

Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project Highlights

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Scholar Program 69

AFLATOXIN DISSEMINATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMME IN BENUE STATE

An aflatoxin dissemination and training programme took place at the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MANR), Makurdi from January 30-31, 2020. The training was organized and sponsored by the Feed the Future Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project (NAPP). It presented research findings from a set of recently conducted research studies on “aflatoxin in the maize value chain in south west Nigeria”. It also trained participants on how to address identified challenges with aflatoxin and to share the same with others around them. Aflatoxins are secondary metabolites produced by toxigenic species of fungi

Mr. Thomas Unongo (Director of Agricultural Services, MANR, Benue State) represented the Commissioner for Agriculture, and gave the opening remarks. The dissemination and training was facilitated by Mrs. Oluwatoyin Adebowale (NAPP Scholar) and Dr. Obadina Adewale, Professor, Department of Food Science and Technology, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) (Mrs. Adebowale’s NAPP advisor).

The dissemination and training event participants were 24 extension agents and students (17 males and 7 females), from across Benue State.



Mrs. Adebowale making a presentation on maize fermentation and safety

The goal of the dissemination and training exercise was to train participants on how to manage maize, from planting to harvesting, through storage and handling, transporting and consumption. In the project tradition of training one to train others, the exercise was planned so that the participants would, in the immediate future, disseminate the research findings to others in their communities and train them on aflatoxin and maize management.



A participant giving a practice presentation on aflatoxin to the group

On the first day, Dr. Obadina gave a presentation on maize management and handling and Mrs. Oluwatoyin gave another on maize fermentation and safety. On the final day, individual participants practiced presentation and training (with the rest of the group as the trainees). This practice activity provided the participants the opportunity to exhibit their understanding of the findings and prepared them to train others in their communities on how to address the related challenges of aflatoxin

At the end of the programme, participants expressed a need to get all stakeholders informed about aflatoxin in maize and its products, as well as the dangers aflatoxin poses to human and animal health. Hopefully, this will limit Nigerians’ consumption of bad maize and reduce the risks of their exposure to aflatoxin. Participants

also expressed the desire to learn more about the subject and pointed out that the training was an eye-opener. Facilitators were so impressed with the feedback of the participants that they volunteered to support them in their local communities for future knowledge dissemination and training on aflatoxin maize.

Within one week, the 24 trained in Benue state have gone on to train almost 450 people. This activity demonstrates how researchers working with extension agents can ensure that the findings of technical

scientific research in Nigeria can benefit many Nigerians through the support of USAID Nigeria.



Group picture

By Mrs. Oluwatoyin Adebawale

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