

OPENING ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, CHIEF AUDU OGBE, OFR, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 7TH ASAN-NIAS JOINT ANNUAL MEETING AND INDUCTION HOLDING AT ILORIN, KWARA STATE ON 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2018.

PROTOCOLS

It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to give the opening address at the 7th Joint Annual Meeting of the Nigerian Institute of Animal Science (NIAS) and the Animal Science Association of Nigeria (ASAN).

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and rural Development (FMARD) has observed with keen interest the far-reaching positive impacts of the Animal Science profession and practice, as regulated by your auspicious Institute, in the overall development of the Livestock sub-sector in Nigeria. It is apposite to note that within the space of one year, the ripple effects of the 6th ASAN-NIAS JAM tagged “Sustainable Livestock Production for National Development” on the industry are evident in renewed enthusiasm by the private sector for investment in the livestock industry.

It is my hope that the outcome of this year’s conference with the theme: **Development of a Resilient Livestock Industry for National Economic Growth** will chart the course for concrete resolutions and roadmap to consolidate on the gains of past years and provide the nation with abundant possibilities in a vibrant Livestock Industry.

I commend NIAS as well as ASAN for putting this meeting together and for the steady progress emanating from concerted professional efforts in repositioning the Livestock sub-sector in Nigeria for greater heights.

The Livestock subsector as we all know is very vital to the socioeconomic development of Nigeria and represents an important source of high quality animal protein, provides about 36.5% of the total protein intake of Nigerians, generates employment, income, and earns foreign exchange for the country. The subsector is estimated to contribute about 8-10% of the Agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 5% of the National GDP. The global projection is that Nigeria's population presently at about 190 million may reach about 400 million by 2050. Consequently, demand for livestock and livestock products will more than double within this period. To satisfy this expected huge demand for animal protein and other livestock products, livestock production and productivity has to increase commensurably in quantity and quality by about 60%.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, this is a huge task and in furtherance of this, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in addition to its ongoing interventions in livestock, is engaging with the World Bank on a project tagged "**Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support Project (L-PRES)**". L-PRES is a 6 year Project with development objective to improve productivity, resilience and commercialization of selected livestock value chains.

Some of these ongoing FMARD's innovative interventions includes the **National Egg Production Scheme (NEGPRO)** designed to empower small and medium poultry farmers across the country with low interest credit facilities through a modified Anchor Borrower System; The **Dairy Development Programme (DDP)** supports private investors and key stakeholders in the Dairy industry to promote commercial, peri-urban and smallholder dairy businesses; The **Cattle Breed Improvement Programme (CABIP)** provides Artificial Insemination (AI) training to master trainers as well as essential tools and inputs to facilitate Community Artificial Insemination Services for systematic genetic improvement.

The Ministry is also in the process of putting in place a holistic **National Animal Identification and Traceability System (NAITS)** with the overall objective of ensuring the implementation of an efficient and internationally recognised animal identification and traceability system for Nigeria.

Surely this intervention when in place would increase farmers access to regional and international markets; curb rustling and allied crimes; enable effective disease surveillance and control; provide reliable data and information required for evidence based policy decisions among other benefits.

In collaboration with other Ministries and Agencies, FMARD is also repositioning the apiculture value chain to ensure that we leverage on Nigeria's comparative advantage in apiculture to generate employment, improve livelihoods, contribute meaningfully to national and global supply of honey and other Bee products, as well as earn foreign exchange.

Indeed, government is determined to provide enabling environment, support and cooperate with all stakeholders in the Livestock sub-sector to unlock the potentials therein and deliver maximum benefits to Nigerians.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen on this note, I congratulate all inductees on this very special occasion and urge you all to be good ambassadors of your profession and our dear country Nigeria.

I call on all present to enjoy the moments, have fruitful deliberations and catch up with old friends as I on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Chief Audu Ogbe OFR declare the 7th ASAN-NIAS Joint Annual Meeting holding in Ilorin, Kwara State this day 11th September, 2018 Open.!!!

Thank you and God bless you all