

YOBE STATE GOVERNMENT

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
DAMATURU

BEING A PAPER PRESENTED TO THE
PEER REVIEW TEAM, SECRETARIAT OF
NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM ON THE
DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN
YOBE STATE.

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STATE.

The Yobe State Ministry of Agriculture has earlier drawn up the State's Agricultural Policy (for the crop sub-sector), the Challenges/Constraints of the Agricultural sector and Strategies to overcome such constraints.

A. POLICY THRUST

1. Increase Food Self-Sufficiency and Food Security.
2. Employment generation especially of Youths.
3. Income generation (Poverty Alleviation/Reduction).
4. Increase raw-materials for the State Agro-based industries.
5. Increase Foreign Exchange earnings.
6. Modernization of Agricultural sector through the use of modern implements in production, processing, storage and distribution/marketing through the use of modern technologies.
7. Raise public awareness in order to enhance linkages between human resources and environment.

B. CHALLENGES/CONSTRAINTS.

1. Inadequate and inappropriate modern farm machineries to put more land area/hectarage into productive use.
2. Inadequate supply of inputs like improved seeds, fertilizers, seeds, chemicals, modern crop husbandry, etc.
3. Prevalence of pests and diseases particularly Quelea birds and Grasshoppers.
4. Continued dependence on rain fed Agriculture.

5. Lack of free-flow of water from major rivers due to dams constructed upstream, siltation and invasion of Typha grass thus affecting irrigated agriculture.
6. Inadequate Agricultural extension service delivery.
7. Poor storage facilities.
8. Absence of markets/price supports.
9. Poor infrastructural facilities like roads, portable water, health, energy, etc.
10. Continued deterioration of the ecosystem resulting from bad practice of human activities like tree fellings.
11. Rural to urban migration particularly of the Youths.
12. Lack of adequate funding of the Agricultural sector.

C. STRATEGIES.

1. New Agricultural technology and modern appropriate farm machineries will be provided to expand cultivable areas to increase food production. Presently, about 650,000 hectares of land is under rainfed Agriculture, and only about 40,000 hectares under irrigation (out of about 366,000 hectares of irrigatable land i.e Fadama land).
2. Adequate and timely inputs like improved seeds, fertilizers, chemicals, etc will be provided to farmers at subsidized prices.
3. Extension services delivery will be greatly enhanced and strengthened.
4. Animal Traction Loan Scheme will be given further encouragement through procurement of Bulls, Cultivators, Ridgers and Carts for distribution to farmers.

5. Better storage facilities will be provided and encouraged to be used to support food security under the Strategic Grains Reserve Programme.
6. More Tube wells and Wash bores will be drilled and small irrigation pumps provided to farmers at subsidized rates.
7. Construction of control gates to prevent water back flows into the river tributaries and channels.
8. Invasion of Typha grass will also be controlled.
8. Encourage the formation of Farmers Cooperative Societies to channel activities through such societies.
9. Adequate Agricultural loans will be sought from financial institutions like Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB). Commercial Agricultural Credit Scheme (CACS) is now in the pipeline.
10. The Yobe Agricultural Development Programme (YOSADP) will be strengthened to conduct on Farm Adoptive Research, Seed Multiplication, training and re-training of Extension Workers.
11. The State will continue honouring all its obligations like counterpart fundings of the Federal Government World Bank assisted Programmes such as National Programme for Food Security (NPFS), National Fadama Development Programme (FADAMA III) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) assisted Community Base Agricultural and Rural Development Programme (IFAD – CBARDP).
12. Adequate funding through enhanced budgetary provisions.

