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STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME DELIVERY IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The level of development that would be witnessed in the agricultural sector of any nation depends on the seriousness with which the agricultural educators and the policy makers holds the delivery of programme in agricultural education. This paper therefore sought to explore the strategies that could be adopted to strengthen the delivery of agricultural education programme in Nigeria. The article adopted a literature review approach. The paper began with brief description of the vital role of agriculture via-a-vis the gloomy situation of the Nigerian agricultural sector. This is interspersed with explanations of some important concepts in the topic after which strategies that could be adopted to strengthened the delivery of agricultural education were fully discussed. Among these are: adoption of supervised practice in the teaching of agriculture at all levels of education; on-the-farm training of students offering agriculture in tertiary institutions; internship for graduates of agriculture; use of modern agricultural equipment in training of students; re-introduction and strengthening of youth organizations or farmers clubs in secondary schools; enacting favourable agricultural policies; regular updating of agricultural teachers knowledge, skills and attitudes; improvement in the use of ICT in teaching agriculture among others. It is the believe of this paper that if the above approaches are adopted in the training of youths and students in agriculture, it could awaken youths interest in agriculture, thus making graduates of agriculture to take up occupations in the agricultural sector thereby boosting food production and economy of the nation.

Introduction

Agriculture has been known to be the backbone of most developing economies of the world. Agriculture is the major source of food for growth and development of human body. It is the foundation upon which the technological and scientific breakthrough of the present era was laid. Economic and technological growth is only sustainable in a country when there is food security (International Food Security Research Institute, 2018). Smith (2009), also noted that agriculture is not only basic to human existence but also an important factor in determining the complexities of the global socio economic change. Agriculture has been defined by Iwena (2008) as the cultivation of crops and rearing of animals for economic benefit of man. In this modern times the concept of agriculture is now more broadened to encompass all activities that is done to ensure that food and raw materials are available for human as well as most activities that ensures that the natural resources are conserved for sustainable production. Hence, Brejah (2012) comprehensively defined agriculture as farming in all of its branches and the cultivation and tillage of the soil, dairying, the production, cultivation, growing and harvesting of any food, aquacultural, floricultural or horticultural commodities, the growing and the harvesting of forest product upon forest land, the raising of the livestock

including horses, the keeping of horse as a commercial enterprise, the keeping and raising of domesticated animal used for food purposes, bees, fur bearing animals and any forestry or lumbering operations performed by a farmer. The importance of agriculture to the nation, individual and entire world are unquantifiable.

Agriculture is the major source of employment and income for the teeming population of youth and aged in many developing countries of the world including Nigeria. It supplies food, clothing, shelter materials and raw materials for industries. The enormous role or strategic place which agriculture occupies in life of various countries informed why most countries of the world take teaching and learning of agriculture as an important aspect of their education system. Most countries of the world (especially the developed ones) place high premium on the teaching and learning of agriculture both in and outside the formal school settings. That is why small percentage of the developed countries population like U.S.A (2%), Israel (1%), Australia (4%) and United Kingdom (1%) (The World Bank, 2017) are engaged in the productive agriculture, yet their output is enough to feed their nation and export to other countries. However, the state of agriculture in most

underdeveloped and developing countries of sub-Saharan Africa is a direct opposite of what is obtainable in the developed nations. Larger percentage of the population are engaged in agricultural production, (Nigeria 37%, Ghana 41%, Angola 51%, Cameroon 62% (The World Bank, 2017) yet hunger and poverty still pervade the lands. Many agricultural practices are still being done in the crude and unscientific manner which makes the vocation or job to be drudgery and laborious (Adebo & Sekumade, 2013) and the yield per hectare to be low in comparison to what is obtainable in the developed nations.

The developed nations did not just attain advanced level of agricultural development by chance but was brought about by a consistent and conscientious improvement in agricultural education programme instruction design and delivery systems over the years. Agbulu (2013) attested that the emphasis on practical know-how or farm experiences has had a favourable impact on the effective training of European and American potential farmers and subsequently on their effectiveness in the performance of their role of improved and efficient agricultural production. This, therefore calls for the need to devise a better strategy for improving the teaching and learning of agriculture in Nigeria to meet the global standard in which poverty and hunger will be reduced and also attain a situation in which fewer population will be engaged in production with higher turnout as obtained in the developed nation. To achieve this, there is need for improvement in the design as well as delivery of agricultural education programmes in schools and institutions in Nigeria.

