

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT, ANIMAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA AT THE 7<sup>TH</sup> ASAN-NIAS JAM, 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION HELD ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2018 AT M & M EVENTS CENTRE, ILORIN, KWARA STATE**

**PROTOCOLS**

His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Kwara State  
The Honourable Minister of Agriculture & Rural Devt.  
The Honourable Commissioner of Agriculture, Kwara State  
The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Kwara State  
The President NIAS  
Board of Trustees, ASAN  
National Executive Council, ASAN  
The Council Members NIAS  
Our key note Speaker, Vice Admiral Murtala Nyako (rtd), GCON, CFR, D. Agric.  
The Captains of Industries  
Our distinguished Sponsors  
Gentlemen of the Press  
Students, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed my great pleasure to welcome you all to the 23rd Annual Conference of Animal Science Association of Nigeria and the 7<sup>th</sup> ASAN-NIAS Joint Annual Meeting, Ilorin 2018. Ilorin, The State of Harmony and the most peaceful and secure place in Nigeria today, with very accommodating and loving people.

I want to start by thanking the Almighty God for preserving our lives since last year when we met at Abuja. For the benefit of our guests, who are attending our conference for the first time and for the purpose of emphasis, I am proud to let you know that the Almighty God is the God of Animal Scientists. God loves Animal science more than any other profession, so much more that, our offering is the only one accepted by Him.

In the year under review, we have lost some of our noble members. Notable among them is Professor Gabriel Mojisola Babatunde, whose passion and love remain legendary and was the constant feature of our meetings, even at old age, and many others who have joined Oyenuga *et al* on the other side of the divide. I

will like to crave your indulgence to stand and observe a minute silence in remembrance of these compatriots of our profession.

Distinguished colleagues, many waters have passed under the bridge since the last time we met; the enemies and detractors of our noble profession bared fangs and raised their ugly heads to draw us back to status quo, but God defended our course. Rather than going back, God is moving us forward with a lot of achievements and milestone individually and collectively as some of our members rose to higher positions in their various areas of endeavor viz; Permanent Secretary, Commissioner of Agriculture, Vice chancellors, International appointments among others.

Worthy of note is the landmark and monumental breakthrough in the area of Poultry Breeding and Genetics Research in the development of an improved indigenous breed otherwise known as FUNAAB ALPHA, by our very own Professional colleagues led by Professor (Mrs) Olufunmilayo Ayoka Adebambo -A pride to the profession and nation. The breed has been tested, proven and certified by the National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology (NACGRAB). FUNAAB ALPHA is now the second poultry breed to be registered in Nigeria after Shika brown developed by the NAPRI, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Your Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, The Association and the Nigerian Institute of Animal Science (NIAS) consider as topical and apt the theme of this joint meeting, which is **“Development of a Resilient Livestock Industry for National Economic Growth”**

Nigeria is Africa’s most populous country with an average GDP of about half a trillion USD dollars between 2014 and 2015 according to the World Bank. Nigeria's agriculture sector remains without a doubt the mainstay of the country's domestic economy. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the agriculture sector grew at a rate of 4.1 percent in 2016 and accounts for 75 percent of non-oil exports. Driven by increasing consumer demand, the livestock sub-sector has outgrown the sector at a rate of 12.7 percent. The livestock subsector is vital to socio-economic development and key to national food security as the 2018 GDP indicators shows same positive growth trajectory.

The subsector's growth rate notwithstanding, the dietary animal protein supply gap is increasing. Livestock products provide 36.5 percent of the total protein

intake of Nigerians. In 2010, Nigeria imported USD548 million of meat and milk products to narrow the supply-demand gap, which increased to USD675 million in 2014. To close this gap, livestock production and productivity would have to triple. This is a huge challenge in the face depleting land and water resources required for traditional systems of livestock production and which has indeed been fingered as the major cause of the perennial farmer-pastoralist clash with immeasurable human and material loss. This situates the Animal Scientist as a key player in nation building and the profession of Animal Science as a key vehicle to national food sufficiency, national security and indeed nationhood.

This is therefore a clarion call to move from paying lip service to action in ensuring that the livestock sub sector of our economy contributes its quota to the GDP. It is important to reiterate that several National strategies such as the Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP) and the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), released in March 2017 can only be achieved with a functional Animal Science practice, as we have the only critical mass and knowledge requirement to actualize these national strategies for building a globally competitive economy and the real GDP of the country by 4.62 percent over the planned period from 2017 – 2020 as envisaged. I will like to point that hide and skin in the leather value chain for example, is the 3<sup>rd</sup> to oil and gas in foreign earnings to Nigeria. It is rather therefore imperative that this enormous potential in the livestock sub-sector must be harnessed for the attainment of our desired national economic stability.

Animal husbandry which comprises Primary animal health care of sanitation/hygiene, Animal nutrition, Breeding, Management, Processing, Marketing etc have been relegated to the background with the preponderance of budget going more for Disease Control. Government is yet to implement its White paper on the Vision 20:2020 National Economic Development Blueprint which recommended the unbundling of the National Animal Production Research Institute (NAPRI) into four (4) Livestock Commodity based Research Institutes. NAPRI as it currently exists can never cope with developing the various Seed stock

required by the Industry for the different Livestock species. It should be unbundled into the followings:

1. National Beef Research Institute
2. National Poultry Research Institute
3. National Dairy Research Institute
4. National Swine Research Institute

Nigeria does not have a Central Animal Feed Quality Control Laboratory for Referral and Trade purposes that will assist the Industry gain market access, particularly for Import and Export of Animal feeds and Ingredients. Above all, the remunerations of Animal Scientists is appalling and a disincentive, while he faces the same and even greater job risks than the Veterinary Surgeons that enter Service with 12 years Salary head start. The Animal Scientist deserves equal (if not a better) remuneration with the Veterinary Surgeon.

Our profession and indeed Association made of highly knowledgeable and skilled personnel, have continued to improve livestock production, processing, and marketing activities. ASAN members are the ones with responsibilities for Genetics and Breeding, Meat Science and Processing, Grassland agriculture, Animal Physiology, Livestock Marketing, Feed milling technology, Nutrition and Production of Poultry, Pigs, Sheep, Goat, Cattle and Micro- livestock etc. and ready to partner with relevant government agencies and bodies.

To solve the problem of egg glut, government should fulfil her promise of feeding pupils in schools with an egg daily in most of our schools. Only few schools are currently doing this.

Also, we must employ a multidisciplinary approach to dispel the fear that egg consumption is not good for adults. Egg is a “whole meal” for man containing all the nutrients man may need for growth and development. Research has overturned the erroneous myth and belief that eggs are responsible for high cholesterol in the body and heart diseases. Our body needs some level of cholesterol for certain body functions and egg cholesterol is essential and good. An egg a day actually keeps doctors away.

Distinguished colleagues, let me again warmly welcome all to this biggest gathering of Animal Scientists even as I urge you to be open and deliberate on information that will ensure the **”Development of a Resilient Livestock Industry for National Economic Growth”**

**I thank you for listening!**

**TAIWO ADETOYI ADEOYE RAS, FASAN, FNIAS, FCASN, PAS(USA)**  
**PRESIDENT, ANIMAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA**