and establishment of well-designed institutions have not been our major challenge as a people. Where we seemed to have missed it consistently is in the area of having the right political will to see these laudable programmes through. It is hoped that the present government led by President Muhammadu Buhari will provide the much needed political will to return Nigeria to the golden era where agriculture was the mainstay of the economy.

With respects to formulating the right policies, the President has stated that, the goal of his administration is for Nigeria to attain self-sufficiency in food production and export over 10 million metric tonnes of grains and processed foods to the ECOWAS region and beyond by 2019 during one of his speeches at the ECOWAS summit in 2015 (Nigerian Dailies, 2015).

Policies need well established, well-funded, and well-motivated institutions to drive and execute them. Existing Institutions such as Federal and State Ministries of Agriculture, Universities and other Research Institutes, Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC), Nigerian Export-Import Bank (NEXIM), CBN, Bank of Industry (BOI), Bank of Agriculture (BOA), Marketing Boards, ATA, ACGSF, National Quarantine Services, NGO'S and other Agencies, need to be strengthened and given the needed support to

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

carry out their statutory responsibilities. Other institutions may be established to cater for other areas not covered by these institutions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Nigeria's agricultural potential is one of the highest that can be obtained on the planet. The paradox however, is that with these huge agricultural resources, Nigeria's food import bill rose to as high as N1.1 trillion in 2009 which has been increased to ₦6.6 trillion Naira in second quarter of 2016 respectively; the money which is more than Nigeria 2016 national budget of ₦6.06 trillion naira (Ships and Ports, 2016). Our main food challenge began with the discovery of the black gold (petroleum) in the late 1960s. However, the present reality where oil prices have plummeted requires that we return to our first love; Agriculture.

The tide needs to be turned quickly if we are to transform from being a net importer of basic food items to a net exporter of food and agricultural raw materials. To turn the tide, a holistic approach must be taken to agricultural development through the formulation of appropriate policies supported by strong institutions. All stakeholders in the agricultural sector must brace up to this challenge. The good news is that, this is not an uncharted course.

It is a terrain with which we are very familiar with. We can then reclaim our position of becoming the giant of Africa in agricultural production and export if we are all committed to it.

References

Adebowale, A.S. (2013): Food Production, Hunger and Poverty of Public Policy in Nigeria: A Political Economic Analysis. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, June 2013. Vol.2 No.2. 20-25.

Adepoju, A.A. and Awodunmuyila, D.J. (2008). Economics of Cocoyam Production and Marketing in Ekiti State , Nigeria. *Research Journal of Applied Sciences* 3(2): 95-98.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

Adewole, A.A. and Sikiru, T.K. (2003). Poverty as an issue in rural development in international review of politics and development vol, number 1, January.

Adewumi, M.O., Babatunde R.O. and Ayodele O (2010). The Anthropometric Status of Farming Households in Kogi State, Nigeria. Paper presented at the Joint 3rd African Association of Agricultural Economists (AAAE) and 48th Agricultural Economists Association of South Africa (AEASA) Conference, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-23, 2010.

Akinsanmi,G. (2009). Nigeria: Food Security – Transforming Potentials to Empowerment. *This day National Daily*. Retrieved September 16, 2010 from htt://www.allafrica.com/Nigeria/ *International Journal of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development* 4 (2): 2011.

Aregbesola, R.A. (2011). "The Challenges of Hunger and Poverty in Osun State in the Nation Newspaper, September 17th.

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) report: various issues

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN Report: 2001; 2005: 2007).

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), 2000.

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), 2011: Monetary Policy Circular. CBN, No 20.

Central Bank of Nigeria and Agricultural Development Bank (CBN, 1993: ADB, 2007).

Chinaka E.C, Akinplu E.C, Okoye, B.C, Asumugha G.N. (2013). Determinants of Adoption of National Root Crop Research Institute on Cocoyam Production Package among Smallholders Women Farms in Enugu State. Proceeding of the 43rd Annual Conference of Agricultural Society of Nigeria, Abuja. National Root Crop Research Institute, Umudike, Abia State.

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), (2000): "Multi Criteria of Agribusiness: The Case of Marketing Cooperatives and Juice-Producing Companies" *International Journal of Agribusiness* 18(4): 5433-558.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

Dimelu M.U, Okoye A.C, Okoye B.C, Agwu A. E, Aniedu O.C, and Akinpelu A.O (2012). Determinants of Gender Efficiency of Smallholder Cocoyam Farmer in Nsukka Agricultural Zones of Enugu state, *Nigeria. Sci. Res. And Essay* 4 (1): 4.

Dongo-Daji, S.D., (2005). Economics of Dry Season Onion Production Technology in Sokoto and Kebbi States. A Ph.D thesis submitted to the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Extension. Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto, Nigeria.

Eze, C.M. (2009). The Privatized State and Mass Poverty in Nigeria: The Factor of Economic Development since 1980s. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*. 3(10); 443-450.

Fayinka, F.A. (2004). Food Security and Production in Nigeria: Challenges under Democratic Dispensation. Paper presented at the 9th ARMTI Annual Lecture held on March 24th, 2004.

Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), 2005. Food Agricultural Organization and the State of food insecurity in the world. Rome: FAO.

