

# Agricultural Management Strategy on Food Security in Taraba State

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## Abstract

The increasing population of the world is becoming worrisome compare with the food production or agricultural activities that is considered to be backward or inadequate because of certain factors that thwart agricultural activities like the climate change and lack of modern agricultural equipments for commercial agricultural activities, family, community and government are developing a means to an end on how food security and other agricultural activities can be booster to meet up the growing population. This paper suggest strategic of agricultural management that will support food security in Taraba state in order to meet up the growing population in the state. The paper further recommends food security measures for the state and the Nation at large.

**Keywords:** agricultural management strategy, food security and Taraba State

## INTRODUCTION

Taraba State is basically an agrarian Sate with about 80% of the population engaged in active farming. The state is endowed with great agricultural potentials ranging from fertile soils to good climatic conditions. It has a total land mass of about 6million hectares out of which about 4 million hectares are arable and about 1.3 million hectares are put under croup cultivation annually. Crops that thrive well and which can be cultivated in commercial quality in the state include cereals (Maize, Millet, Sorghum, and Rice), roots and tubers (Yam, Cassava and Sweet potatoes), beverages (Tea, Coffee, Cocoa and Ginger), Legumes (Sesame, Groundnut), tree croups (Mango, Orange, Oil Palm, Guava, Cashew

Livestock also plays a vital role in the lives of the people. The State has about 18 million animals and has the highest concentration of livestock in Nigeria. Taraba State has 5 million cattle, 3 million goats, 2.5 million sheep and 10 million pigs, 0.4 million rabbits, With these great agricultural potentials Taraba State can contribute greatly in achieving Nigeria's 60% growth rate in agricultural production. The Mambilla Plateau has climatic characteristics typical of a temperate climate. Temperatures are low (mean temperature = 19 C) throughout the year and rainy season lasts from February to November, with a mean annual rainfall of over 1850mm. no wonder, with a total Landmass of 394, 890Ha; Grazing land 158, 690Ha (40%) and a height of about 1830m above sea level, the Mambilla Plateau has the highest concentration of cattle (about 5 million) in the Nation. The climatic and topographic features of the Mambilla are very suitable for Dairy and Beef production. In addition, the Mambilla Plateau forms the watershed from which the major drainage systems in Taraba State take their source. River Benue, Donga and Taraba are the dominant drainage systems which flow across the Muri plains to drain the entire State. Together with the minor ones, such as the Lamurde, it form extensive flood plains providing sufficiently fertile agricultural and grazing land.

The vegetation of Taraba State comprises three types of vegetation zones namely; the guinea savannah, which is marking by mainly forest and tall grass are found in the Southern part of the State, like Wukari, Takum, Donga, The sub-sudan type characterized by short grasses interspersed with short trees are found in Jalingo, Lau, Ardo-kola, while the semi-temperate zone are marked by luxuriant pasture and short trees is found on the Mambilla Plateau. These vegetation zones are generally suitable for the production of almost all specials of livestock (TRIP LTD, 1999)

## AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT

Agricultural management is an occupation that involves the science of food production. It deals with farming techniques, the domestication of animals, and the general processing of food. There are many agricultural jobs that require management, especially on projects working in the scientific disciplines and with farm labour. With the changing dynamics of global food production, this field is one of the fastest growing in the world Since concepts like productivity and food security play such an important role in the food supply of the world, agricultural management careers have high potential. Outbreaks of contaminated food sources have prompted new government regulatory bodies to manage the process of food production from both plant and animal sources. In addition, population growth and the use of certain foods such as corn as bio-fuel have limited the growth potential of the industry. The goal today is to strive for new ways to produce the necessary amount of food for

the growing population, while maintaining the quality that society has come to expect from its food sources.

### **FOOD SECURITY**

Food security may have different meaning for different people. The international conference define food security as “access by all people at all time the food needed for healthy life”

Food security is the state of self-sufficiency in food production achieved by implementing policies that will provide food for the family and crops/raw materials for industries, trade and export. Food security exists when all residents in a community can reliably access safe, nutritionally adequate, culturally appropriate food. Food security can only exist in a food system that is sustainable; and the most sustainable food systems are predominantly local. An equitable food system is socially just. It ensures that everyone, regardless of income, can obtain quality food in a dignified manner

### **AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The major occupation of the people of Taraba State is agriculture. Cash crops produced in the state include coffee, tea, groundnuts and cotton. Crops such as maize, rice, sorghum, millet, cassava, and yam are also produced in commercial quantity. In addition, cattle, sheep and goats are reared in large numbers, especially on the Mambilla Plateau, and along the Benue and Taraba valleys. Similarly, the people undertake other livestock production activities like poultry production, rabbit breeding and pig farming in fairly large scale. Communities living on the banks of River Benue, River Taraba, River Donga and Ibi engage in fishing all year round. Other occupational activities such as pottery, cloth-weaving, dyeing, mat-making, carving, embroidery and blacksmithing are also carried out in various parts of the State. In the past few years, agriculture has raised once more to the top of national and international policy agendas.