D. EFFORTS MADE SO FAR FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE.

1. Provision of Adequate Inputs:

i. **Fertilizer:**

Agricultural inputs like improved seeds, fertilizers, chemicals etc should not only be supplied at the right quantity and type but at the optimum or appropriate time. In developing agriculture, of all the inputs required for production, fertilizer tends to be the most critical and limiting. There has always been ever increasing demands of fertilizer by farmers. It is in realization of this, the present administration not only embarked on direct procurement of the commodity (fertilizer) without recourse to Federal Government allocation but also the resuscitating of the dormant Gujba Fertilizer Company. The State Government has procured about 40,000 metric tones of raw materials for the blending of NPK type of fertilizer at the Company. The raw materials cost over N4.0 billion. The Company right now is in production. It is hoped the fertilizer so produce will meet the State's requirement for a couple of years. In 2009, the State distributed 298,800 bags (14,790 Metric Tones) valued at N680,340,000.00. This year (2010) in addition to what is now being produced, the State procured 120,000 bags (6,000 Metric Tones) valued at N511,000.00 from the Federal Government.

ii. **Improved Seeds:**

Yobe State is in a Sahelian climatic zone where yearly average rainfall is very low and the growing period is very short i.e about three months or at most four months (June – September). Crop

variety to be grown should have such desirable characters of early maturing and drought resistant/tolerant. Over the years the State Government used to procure improved varieties of crops from Research Institutes, National Seeds Services and reputable Seed Companies. Such improved varieties will then be multiplied by Yobe State Agricultural Development Programme (YOSADP) and Outgrowers to be distributed to generality of farmers.

iii. **Pest Control:**

Yobe State is an endemic area of pests and diseases particularly Quelea birds, grasshoppers and other insect-pest complexes. Such pests and diseases always occur in form of outbreaks covering wide areas. The Ministry of Agriculture at any moment stocks enough chemicals to control the pests and diseases. Controls of Quelea birds are always done through aerial spraying due to the difficult terrains of the nesting/roosting sites of the birds. The sites and infestations also spill to other neighbouring States like Jigawa, Gombe and Bauchi. Controls of the birds are mostly regional through Federal Government interventions. Last year (2009) over N50 million was expended on procurement of chemicals, sprayers, flying hours (for aerial control of Quelea birds and ground control of other insect pests and diseases).

iv. **Mechanization:**

The State through its agency called Yobe State Agricultural Mechanization Authority (YOSAMA) has over the years procured a number of farm machineries particularly tractors and threshers. Such machineries are provided to the farmers on hire

basis at a highly subsidized rates. The State last year (2009) procured 700 tractors at a total cost of N4.55 Billion. Such tractors were distributed to Local Governments, Farmers Cooperative Societies, Large Scale Farmers etc on loan at subsidized rates. This is to encourage ownership of the machinery (tractor) by farmers. The Cooperative grouping will further encourage consolidation of small farm holding to bigger ones to ease mechanization. The State government has also planned to establish standard workshops for repairs of farm machineries and fabrication of spare parts in each of the three Senatorial Districts.

2. Development of Irrigation:

Yobe State has about 366,000 hectares of Fadama land and less than 10% i.e 30,000 – 40,000 hectares being cropped under irrigation. A number of perennial rivers exist in the State, prominent of which is River Yobe, which flows through about seven Local Governments in the northern part of the State. The Hadejia River and Jama'are River converge at the Nguru wetlands to form the Yobe River System. Thus, the contributions of the two rivers (Jama'are and Hadejia) greatly determine the volume of water in Yobe River system. The construction of Tiga and Challawa Gerge dams on the Hadejia River system and the attendant uncoordinated operations of the dams have greatly affected the volume of water discharge to Yobe River. The proposed construction of Kalin Zaki dam on the Jama'are River will further aggravate the water situation in Yobe River.

Over three million people live in settlements along the Yobe River and thus their livelihood will be strongly threatened if there is no

enough water in the river system. This issue of Dams and coordination of river flows need the strong intervention of Federal Government.

