
RESEARCH, DATA SHARING AND THE NIGERIAN INDIGENOUS CROPS

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The oil boom of the 1970s led Nigeria to neglect its strong agricultural sector in favour of crude oil. In 2002 oil and gas exports accounted for more than 98% of export earnings and about 83% of federal government revenue. With the sudden crash in the price of crude oil in the international market in June 2014, Nigeria with a mono-economy became one of the worst hit countries. Recently, the government came up with a plan to revive agriculture as the economic mainstay of the country with the Green Alternative Road Map. As good as this plan looks, it can only be achieved, if the challenges facing agriculture in the country are tackled adequately. One of the glaring challenges is inadequate agricultural research and poor dissemination of the available findings especially on the indigenous and economically viable crops. Institutional better management of research data and findings through the development of ICT infrastructure and training especially the creation of online repositories is paramount to agricultural development. As a result, inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional networks and collaboration can be fostered. When this is in place, it will be easy to reach the grass-root farmers through Agricultural Extension Agents in the Country and this can be extended to Africa and to other parts of the Globe. ICT tools and platforms (AI, Github, Wordpress, etc) that have the capacity to reach many farmers and different stakeholders at the same time with critical agricultural research findings and critical information that have been dormant or inaccessible both from the local as well as from International sources are inevitable. It is imperative that Digital Agriculture is embraced and strengthened by all stakeholders including the government for Nigeria's and Africa's agricultural transformation especially in food security and general bio-economy.

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