



Agricultural Policy Research Network

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APRNet Q3REPORT

(Covering the Period, 1st July – 30th September 2018)

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1. Introduction

The Third Quarter (Q3) report of APRNet documents the major activities, challenges and achievements of the Agricultural Policy Research Network (APRNet) from 1st July 2018 to 30th September 2018. The major activities and challenges as well as prospects are hereby presented under the following sub-themes.

2. APRNet's Journal: Nigerian Agricultural Policy Research Journal's Progress

During the period in review, Volume 4 of NAPReJ, APRNet's policy journal was still being prepared. Out of 10 submissions received only 6 were found fit to make it into Volume 4 when it will be published online and in print form. This is a rejection rate of 40%. This is aimed at making the journal highly reputed and be reckoned with when food and agricultural policies are being discussed. The online launch is planned for 22nd November 2018. There was some delay due to late responses from the blind peer reviewers. APRNet is considering building a set of incentives to its NAPReJ paper reviewers in order to motivate them to deliver their assignments more speedily.

3. APRNet Team Participated at the Feed the Future Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project 2018 Conference

During the period under review, APRNet's team of 6 participants participated in the Feed the Future Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project 2018 Conference on *COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH FOR AGRICULTURAL POLICY IN NIGERIA* from 14-16TH August 2018 at Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja.



Figure 1: From Left to right, Dr. Stella Adejoh (APRNet Member), Prof. PC Ike (APRNet Vice President), Dr. Anthony O. Onoja (APRNet President), Mrs. Felicia Odum (APRNet Member), Prof. Job Nmadu (APRNet Member and President, Nigerian Association of

Agricultural Economists, NAAE) and Mr Dan Oyobo (North Central Zonal Coordinator, APRNet) all at the APRNet Panel Session.

4. APRNet Hosts a One-day 5th APRNet National Multi-Stakeholders' Forum on: "Making Agricultural Policy Research Work for End-Users" in Abuja

On Thursday, 30th August 2018, APRNet held an 1-day 5th APRNet National Multi-Stakeholders' Forum on: "Making Agricultural Policy Research Work for End-Users" at Valencia Hotels, Wuse II, Abuja. The one-day APRNet 5th National Multi-Stakeholders Forum recognized the efforts of the present administration led by President Muhammadu Buhari towards diversifying the economy of Nigeria through sustained agricultural transformation.



Figure 2: Group Photograph of some participants present at the 5th APRNet National Multi-Stakeholders' Forum on Making Agricultural Research Work for End Users in Nigeria

The forum was organized by the Agricultural Policy Research Network (APRNet) with support from International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) via the Feed the Future Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project. It was aimed at exploring best options for making agricultural policy research work for end-users thereby improving the livelihood of farmers and other agriculture industry players in Nigeria. The APRNet is a group of professionals from different areas of specializations in the Agriculture sector working through inclusive engagement of multi-stakeholders relevant for sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria and Africa via evidence-based advocacies for policies to advance Agriculture and other agro-allied enterprises. The forum, which was well-attended, included representatives from diverse fields with interest in agriculture and rural development. It commenced with an opening address by President, APRNet - **Dr. Anthony O. Onoja**. During his address, the President highlighted that the core interest of the Network is using a multi-stakeholders approach in addressing myriad of challenges inherent in Nigerian agriculture and food sector which he briefly identified as including poor productivity along the value chain exacerbated by climate change, storage

losses of agricultural produce, incessant killing of farmers by herdsmen, poor access to finance and international and local markets, and poor linkage of research findings with end users' demands among many other issues. He noted that APRNet activities are in line with the Federal Government Policy on "The Green Alternative". At the end of the Presidential address there was a Keynote speech by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, FMARD (Chief Audu Ogbeh), which was delivered by Mr J.E. Itodo from the Research Department of the Ministry. At the end of the keynote address he formally declared the event opened. After the ministerial speech, the Head of IFPRI-Nigeria Office (**Dr. George Mavrotas**) mentioned in his speech that he was delighted with the progress made by the network under the leadership of **Dr. Anthony O. Onoja** notwithstanding that he was just a few years in the office as the President of the network. In his remarks, **Dr. George Mavrotas** also stressed that IFPRI-Nigeria (and on behalf also of the *Feed the Future* Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project, NAPP), will continue supporting the activities of APRNet. He encouraged the APRNet senior management to intensify their efforts for strengthening the Network in the coming year.