Agricultural education has been defined by Osinem (2008) as a process of imparting knowledge, skills and attitude in agriculture to the learners at any level of education. Agbulu (2011) explained further that vocational agriculture train people in actual involvement in farming practices while agricultural education is the acquisition of knowledge and skills in agricultural science with the view to inculcate these knowledge and skills into prospective farmers for better productivity. Agricultural education seeks to prepare and develop students' abilities to make a beginning and advance in farming and to produce farm products efficiently. Thus, the process of acquiring scientific and technological knowledge and skills in any field of agriculture at any level of education either with the aim of engaging in agricultural production and services or with the intention of imparting such knowledge into

perspective farmers are all under the purview of agricultural education. Therefore, it is expected that any institution engaging in Agricultural education programme should properly deliver it to the recipient.

Agricultural education programme delivery system can be described as the process, modalities or approaches adopted in inculcating worthwhile knowledge, skills, and experiences in Agricultural sciences, technology and practices to learner at any level of education. Agricultural education has been an age long practice in the Nigeria. Before the advent of formal system of education, Agriculture education was delivered under the traditional system through the informal and non-formal methods (Victor-Igue 2011). In each of the methods, the delivery or programme mode has been through actual participation in the farming processes. This include, observing the elders, the elders demonstrating to the younger ones, the younger ones practicing what they have learnt under the tutelage of the adults, and practicing it repetitively. These methods could be likened to observation, demonstration, supervised practice and repetitive practice. Also during that time, dignity of labour was consciously inculcated into the youths in words and practice. This accounts the massive production of agricultural products for local consumption and export before and during the colonial era (Orji Okoro, 2011; Eze, 2017).

Upon realizing the vital role of agriculture to the national economic development, efforts were made by the leaders to produce competent agriculturists (Agbulu, 2011). This was first done by introducing the study of agriculture into the primary school curriculum, later changes were made to secondary school curriculum to accommodate pre-vocational agriculture at the junior secondary school level with serious emphasis on skill acquisition. Also, at the senior secondary school level, efforts were made to inculcate skills in all aspect of agriculture to ensure that students were well grounded in the vital areas of agricultural production because the curriculum was structured in a way that makes for continuity of concepts and principles introduced at the junior secondary level. Also, emphasis was laid on learning by doing and competency based curriculum was emphasized (Akanmu, Olorundare & Upahi, 2016).

Moreover, series of efforts have been made to make the teaching and learning of agriculture at the tertiary education level comprehensive so as to be able to produce competent manpower that could manage the agricultural sector of Nigeria. These were done

through the training of agricultural teachers by inclusion of agriculture in the colleges of education as well as agricultural education in the faculties of education, establishment of colleges of agriculture, establishment of specialized universities of agriculture and host of other agricultural training institutions.

Thus, it could be said that government had done a lot to boost agricultural education and production in Nigeria. However, the youth apathy for agriculture as currently witnessed in Nigeria does not justify the efforts of government in agriculture training and education in the country. This worrisome situation of youth apathy towards agriculture was reported by Tijani (2014), that there is a significant reduction in students opting to study agriculture in higher institutions while few are interested in making a profession or pursuing a career in agriculture related fields. Moreover, at the secondary school level, the objectives of senior secondary school agriculture are to stimulate and sustain students interest in agriculture, to impart functional knowledge and infuse practical skills in agriculture to students, to prepare students for future career in agriculture and to prepare students for occupation in agriculture (NERDC,2012). Studies have shown that the poor delivery of agriculture at the secondary schools has made the graduates of agriculture at this level not able to effectively take up paid jobs in agricultural sector. Olaitan and Uwadie in 1993 noted that there is lack of adequate training of students in agriculture to take up farming as career (as cited by Akanmu, Olorundare & Upahi, 2016). This has therefore defeated one of the objectives of senior school agriculture which is to make students produce foods for themselves and others by making use of the resources within their immediate environment (NERDC, 2012).

The high rate of youth apathy for agriculture shows that students interest has not been stimulated which implies that the foundation for sustenance in agriculture has not been laid. The high rate of poverty, hunger, unemployment and restiveness among youth is also a pointer to the fact that youth have not been prepared to take up occupation in agriculture. This, therefore, calls for the need to seek for means of improving agricultural education programme delivery that would enhance favorable attitudes of youth towards agriculture. It also calls for reappraisal of the programme delivery strategies that have been used in executing these laudable objectives with the aim of suggesting other delivery

strategies which could stimulates students interest in agriculture thereby helping them to take up occupations in agriculture field. Therefore, to improve the programme delivery in agricultural education, it is hoped that adopting the following strategies in the agricultural education and training process could be of help.

