

# Nigeria Agriculture Policy Activity

July 2021

NAPA Highlights #2

## MY REPORT ON THE VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF THE BENUE SOIL PRODUCTIVITY INDEX RATING PROJECT I WAS PRIVILEGED TO BE PART

My name is Gbakaan Kelvin a 300 Level student of the Department of Crop Production, College of Agronomy at Joshua Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi (JOSTUM).

I came into the picture on the 15th of July when I was called to Dr. Mrs. Agada's office to be briefed on the program and what was expected of me.



SOME MEMBERS OF THE TEAM SHORTLY AFTER LEAVING THE DEPUTY DEANS OFFICE

On the 16th of July, the Journey began, as early as 7 am, we all converged at a central point, dusted our boots, made sure all materials

needed for the soil sampling process (the hand trowel, the core sampler, the tapes, packaging leathers, and markers etc..) were ready. Then we took off to Guma Local Government area (LGA), first point was Udei council ward. We were assisted by the Divisional Agricultural officer (DAO) and some small holder farmers who were excited that their farm fields were chosen. They asked what the essence of the exercise was. They were favorably responded to.

Thereafter, we took samples at strategic points, we made sure to take multiple samples at points where there was significant slope to explain for variations in soil nutrients distribution as well soil development. We made some progress and returned back to Makurdi at

about 5pm. We went round 7 LGAS collecting over 600 soil samples.

Fast forward to the one-day program held at the University Research farm comprising of mostly 400 level students, with well over 800 students and some staff in attendance. The program began with opening remarks made by the SIWES (students industrial work experience scheme) coordinator. The large number was split into departments and the process was showed to students in each group.

After the one-day training, a vehicle was hired, and we took off to The University of Nigeria, Nsukka. We arrived at the University campus on the 1st of August. We were warmly welcomed and took some time to settle and get acquainted with the environment.

On the second day, which was a Monday, we took the samples to the laboratory but couldn't begin analysis because the samples were a little bit wet due to the constant rains we experience at this particular time of the year. However, we took the samples out to a spacious place to get them dried in the screen house.

On the third day, we took a tour round the University animal farm. On our way back we went to make sure our samples were all dried up and ready so we could move to the next phase.

On the fourth day, we crushed the samples, sieved and repackaged the samples moving them to the laboratory for sample labeling.

On Thursday, we sieved about 50 samples, weighed them, after which we went ahead to prepare reagents. We were split into two groups; one group tested the

samples for organic carbon content while my group tested for the percentage nitrogen in the soil samples using the Makham distillation method. After the first batch of samples were analyzed, the groups were swapped. This was to ensure that we could learn each procedure.

This experience has been so intense and rewarding. The process was information packed. A few months

back, I wouldn't have guessed I would be in Enugu State undergoing a training, or be paid a stipend, fed and lodged in a luxury suite. I am still in awe. For these past 23 days, I have been impacted with knowledge that would last a lifetime. I am quite certain; with usage and constant practice I and the team will be well grounded Agronomists.

By Dr. Gbakaan Kelvin

This work is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Feed the Future initiative through the Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project, Associate Cooperative Agreement Number AJD-620-LA-15-00001. The contents are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Copyright © 2021, Michigan State University, and the International Food Policy Research Institute. All rights reserved. This material may be reproduced for personal and not-for-profit use without permission from but with acknowledgment to MSU, and IFPRI.

Published by the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics, Michigan State University, Justin S. Morrill Hall of Agriculture, 446 West Circle Dr., Room 202, East Lansing, Michigan 48824.