Federal Office of Statistics (FOS): 2002.

Ijere and Mbanasor (2002). Agribusiness Development and Nigeria Agriculture In Nwosu, A.C. *et al.*, (ed) Agricultural Transformation in Nigeria. Owerri Novelty Industrial Enterprises Ltd.

Jones, P.G. and Thornton, P.K. (2006). Mapping climate vulnerability and poverty in Africa report to the Department for International Development, ILRI, Nairobi, Kenya. Pp171.

Jagtap, S. (2007). Managing Vulnerability to Extreme Weather and Climate Events: Implications for Agriculture and Food Security in Africa. Proceedings of the International Conference on Climate Change and Economic Sustainability held at Nnamdi Azikwe University, Enugu, Nigeria 12-14 June.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

International Food Policy Research Institute, (2006). Reaching Sustainable Food Security for all by 2020: Getting the Priorities and Responsibility. Washington D.C: IFPRI

Lynn Krieger Mytelks (1989): The unfulfilled Promise of African Industrialization" in *African Studies Review* Volume 32, No. 3. pp. 77-137.

Matanmi, B.M. (1991). "How Agricultural Extension Benefits Rural Women Involved in Agriculture" NOMA, ABU, Zaria, Nigeria.

Munack, A. (2002). Agriculture and the Environment: New Challenges for Engineers. Vol. IV December. International Commission of Agricultural Engineering (CIGR). Proceedings of the International Conference on Climate Change and Economic Sustainability held at Nnamdi Azikwe University, Enugu, Nigeria 12-14 June.

Nwafor, J.C. (2007). Global climate change: The driver of multiple causes of flood intensity in Sub-Saharan Africa-paper presented at the International Conference on Climate Change and Economic Sustainability held at Nnamdi Azikwe University, Enugu, Nigeria. 12-14 June.

Obiyan, E. (2000). The Private Sector and Agricultural Transportation. Nwosu, A.C *et al.*, Agricultural Transformation Agricultural Transformation in Nigeria.

Odjugo, P.A.O. (2010). General Overview of Climate Change Impacts in Nigeria. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 29(1): 47-55.

Onugu, C.U. (2008). Advancing Women Participation in Agricultural Development through Cooperative Societies: The Case of Women in Agricultural Programme in Anambra State, *Nigerian Journal of Cooperative Economics and Management*. 4 (1): 82-90.

Olomola, A and Adesugba, M. (2014). Transforming Nigerian Agriculture in the context of a Green Economy: Financing Challenges, Opportunities and Mechanisms. The proceedings of the 15th Annual National Conference of Nigeria Association of Agricultural Economist (NAAE), held at Niger-Delta University, Wilberforce-Island, Bayelsa State.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

Okoye A.C, Dimelu M.U, Okoye BC, Agwu A.E (2009). Gender Constraint in Smallholder Cocoyam Production in Enugu North Agricultural Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. Proceeding of the 43rd Annual Conference of Agricultural Society of Nigeria, Abuja.

Okoye, B.C; Onyenweaku, C.E; Ukoha, O.O; Asumugha, G.N and Aniedu, O.C (2008) Determinants of Labour Productivity on Small – Holder Cocoyam Farms in Anambra State, Nigeria. *Journal of Scientific Research and Essay.* vol, pp 559-561.

Okuneye, P.A. (1995) "Nigerian Agriculture on the Move, yet Refuses to Move". In his 2nd Inaugural Lecture on the Series of University of Agriculture, (UNAAB) Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Omotesho, O.A; M.O.A, A. M-L and O. E. Ayinde (2006). Determinants of Food Security Among the rural farming households in Kwara State, Nigeria. *Africa Journal of General Agriculture* 2(1): 8-15 http://www.asopah.org.

Spore, R.W. (2006). Sept; 101(3). 514-25. *Journal of Applied Microbiology*.

Ubulua A.O, Chukwu L.I (2008). Potential and Constraints of Cocoyam Production in Nigeria. Proceeding of the 42nd Annual Conference of Agricultural Society of Nigeria @ Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Pp. 298-302.

Vision 2020, (2009). Report of the Vision 2020, National Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Food Security, 2009. Abuja: FMA. General Studies in the Social Sciences and Citizenship Education; Some Fundamental Topics edited by F.A. Adekola and G.T. Ijaya.

Weblow, (1997). General Studies in the Social Sciences and Citizenship Education; Some Fundamental Topics (UNILORIN) edited by Prof. F.A. Adekola, Dr. Gafar T. Ijaya

WFP, (1995). World Food Programme Annual report.

Zoellick, Robert B.A. (2009). Climate Smart Future: The Nation Newspaper, Vintage Press Limited, Lagos, Nigeria. Page 18.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

Ziervogel, G.A. *et al. (*2006). Adapting to Climate Variability: Pumpkins, People and Pumps. Natural Resource Forum. 30. 294-305.

Ziervogel, G.A. *et al*. (2006). Climate Variability and Change: Implications for Households Food Security. Assessments of Impacts and Adaptations to Climate Change (AIACC) working paper No. 20, January, 2006. The AIACC Project Office, International START Secretariat, Washington DC, USA.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License

View publication stats