Engaging the Use of Supervised Practice in the Teaching of Agriculture

To improve the teaching and learning of agriculture at every level of education, the use of supervised practice must be ensured. Supervised practice according to Retallick (2010), is the practice whereby students are allowed to apply what they have learnt in principles and theories in agricultural education classroom in a planned real life situation under the supervision of their teacher. Supervised practice involves the teacher instructing students on what to do and the students are allowed to actually carryout the task under the guidance or watch of the teacher or skilled instructor.

It is a known fact that agriculture as a vocational course or subject is skill oriented. Learners must acquire skills in animal and crop production, soil and water conservation practices, crop and animal protection, processing, storage and marketing of agriculture produce as well as other agricultural activities. For all this skill to be acquired, learners have to be taught the principles, the task involved and actually carry out this tasks. These tasks could only be learnt when students carry them out under the supervision of an experienced instructor. Hence, the need for supervised practice. Also, it is one of the principles of vocational education that repetitive practice of tasks should be done to make skill learnt permanent (Victor-Igwe,2011). Thus, the students should be allowed to repeat the tasks or skills they have learnt repetitively under the watch of an experienced instructor to enhance mastery of the skills. This method has led to the level of agricultural development of developed nations as explained by Agbulu, (2013) that agricultural training in the central Europe in the Mid-19th Century for agricultural teachers, agricultural researchers, managers of major agricultural enterprises and extension officers was by supervised practical training for this cadre of trainees and ranged from 1-3 years. Adopting this in Nigeria could go a long way to boost agricultural education training and delivery and consequently productivity. In the act of the doing this, some of the students could actually develop interest in such areas of agriculture.

which they have practiced while in school thereby enhancing engagement in agricultural production later in life.

Introduction of On-the-farm Training of Youths and Students

The primary production aspect of agriculture is a field oriented job or activity. Therefore, to improve the delivery of agriculture in Nigeria institutions and colleges, there is need to lay more emphasis on On-the-farm training. On-the-farm training can be described as the kind of training in which large part of students teaching and learning are carried out on the field. Under this arrangement 70-90% of student's activities are done on the farm where students engage more in practical aspect of agriculture. Challenges or issues encountered in the course of practice are discussed mostly on the farm or field classroom.

Agriculture as a discipline is both an applied science and vocational subject. The scientific and knowledge acquisition aspect could be done in the classroom but the skill training aspect could only be effectively done on the field. Lawal, Onipede, Oketoobo, and Famiwole (2014) expressed that acquisition of skills in agriculture could only be achieved by participating in different agricultural practical and activities on the school farm. Therefore, agricultural student should be made to spent the initial years (like the first two or three years) in the classroom learning the basic sciences, theories, principles and technologies guiding the practice of agriculture with frequent practical demonstrations and supervised practice on the farm, while the last two years of programme should be spent on the farm till graduation. During this period, students will be full time modern farmer practicing all aspect of farming from land preparation to marketing of the produce. Also, during the period, some classroom interaction activities will be included on the farm class where students and their teachers could discuss issues arising from their practical experiences on the farm and appropriate solutions would be jointly arrived at. Although, similar programme called Farm Practical Training (FPT) is done in the penultimate year of the Bachelor of Agriculture Programme, this could be improved upon by making it to be two years of full time farming.

Marthaler and Schulthes, in 2002 remarked that agricultural training institutions in the Europe required that a farmer undergoes not less than two years of supervised practical training on farms and not less than one year of theoretical training combined with practical demonstrations (as cited by Agbulu & Akuto,

2013). By doing this, students would acquire relevant skills and techniques of crop and animal production. The use of modern equipment and techniques on the farm training will also remove the notion that agriculture is a drudgery enterprise meant for rural and uneducated aged. They would also be able to appreciate the dignity of labour as well as see agriculture as a rewarding and profitable enterprises. All these would help to change the youth attitude towards agriculture and motivate them to embark on agricultural production after graduation. The series of experiences they would gained during this period could also encourage them to seek loans to establish their own agricultural enterprise. To the government, this kind of programme could reduce unemployment, delinquencies and help to boost food production for local consumption and export.

Engaging the Use of Modern Agricultural Machines and Tools in Schools

One vital issue that has reduced the participation of youths in productive agriculture is the drudgery nature of traditional agriculture. The use of crude implements such as hoes and cutlasses and the strenuous labour involved makes agriculture to be confined to the aged ones and uneducated youths who have no alternative while the educated ones migrate to the cities in search of lucrative jobs (Hall, 2013).