The State Government has taken a number of measures to develop irrigation facilities. Such measures include:

- i. Desilting of river channels and tributaries to carry large volume of water
- ii. Control of Typha grass to allow free flow of water.
- iii. Construction of control gates to avoid water back flows.
- iv. Widening/dredging of ox-bow lakes and water ways.
- v. Massive drilling of wash bores and tube wells.
- vi. Provision of 2" and 3" water pumps to farmers.
- vii. Reactivations and expansion of Small Irrigation Scheme.

3. Establishment of Yobe Youth Empowerment Farm Programme (YYEFP)

Yobe State is blessed with abundant fertile land that can support the cultivation of a wide range of tropical crops. It was observed there is a lot of Youth unemployment more especially in the urban centres. The present administration came up with an initiative to develop such unutilized abundant land and the idle Youths be settled on such developed lands for them (Youths) to be gainly employed and be more productive. This resulted into the establishment of "Yobe Youth Empowerment Farm Programme (YYEFP)". The idea is to develop 1000 hectares of land (with prospects of expansion) in each of the seventeen Local Government Areas. Able bodied and unemployed Youths will then be settled on such land with a land

holding of at least one hectare each. The State Government will develop the land and provide all the needed farm inputs. The Youths are to manage such farms themselves. At the end of the harvest, the inputs supplied to the youths will be costed and recovery made in kind from the produce so obtained. The pilot project of the Youth Farms was started in 2007 in Damaturu, the State capital. Presently, there are three of such Youth Farms in Damaturu, Potiskum and Gashua (one from each Senatorial District). Last year (2009) nearly 1,000 hectares were cultivated and over 1,000 Youths settled in these farms.

4. **Yobe State Strategic Grains Reserve Programme**

At the inception of this Administration, the State Government established the "Yobe State Strategic Grains Reserve Programme".

The objectives of the programme are:

- i. To reserve grains for food security and form as Buffer Stock.
- ii. To encourage farmers to produce more as there will be sure market.
- iii. To get a better produce prices over and above cost of production through the Guaranteed Minimum Price set by Government.
- iv. To cushion the effects of high food prices during time of scarcity.
- v. To stabilize market food prices.

The preserved grains will then be sold to the citizenry at critical periods when there is food scarcity and high prices at a highly subsidized rates. In 2007/2008, about 27,000 bags of assorted grains (millet, sorghum, maize and cowpea) were procured and 30,000 bags procured in 2008/2009. Presently, there are about 31,000 bags of grains in the reserves to be distributed soon. The subsidized price sold so far is N2,000/bag

5. **Diversification of Production:**

In order to increase farm incomes to farmers individually and for the State to get more internal revenue, Government planned to diversify its Agricultural activities. Crops with comparative economic advantage are envisaged to be encouraged for production. Such crops include Beniseed (Sesame), Castor oil and Gum Arabic. Tremendous efforts and resources have already been committed to the promotions of these crops particularly Gum Arabic. This Administration has set up a Castor Oil Seed Production Programme. The programme is to cover about 10,000 hectares with about 22,000 farmers (mostly unemployed Youths) will participate. The target production of about 15,000 Metric Tones of Castor seeds is envisaged to be produced.

6. **Counterpart Funding of Federal Government/World Bank Assisted Projects.**

Yobe State will continue honouring all its obligations of counterpart funding of all Federal Government/World Bank Assisted Projects. The State Government has already paid its counterpart fund of N85 million to the Third National Fadama Development Programme (FADAMA III). The counterpart fund for the National Programme for Food Security (NPFS) amounting to N74.8 million has also been paid. The counterpart funds of IFAD-CBARDP project will always be paid as at when due.

7. **Extension Service Delivery:**

The State government will continue encouraging the Extension Workers as they are the ones who will educate and train the farmers

on the methods of modern crop husbandry. Recently, Government has employed about 250 new OND holders as Extension workers to strengthened the existing ones. To ease the mobility for effective supervision, monitoring and reporting of field activities, motorcycles have been provided to the Extension Workers.