1. Agriculture lies at the centre of sustainable development. It plays a crucial role in addressing the food security needs of a growing global population and contributing to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food and is inextricably linked to poverty eradication and attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. To this end, there must be mobilization of the political will and commitment of Governments and other relevant stakeholders, at the State and national levels, to revive the agricultural sectors.
2. Boosting agricultural productivity, improving soil quality, ensuring the safety of food and, as appropriate, enhancing the nutritional quality of food is essential and needs to be done in ways that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. Moreover, a comprehensive approach integrating post-harvest storage and processing to reduce losses and add value, distribution and marketing infrastructure to link to markets and capacity-building at all stages, particularly in the state and the Nation at large, is needed. Farmers and farm workers, female and male, especially small, and resource-poor, indigenous people and rural communities, need to be central actors in a green revolution in a sustainable way, with a sound balance and mutually beneficial linkages among small- and large-scale agricultural enterprises.

### **IMPACTS OF FOOD SECURITY**

- i. Farming families may benefit from higher food prices—as long as it earn more from their crops than it spend on food. But many small-scale farmers actually spend more on food than it earn from selling food (Hertel and Rosch 2010).
- ii. Climate shocks like droughts and floods impact how people access food through work, trade and transfers, such as from relatives who live in other climates (Devereux 2007).
- iii. The causal pathways from climate change to the various aspects of food security (food availability, access, utilization and stability) are complex. Tirado et al., (2010) note the following;
  - a. Increased frequency and intensity of extreme climatic events such as heat waves, droughts, storms, cyclones, hurricanes and floods
  - b. Decrease of fresh water resources, and the impacts of temperature increase and water scarcity on plant or animal physiology
  - c. Sea-level rise and the flooding of coastal lands, leading to Salinization and/or contamination of water, agricultural lands and food
  - d. Water and food hygiene and sanitation problems
  - e. Beneficial effects to crop production through CO<sub>2</sub> “fertilization”
  - f. Influence on plant and livestock diseases and pest species and livestock diseases
  - g. Damage to forestry, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture

### **DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

Families, community’s government and partners must work to promote sustainable organic agriculture, horticulture and livestock rearing. This is to improve food supplies and nutrition while at the same time manages

the land, water, and seeds on which their livelihoods – and very survival – depend, both now and in the future, developing lower farming communities' costs and improve the quality and quantity of crop yields. At the same time, need to care for the land, find buyers and earn fair prices. The state government and communities should join the growing worldwide movement to promote sustainable organic agriculture as an environmentally sound and economically viable alternative for small-scale farmers.

#### **BARRIERS TO ACCESSING QUALITY FOOD INCLUDE:**

- Having a lower income
- Having to pay higher prices for better food choices
- Living too far from where quality food is sold
- Not having transportation options or full mobility
- Not having knowledge or space for preparing food or storing it

#### **SOLUTION TO FOOD SECURITY IN TARABA STATE**

Food Security and Agriculture programs aim to make measurable and sustainable improvements in farming production and resource utilization through instruction and skills improvement in growing, processing and marketing practices. It provide direct technical assistance to farmers through field extension agents, who live and work in communities to promote changes in attitudes and systems, while enhancing clients' skills in agriculture.

Food Security and Agriculture programs can be improve through

1. increase food availability and food access through improved farming systems, invigorated entrepreneurship, and strengthened market systems
2. improve food utilization through food distribution and better care practices, such as improved food processing, preservation and storage

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- i. All stakeholders must be involved in needs assessment and constraint analysis to selection and implementation of programmes which reflect the priorities of the farmers.
- ii. Effective continuous public enlightenment is essential to secure the interest and participation of many farmers as possible
- iii. Adequate and timely funding of selected projects should be ensured.
- iv. The local communities should be organized into farmer groups and co-operatives to facilitate their access to farm inputs and credit
- v. There should be policy stability and clear definition of roles and assignment of responsibilities among the various stakeholders.
- vi. Effective project monitoring and evaluation should be ensured.
- vii. Capacity building and farmer training based on upgrading existing indigenous knowledge should be imperative.
- viii. Programme design should encourage community ownership and emphasize sustainability. .

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Taraba State Government had implemented programmes on food security in the past in response to the demands of a growing population. These did not fully succeed because of many factors. They were conceived and implemented without due consultation with the farmers, they should have involve the communities and other stakeholders from project identification to implementation and monitoring, for Taraba State Government to succeed, however, it must address the constraints/risks already identified in the areas of timely and adequate funding, effective farmer training and extension building on existing indigenous knowledge, good programme governance, etc. to inspire community programme ownership and sustainability. It will also enhance the impact of the programme and provide alternative livelihood and supplementary income to the farmers. Management of Agriculture and food security can play an important role in food production if properly integrated with food, livestock and fish production in order to achieve food security and poverty eradication in Taraba and other state.

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