It is however the belief of this paper that if youths right from secondary schools are taught agriculture with the use of modern equipment (even if not with the sophisticated ones) like motorized or hand-held motorized planter and such mini or portable agricultural equipment, it will go a long way to change the attitudes of youths towards agriculture. If government could make these machines available in schools and students are exposed to their use, they would begin to see agriculture as a job they could embark on without exerting their physical energy. Tijani (2014) also, shared this view by stating that provision of modern agricultural machinery and equipment could help to entice youths into practicing agriculture.

Also, at the tertiary institutions levels, the use of larger equipment like general purpose tractor driven plough, harrow, ridger, planter, fertilizer applicator and combined harvester to teach agriculture could help to change students' orientation. This could make them to be more willing to learn all that will take them to become a successful farmer thereby enhancing their skills as well as their willingness to embark on agricultural production after graduation.

Re-introduction and Enforcement of Agricultural Youth Organizations or Farmers Clubs in Schools

Youths and students have always been known to be highly influenced by their peers and the clubs which they identify with. Therefore, the establishment of agricultural youth organizations or farmers' clubs in schools could be another way of improving the delivery of agricultural education programmes in schools. Agricultural youth organizations or clubs is an organized group of young people guided by a leader for the purpose of building the capacity of youths in the area of agriculture. Some of these agricultural youth organizations include 4H Club, Young Farmers Club (YFC), and The Children in Agriculture Programme among others. The main purpose of these clubs is to develop a sense of competence, usefulness and leadership capabilities in agriculture. These agricultural youth organizations carry out activities like cultivation, processing, storage and packaging of any food crops; rearing of farm animals (mono-gastric and ruminants); gardening and fish farming. These organizations also engage in some home making activities like food preservation, preparation, textile as well as clothing (Adebo, 2012; Methodistacademy.com, 2002).

Through the activities and interaction of youths with their peers in these clubs, they will learn many agricultural skills as well as change their perception about agriculture as the occupation of the aged. One Global Economy Corporation (2016) remarked that formation of young farmers' clubs in secondary schools would stimulate youth interest in agriculture by exposing them to innovative agricultural practices and appropriate agricultural information through slide shows presentations and interactive internet programmes. Hence, the formation or re-introduction of agricultural youth organizations into Nigerian school programmes could be a vital way of improving agricultural education programme delivery.

Regular Updating of Agricultural Teachers Knowledge, Skills and Attitude in Agriculture

Agricultural teachers at any level hold an important position in the delivery of agricultural knowledge, principles, facts, science, technologies and skills to learners. They are also instrumental to the development of positive attitudes and interest towards agriculture. From the foregoing, there should be a regular updating of these teachers, knowledge, skills and attitudes in agriculture for them to be able to inculcate facts to their learners. Myers and Dyers (2005) observed that agricultural teachers are faced with a lot of problems which necessitate regular

professional development for them to function optimally. Moreover, agricultural practices are dynamic occupations and businesses that move with changes in human taste, technologies, weather and other factors. As this changes take place, the agricultural teachers need to be kept abreast with the latest developments in science, technologies, tastes, markets and industrial needs of the society (Olaitan & Mama, 2001). More importantly, in this era of information and communication technologies (ICT), agricultural teachers would need to update their knowledge on how they could use ICT to improve their lesson delivery. Agricultural teachers also need update about the latest agricultural equipment and tools so as to pass this to their students for maximum productivity and enjoyable profession. Thus, regular training of agricultural teachers through workshops, conferences, seminars, (Ohia, & Odenefe, 2013) short duration courses and symposium could go a long way to make this possible, thereby, enhancing agricultural education programme delivery systems. The necessity of this is attested to by Abimbola (2018) when he noted that all teachers should be exposed to periodic workshops, seminars and conferences to update their knowledge and practices.