Other highlights of the forum included a presentation on "Leveraging ICT for agricultural development" by **Dr. Tony Ojobo**, Director Public Affairs, Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC). More papers came from **Mr UkonuUkonu** on practical ways of adopting snail farming for food security and poverty alleviation and **Dr Manson Nwafor** (Senior Economist, IITA) who made a presentation on "Experiences in Linking Research and Practices". **Observations:**The following observations were made: (i) APRNet was making progress in linking agriculture research with policy for end users in the country but there is still a need for APRNet to ensure that all her activities contribute more towards achieving food security in Nigeria; (ii) The revolution experienced in telecommunication industry had made some positive impacts in economic growth through e-commerce and other related economic activities and that the agricultural sector also needs to leverage on these; (iii) Despite its relevance, public spending on agricultural policy research has continued to decrease over the years; (iv) A substantial and sustainable investment in "Research and Development" is required to ensure an efficient agricultural production and performance; (v) Huge potentials abound for farmers and individuals for raising household income levels by adopting mobile snail farming across the country; (vi) There is need for "Demand Driven Research" which is required in Nigeria food sector to bring the desired growth that is needed in the sector. However, data issues were constraining research conduct in Nigeria for policy making. The APRNet 5th Multi-Stakeholder Forum made the following resolutions:

i. There is need for frequent capacity building in the agricultural sector at all levels of government in Nigeria and especially at the Federal level through the involvement of APRNet and other stakeholders towards the productivity of farmers;

ii. APRNet should be encouraged to be involved in more robust and regional methods of policy data analysis in the agricultural sector. This could be done through the collaboration of APRNet and other relevant stakeholders both locally and internationally;

iii. Relevant government and non-governmental agencies including APRNet should assist Nigerian farmers to upload their products on the internet using social media and internet facilities to penetrate international markets;

iv. Government should invest in reliable data provision and make them more open for easy access by researchers and policy information especially in the agricultural sector;

v. Professional associations should synergize and get more involved in the advocacy for decentralization of agricultural policy so as to capture specific regional requirements and comparative advantage in each region;

vi. Funding to agricultural sector and research should be improved by both the public and private sectors.

vii. APRNet shall lobby and demonstrate the need for a quarterly review of the Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP) in order to guide the Federal Government on progress towards attainment of the objectives of the country's agricultural policy. In line with this, it should as much as possible identify and create research groups that will engage in demand driven research that is widely accepted and has fundable themes.

5. APRNet 9th Agricultural Policy Research Seminar Held in Abuja

During the quarter in review, too, specifically on 30th August 2018, the 9th APRNet Seminar was held in Abuja at Valencia Hotels in Wuse. At the event, the presenter, **Dr. Victor Oboh** (Assistant Director at Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN) presented a paper on “Boosting Agricultural Productivity through Investment in Agricultural Research”.



Figure 3: The Paper Presenter, Dr. Victor Oboh of Central Bank of Nigeria, presenting a paper on Sustainable Agriculture Financing in Nigeria during the 9th APRNet Agricultural Policy Seminar Series

6. Career Profile: One APRNet Member, Dr, IbisimeEtela, Promoted to the rank of a Professor

During the period under review, one of APRNet active members, Dr. I Etela was elevated to the rank of a professor of Animal Sciences at the University of Port Harcourt.



Figure 2: Portrait of Professor IbisimeEtela, newly promoted to the rank of a Professor at the University of Port Harcourt.

7. New Membership

During the period under review, APRNet recorded three new members:

One of them is Mrs. Felicia-Ngozi Odum. **Felicia Ngozi Odum (Nee Ukwueze)** is currently a Ph.D student at the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension of Delta State University Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria. Felicia Ngozi Odum (Nee Ukwueze) was a banker finding her way into the academia. Another new member registered in the network during this period is **Mr. Nwaogu Daniel Chinedu** of Michael Okpara University, Umudike, Abia State. The third entrant is Mr. Ufedo Monday Shaibu. **Mr. U. M. Shaibu** is an Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, Kogi State University, Anyigba, in Kogi State. He recently returned from a Feed-the-Future sponsored research programme at Michigan State University, USA. APRNet's growth rate is soaring.

8. APRNet Web Page Activities Progress

During the period under review, APRNet web page recorded high number of visits with the hits peaking in August which is the period when the flag ship event of the Network was hosted. At its peak within the period, in August, APRNet website had a total visit of 14,205 and unique 876 unique visitors. The total number of hits and unique visits for the period were **37,798 hits and 2,375 unique visitors**. This is an impressive performance that attests to the increasing level of interest the public (including all global audience) are registering for the activities of APRNet.

