

Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria

Number: Twenty-sixth Annual Conference

Theme: Redefining Agricultural Extension Practice to Cope with Emergencies

Date: 26-29, April 2021

Venue: Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria

ISSN: 1595 – 1421. <http://aesonnigeria.org/ConfProc> . **Email:** editorinchief@aesonnigeria.org

Redefining Agricultural Extension Practice to Cope with Emergencies

<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jae.v26i1.1S>

Engr. Frank Satumari Kudla

Director Federal Department of Extension Services

Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Abuja, Nigeria

satumari2001@yahoo.co.uk

A key note address presented at the 26th edition of the Annual Conference of Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria (AESON), held at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, between 26th – 29th April, 2021

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

It is my pleasure and privilege to welcome all of you to this unique conference of professionals in agricultural extension in Nigeria

The theme for this conference “Redefining Agricultural Extension Practice to Cope with Emergencies’ is most apt in the circumstances of the socio-economic situation around the globe and quite specifically our nation Nigeria. As we are all aware nations are developing coping strategies consequent on the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Nigeria emergencies currently exist in rural communities because of the plethora of insecurity issues like farmers’/herders’ clashes, banditry, kidnapping and diverse impacts of climate change such as drought and desertification, erosion and widespread flooding affecting the already distressed socio-economic conditions of farm families.

Even before COVID 19 pandemic, the agricultural sector had been identified by the government for economic recovery and social transformation particularly in the effort to attain national food security, diversify foreign exchange earnings base of the country, improve rural livelihood, and provide employment for the teeming young people, among others. Our Ministry has taken up this onerous responsibility and renewed our commitment to increase agriculture contribution to the GDP. The revitalization of the National Agricultural Extension System (NAES) comes as veritable means to achieve these set goals. Recall when this administration came to office on 29th May, 2015, it set up a committee to review the status of extension services nationwide with a view to chart a way forward to revitalize the national extension system.

The development of a stand-alone policy for the agricultural extension subsector has become a fulcrum to drive the government determination to a logical conclusion in the

Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria

Number: Twenty-sixth Annual Conference

Theme: Redefining Agricultural Extension Practice to Cope with Emergencies

Date: 26-29, April 2021

Venue: Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria

ISSN: 1595 – 1421. <http://aesonnigeria.org/ConfProc> . **Email:** editorinchief@aesonnigeria.org

agricultural sector. This policy is therefore a response by government to provide an enabling environment or a regulatory instrument to strengthen the discipline and practice of agricultural extension in the country. A proactive NAES will facilitate knowledge support to assist agricultural value chain actors in the bid to efficiently drive increased agricultural productivity and ensure sustainable food and agriculture production in the country.

The content of the policy is based on evidence and reflects the views of the various stakeholders who participated in consultative fora held across the country including Hon. Commissioners of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Chairmen and Members of the States' House of Assembly Committee on Agriculture, Local Government Council Chairmen and Heads of Agriculture Department, Farmers And Farmers' Organisations/Associations, Agricultural Research Systems, Small, Medium and Big Private Extension Service Providers, Credit and Telecom Service Providers amongst others. I believe the wide consultations confer on this document the ownership of community of agricultural extension practitioners such that its effective implementation is guaranteed in this immediate future.

The Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria (AESON) had been a formidable partner in the journey of conceiving and bring to fore this policy thus far. I will like to use this opportunity to further enlist for the support of this community of professionals in the implementation strategy to putting the policy into operation. The policy would be passing through the process for legislation as an act of the national assembly before domestication at the states. We as practitioners need to engage the public to ensure success of these processes.

It is on record that the Federal Ministry Agriculture and Rural Development initiated an early coordinated response to minimize Covid 19 lockdown impact as a member of a Joint Technical Task Teams (JT TT) at national and state levels. The Ministry influenced the multidisciplinary task team to develop strategies to facilitate free movement of food and agricultural inputs in the grim days of total lockdown. There are also diverse initiatives in the Ministry to assist victims of emergencies resulting from insecurity challenges or climate change impacts where such exist across the country.

My passionate appeal goes to the academics in this group to give attention to research and trainings that demonstrate the ways and means agricultural extension practice can generate and proffer sustainable relief and recovery to rural communities in emergencies. We must show the institutions with traditional mandates for emergencies the need to utilize agricultural extension advisories services as a viable means of executing

Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria

Number: Twenty-sixth Annual Conference

Theme: Redefining Agricultural Extension Practice to Cope with Emergencies

Date: 26-29, April 2021

Venue: Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria

ISSN: 1595 – 1421. <http://aesonnigeria.org/ConfProc> . **Email:** editorinchief@aesonnigeria.org

emergency responses and bringing stability to such fractured communities. Our training curricular should evolve to prepare trained professional competence in line with this trend.

I will also like to charge other practitioners to adapt existing rural focused agricultural extension communication and educational infrastructure to inculcate emergence response to their field activities. Our rural farm families are already in the dilemma of emergencies and agricultural activities are under severe threat but this gives us an opportunity to innovate strategies for actions providing credible information and farming advice to adapt to various shocks. Even in-service trainings to practicing extension agents need to rise up to this challenge to proactively engage them to institute processes that will disseminate preventive and behavioral changes messages on community resilience to emergencies through community sensitization and other available media.

Finally, I want to assure you that we are all partners in the onerous responsibility to make agricultural extension practice effective and more proficient in Nigeria.

Thank you