Improvement in the Use of ICT in Agricultural Education Delivery

The current trend in this age is the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in every sector of the economy including education (Talebiana, Mohammadia, & Rezvanfara, 2014). In the education sector, the use of ICT has penetrated all aspects of teaching and learning from the preparation of instruction to evaluation stage (Mandal, & Mete, 2012). Although the use of ICT cannot be said to be non-existent in the delivery of agricultural education in Nigeria, there is still need for improvement. The use of ICT could be employed to show many non-available agricultural equipment in the students' locality to them through the internet. Virtual agricultural laboratories could be created using three or four dimensions to demonstrate some laboratory experiments to students where physical laboratories are not available. Also, the use of Video (especially for students in urban centers) to show some agricultural practices that could be carried out due to lack of land for school farming. Agricultural teachers should intensify their efforts by adopting the use of various ICT tools and applications like google classroom, video, online journals, online conferences e.t.c to teach agricultural students (Markovic, 2010; Sarkar, 2012). Also, many of the current social media sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram could be

good means through which agricultural teacher could pass instruction to learners. Efforts should be intensified by agricultural teachers to make sure that all viable ICT tools and packages are explored not only to teach students but to also stimulate their interest in agriculture. Abimbola (2018) also subscribe to this when he remarked that teachers should employ the use of modern technologies in their teaching. The author however remarked that this should be at all levels of education.

Inclusion of Internship for Agricultural Graduate in a Well-established Farm.

As done in the medical professions, internship is usually undertaken by graduates of such profession to gain real world experience in addition to the clinical training they have done in school. The adoption of similar approach (internship) in agriculture could also be a good way of preparing youths for agricultural occupations. This could be done by posting or attaching graduates to a well-established farm. This type of farm would be the one that operates on the principles of modern farming systems with modern equipment. If this is done, students on such programme would be able to gain firsthand experience on how farming business is done. They could also gain some experience they might not get in school. It would help the student to see the profitability of farming business thereby stimulate their interest to have such; starting from a small scale level. In the course of this internship, graduates of agriculture could also decide on the aspect of farming that caught their interest which they would also wish to invest on, as source of livelihood and with passion. Tasi (2013) said something similar to this when he suggested that all levels of government should infuse a six months or one year modern agricultural practices or training in the existing youth development programme like the NYSC, YouWin, SURE-P, including the current N-POWER for interested youths. Since most of those that participate in these programmes are graduate this could be used as an internship programme to inculcate agricultural skills into agricultural graduates and all interested youths.

Inculcation of agricultural Awareness Topics or Programmes into School Curriculum

The major problem affecting agricultural teaching, learning and production in Nigeria is not that of inadequacy of the content or incompetence on the part of the trainers and trainees but that of poor attitudes, interest, perception and unwillingness to engage in productive agriculture. Poor societal image

or perception as always been the major problem facing vocational education in Nigeria (Sofoluwe, 2013; Okolocha & Baba, 2016). Hence, to remove this perception, agricultural awareness programmes need to be made part and parcel of the educational curriculum of schools from primary to tertiary institutions.

As much as possible topics on the need to embrace agriculture should be made part and parcel of most subjects from primary schools to secondary schools. Topics on the need for agriculture in Nigeria could be made part of civic education, social studies, basic science and technology, health education and religious studies. Also, in subjects like English and Mathematics, topics and passages that has to do with awareness of the need for agriculture can be infused. This could help to prepare a fertile ground for students to receive the principles and skills learnt in agriculture with all seriousness. Apart from the above, symposiums and talks should be organized for students about the dwindling status of crude oil in the world; poverty, hunger and youth unemployment menace ravaging the nation and need to see agriculture as a means of helping themselves and the nation out of the doldrums. The importance of re-orientating the mindset of the youths was expressed by Majaliwa (2013) when the author recommended that undertaking the mindset of youth in Tanzania in agriculture could eradicate unemployment problem.

Also, at the tertiary institutions level, modern agricultural awareness and training could be infused into the general study program or course to enable students realize the urgency of embracing agriculture as a means salvaging the plight of the youth in dwindling economy. Tijani (2014) opined that government should intensify effort on sensitizing and creating awareness to the youths on the benefits of practicing agriculture as well as dissuade them from the notion that agriculture is a job for the rural dwellers but should be regarded as a profitable career. It is expected that if the awareness is created right from the elementary school to the university level, it would not only change the youth perception about agriculture but also energize those studying agriculture to be more committed to their studies and seek for relevant skills wherever available.

Improved funding of Agricultural Education Programmes

It is noteworthy to remark that all the strategies given above could demand huge capital outlay to make them possible. For instance, fund could be required to purchase modern agricultural machines and

equipment, if students are to be trained through on-the-farm training approach. Even for supervised practice to be possible, each student must be provided with input and equipment required for practice. The use of ICT for teaching and learning agriculture requires the use of fund to purchase the devices and software. Updating the knowledge of agricultural teachers through whatever means require fund. Therefore, for any meaningful delivery strategy to be practicable, proper funding of the programme is a necessity.