Table 1: Detailed Website Statistics Summary of www.aprnetworkng.org July-August, 2018

Month	Unique Visitors	Number of Visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth in MBs
Jul-18	886	1,329	5,140	12,731	989.7
Aug-18	876	1,127	8,146	14,205	1.11
Sep-18	613	920	4,489	10,862	1.01
Total	2375	3376	17775	37798	991.82

Source: Onyis Creative Innovations, 2018. Website Consultants.

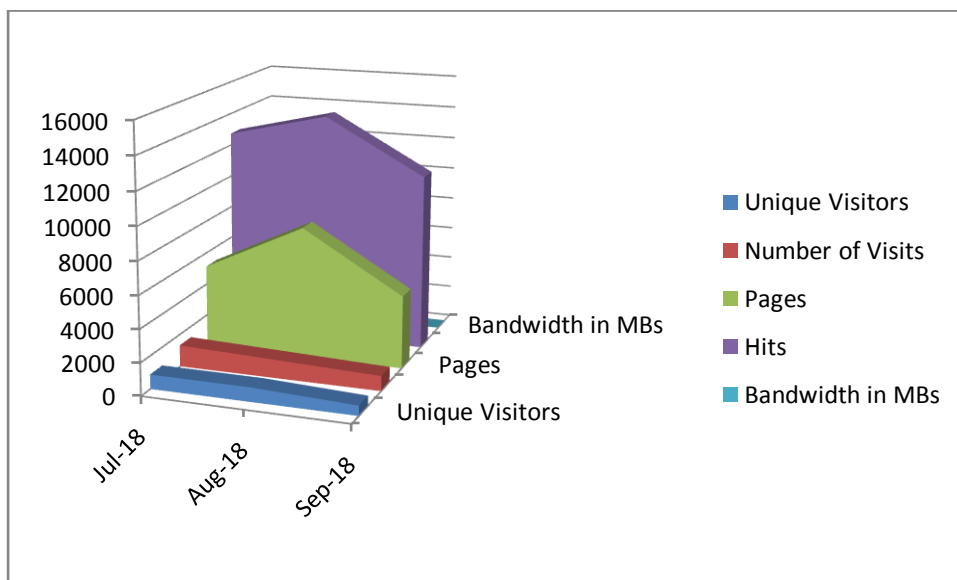


Figure 4: Trend of Web Performance Indicators during the period (Q3)

9. Challenges of the Network

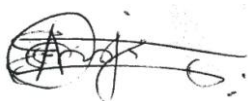
The Network has been challenged by relatively poor attendance of members at the events hosted in Abuja due to distance of members and the associated transport and accommodation costs. The Network requires funding to assist some members who are

distressed to participate, especially very active members. The increasing costs of holding high profile events and upgrading of the journal as well as the website are serious challenges threatening the progress of the network. The network is still in need of funds to pay for an office space in Abuja after its former office it was sharing with IFPRI was vacated a few years back. The secretariat of the Network needs funding as a matter of urgency. The work load is increasing by the day and the magnitude is reaching a level that voluntary service cannot handle anymore. The EXCO who have been doing these jobs after the exit of the APRNet Programme Coordinator was disengaged following inability to pay for his salaries, are already getting wearied as they have permanent jobs they need to attend to. There is a need to consider payment of some token honoraria to the working EXCO to improve the productivity of the network. This is a matter that our official partner, IFPRI-Nigeria needs to re-consider in the next year programme and budget. APRNet has also been trying to have some shots at some research grants and hope development partners can engage the network in consultancy activities to be able to meet up with some of these needs.

10. Prospects

The future looks bright for APRNet despite all these challenges. The membership is growing, the activities of APRNet are getting more impactful and the network is becoming a household name in Agricultural Policy research sphere in Nigeria and abroad. The members' profile is growing as their capacities kept building up. These resources need to be tapped through a strong motivational leadership that will galvanize the members into achieving the missions, goals and objectives of the network. There are rooms for more collaboration with IFPRI and the Feed-the-Future Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project for instance through engagement of APRNet in funded research of these programmes in Nigeria. APRNet will surely deliver on such mandates excellently with its crop of experts in diverse fields of agricultural and food policy. APRNet also needs to convince the members of benefits attached to participation. APRNet can improve on this by broadening the activities by including capacity building programmes and engaging the members in consultancy activities among other strategies.

Signed:



Dr. Anthony O. Onoja

President, APRNet