

# Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project Highlights

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Scholar Program 68

## AFLATOXIN DISSEMINATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMME IN NIGER STATE

Food safety is extremely important for food security and there is a dire need for Nigerians to be well informed about the challenge of aflatoxin along the maize value chain in the country. Aflatoxin contamination in maize and maize based products poses a threat to the health of humans and animals in Nigeria. Knowledge about aflatoxins and how to prevent their contamination of maize based products is necessary to prevent Nigerians from consuming bad maize, thus reducing their exposure to the health risks of aflatoxin.

In this regard, the USAID Feed the Future Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project (NAPP) organized a two-day aflatoxin dissemination and training programme at the Ministry of Agriculture, Minna, Niger State from January 27-28, 2020. The Project used the two-day programme to disseminate findings from a set of research studies (conducted by the Project) on “aflatoxin along the maize value chain in Nigeria” and how to address identified challenges to food security in Nigeria.

The programme designed as *trainer of trainers* was twofold. First to disseminate information about aflatoxin in maize and to train the participants how to manage maize, from the farm to consumer, with food safety as the major consideration. The second goal of the programme was to ensure that in the immediate future, the participants would be able to disseminate the findings and train others in their communities about aflatoxin and maize management.

Commissioner for Agriculture, Hon. Haliru Zakari Jikantoro kicked off the programme with some welcoming remarks. The dissemination and training was facilitated by: Mrs. Oluwatoyin Adebowale (NAPP Scholar), Dr. Obadina Adewale, Professor in the Department of Food Science and Technology, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) (Mrs.

Adebowale’s NAPP advisor) and Ms. Itohan Martins, a FUNAAB graduate student who has joined the aflatoxin research team.



**NAPP Scholar Mrs. Adebowale giving a presentation on aflatoxin**

The 2-day programme of events was attended by 50 participants (40 males and 10 females), who were extension agents and students from all local government areas in Niger State.

On the first day of the programme, Dr. Obadina and Mrs. Oluwatoyin gave presentations on “maize management” and “maize fermentation and safety” respectively. This was followed by model training sessions on how to address related challenges in activities all along the maize value chains from production to sale.

On the second day, participants took turns to practice disseminating the findings to training groups (made up of fellow participants). This ensured that participants actually understood the contents of the presentations while at the same time demonstrating how they were going to disseminate the information to people in their communities. Strengths and weaknesses of the practice presentations were discussed and remedies for the weaknesses presented.



**Participants working on their dissemination plans**



**Aflatoxin training participants**

Participants remained engaged all through the events. The trainers were happy with the interactions and pleased with the opportunity to impart knowledge and skills in a lifesaving programme. Facilitators volunteered to join hands with the participants to further disseminate the findings on aflatoxin in maize as they train others in local communities to challenge related challenges.

By: Mrs. Oluwatoyin Adebowale

Within two weeks, the 50 who were trained had trained 2,008 people. This activity shows how investing in the training and mentoring of young Nigerian scholars not only benefits them but also can benefit many other Nigerians. It also demonstrates how researchers working with extension workers can pass on important information to Nigerian households and businesses

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