Okoli, wejinya, Agam and Asufi (2016) emphasized on the place of proper funding of Technical and Vocational Education by stating that providing adequate funding would require that there is enough money for the purchase and installation of huge technological and technical equipment. It also means that funds are available for the training of teachers on the new trends in TVET as well as adequate payment of teachers' salary as professionals in their field as and when due. It also implies that there is money for infrastructure, that environment is student friendly and that they have classrooms well equipped for technological teaching-learning. It implies that there is provisional assistance for those who want to be self-employed for initial take-off. It further means that government has put in place laboratories, workshops, factories and industries for students industrial training and for employment after graduation. Tijani (2014) also noted that funding of agriculture is a solution to the employment situation in Nigeria. The author noted further that provision of financial assistance is a sure way to provide greater accessibility to tools and equipment. Thus, if the above is the right conception of proper funding of TVET, a lot still needs to be done in the funding of agricultural education programme for it to achieve the desired goals in the national economy.

Enacting Policies that Would Make Agricultural Enterprise Lucrative

One of the means by which instruction in agricultural education can be enhanced in Nigeria is by making the sector lucrative. It is a known fact in Nigeria that youths would always want to pursue a career in any sector they adjudged to be lucrative. Therefore, enacting relevant policies that could make the sector lucrative would make it to be attractive to the youths thereby enhancing instruction in it. Tijani (2014) conceived the factors that could make agriculture to be lucrative to youths as provision of supporting infrastructure in the form of storage, good and roads network facilities to make production and transportation of agricultural goods to market viable.

Moreover, government could partner with some non-governmental organizations which would be buying agricultural produce from farmers at a reasonable price. These organizations could be exporting these products to countries where they are needed. One of the issues discouraging youth engagement in agriculture is lack of good market prices for agricultural products and the perishability of the products when not sold on time. Therefore, government enacting a policy that ensures that ready-made market is always available for farmers' produce could go a long way to assure agricultural graduates and youths of a lucrative opportunity in the agricultural sector. Bress-Biney (2014) noted that the importance of agriculture to the economy demands that agriculture should be made lucrative and attractive to boost national economic development.

It is a common knowledge in Nigeria that a boost in any sector of the economy will always translate to a boost in the education aspect of such sector. For instance, the lucrativeness of oil, banking and medical sector translates to a boost in the enrolment of students, teaching and learning in these sectors. Therefore, a favourable policies leading to lucrativeness of the agricultural sector could translate to a better enrolment and delivery of agricultural education in Nigeria. Hall (2013) shared this view by stating that targeting and luring youths that are within the educational system into agricultural production is a way of increasing youth employment opportunities. Thus, making agriculture lucrative would not only benefit its teaching and learning alone but could spark economic development and arrest restiveness resulting from youth unemployment.

Summary

Agricultural education as an aspect of agriculture that deals with the inculcation of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in sciences and technologies of all aspects of agriculture into intending and practicing farmers is bedeviled with many issues due to poor programme delivery. Nigeria as a nation has a lofty objectives and contents for agricultural education coupled with abundant agricultural resources which could transform the country into one of the global agricultural independent nations. However, poor agricultural programme delivery systems as outlined by authors is one of the many reasons responsible for the current situation being experienced. Hence, the paper, had suggested strategies that could be used to enhance the delivery of agricultural education programme in Nigeria. Among the various strategies suggested and discussed are: engaging the use of supervised practice in the teaching of agriculture; introduction of on-the-farm training to youths and students; emphasizing the use of modern

equipment in the training of prospective agriculturists; re-introduction and enforcement of agricultural youth organizations or farmers clubs in schools; regular updating of agricultural teachers knowledge, skills and attitude in agriculture; intensifying the use of ICT in teaching and learning of agriculture; the adoption of internship for agricultural graduates; inculcation of agricultural awareness topics or programmes into school curriculum; proper funding of agricultural programmes and enacting policies that would make agricultural enterprise lucrative.

Conclusion

The present economic situation in Nigeria demands that a holistic look be made into agricultural education programme delivery system in the country. Nigeria who has been at the fore front of agricultural exportation in Africa is now importing almost all the food items consumed in the country. Besides, there is high rate of hunger, poverty, youth restiveness and unemployment ravaging the country. All these have been attributed to the neglect of the agricultural sector by the youth. This therefore calls for devising strategies that could enhance and sustain youth interest in agriculture. This has been the main thrust of this paper. It is expected that if the strategies discussed in this paper are employed, youths at any level of agricultural education would be more interested in the course and will be willing to acquire necessary skills that would enable them to practice agriculture on graduation.

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