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## **Agricultural Financial Support Services from Commercial Banks for Youth Farmers in Kwara-State: Implication for Policy Reform for Youth Engagement in Agriculture**

by

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### **Abstract**

*Over the years, government has adopted various agricultural policy measures to address the problems confronting agricultural development in Nigeria. In most of these policies the issue of access to finance and youth engagement in agriculture has always been a major focus. In spite of the various revisions and changes in policies, youth participation in agriculture -especially graduates of agriculture- due to inadequate finance to motivate them is still a subject of concern. Therefore, this study examined the trends of policy development in agriculture up to the present time as well as assessed the agricultural financial support services that youth farmers have enjoyed from commercial banks based on the policy provision. The study specifically examined the financial support services available in commercial banks and benefited by youth farmers; the level of awareness of youth farmers about the financial support services available to them in commercial banks; the regularity of financial support services made available by commercial banks to youth farmers and the extent to which youth farmers patronize financial support services available in commercial banks. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The respondents for the study consisted of youth farmers registered with state ministry of agriculture and agricultural desk officers in commercial banks in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Questionnaire was used as instrument for the study. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics of frequency and mean value. Findings from the study revealed that agricultural financial support services for youth farmers from commercial banks include: seasonal production loans, farming equipment/machineries credits with deferred payment; credits for inputs; information on how to assess finances from banks and other agencies such as sensitization programmes; finances for acquiring storage facilities and Finance for purchasing livestock. Youth farmers are aware of the existence of these services but their level of patronage is low. However, they claimed that these facilities are given occasionally to those who have collaterals to secure them. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that adequate policy provision that could facilitate youths farmers easy access to financial support services should be put in place while government should always involve youths who specialized in agriculture and agricultural lecturers in policy formulations to fast-track easy transition of youths from school into agricultural production.*

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### **Introduction**

The unimpressive performance of the agricultural sector has been a source of concern for the Federal Government of Nigeria. The agricultural sector which has been the major source of government income and had contributed more than 70% (Legit, 2017) of the national income before the advent of oil has been so neglected that it now contribute about 45% to the national earning (Tijani, 2014). To address this situation, Nigerian government had made series of policies in the agricultural sector with the aim of boosting agricultural production in the country. All these policies had been targeted at increasing

agricultural productivity through series of measures such as creating easy access to land, increasing supply of inputs, encouraging export, encouraging efficient processing and storage, improving market prices, improving rural infrastructure, improving agricultural finance and encouraging youth and women participation in agriculture among others. In spite of all these policy strategies, little progress has been achieved in the agricultural sector. This was observed by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, (FMARD) (2016) that Nigeria is facing two key gaps in agriculture today, first is an inability to meet domestic food needs, and

second is inability to meet the level of quality required for export.

The Nigerian government over the years have been reviewing agricultural policies and putting in place programmes and strategies aimed at stimulating agricultural productivity. Few among those programmes and policies that were made between 1972 and 1985 are: (i) National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) 1972-1973, (ii) Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) 1976-1980, (iii) Green Revolution Programme (GRP) 1981-1983, (iv) Go Back to Land Programme 1983-1985 (Legit, 2017).

All these policy and programmes have a definite focus and goals. The policy goal of NAFPP was to make Nigeria self-sufficient in food production. Consequently, land reform and mass literacy policies were recommended for farmers. OFN was initiated by another regime with the policy goal of increasing food production on the assumption that making cheap food available would lead to a higher nutritional level which would in turn impact on national growth significantly. The Green Revolution Programme also had the dual goal of curbing importation of food by increasing crop production, and promoting mechanized farming. The 'Go Back to Land' programme was introduced by another military regime which toppled the civilian government in 1983. The policy programme aimed at making farmers out of all Nigerians. In 1985, Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) was initiated to facilitate rural development thereby boosting agricultural development (Legit, 2017).

Previous agricultural policies have good programmes and initiatives for the development of agriculture in Nigeria. However, they have not been able to bring about the much needed transformation in the agricultural sector. Therefore, in 2011, the regime of President Goodluck Jonathan launched the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA). The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2016) explained that starting from 2010 – 2011, the Government of Nigeria, after years of benign neglect, implemented a new strategy, the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) to reform the agriculture sector. The goal of the

policy was to refocus and rebuild the agricultural sector which its relevance had reduced significantly due to lack of lending to farmers by the financial system and the high rate of food importation from across the world. The Agricultural Transformation Agenda, served its core purpose of helping refocus Nigeria's attention on agriculture. Though the policy recorded some level of success, there were still much ground to be covered when it comes to sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria. The Agricultural Transformation Agenda document noted that Nigeria still imports a significant amount of food while she is not earning significant foreign exchange from agriculture, implying that the country is losing on both ends (FMARD, 2016).

Therefore, to tackle the shortcomings noted in the Agricultural Transformation Agenda, build on its achievement and to afford continuity, the Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) was initiated in 2016. The main thrust of the policy is on solving the core issues at the heart of limited food production and delivery of quality standards. It is hinged on the premise that as agricultural production improves locally, Nigerian food production standard will be raised thereby making surplus agricultural produce available for export and consequently improving Nigeria's balance of payments (FMARD, 2016). The Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) is expected to span from year 2016 to 2020. Now, year 2020 is fast approaching there has been little effect of the APP on the food supply in the nation, neither has there been any significant increase in the net export of agricultural product in the nation, hence the need to appraise some of the key strategies put in place to actualize the APP. Among other focus areas of the Agricultural Promotion Policy are Access to Finance and Youth and Women empowerment. These two major issues of access to finance and youth (young men and women) participation in agriculture are serious factors impeding the development of agriculture in Nigeria and they are interrelated.

Youths are the future of agriculture in the country. Food and Agriculture Organization (2014) remarked that rural youth are the future of food security, yet in most countries of the world,

most of these young people do not see a future for themselves in agriculture or rural areas. When the ageing population of farmers are fast going out of farming, the youths are expected to be successors to take up farming from these ageing population. This was noted by Akpan (2010) that youths have a key role to play in the improvement of agriculture and sustenance of farming systems while Itodo, Akadiri, and Ekundayo (2017), stated that youths are the primary productive human resource of socio-economic development. However, majority of these youths are not interested in farming or any other aspects of agriculture due to the seemingly non lucrative nature of the job and unwillingness of government in directing money into the sector as it is done in other sectors of the economy. Tijani (2014) remarked that the participation of youth in agricultural sector in many developing countries is very low due to the unattractive nature of the sector resulting from risks, its labour-intensive nature, high costs of agricultural inputs and poor pricing of agricultural output.

The apathy of youth towards agriculture in Nigeria is so severe to the extent that youths instead of taking a career in agricultural activities in the rural areas, prefer to migrate to urban areas in search of alternative employment (FAO, ILO & UNESCO, 2009). Adebo and Sekumade (2013) reported a study conducted in South-Western university of Nigeria that most of the sampled students many of who came from farming families and had their childhood homes in rural areas and studying agricultural sciences perceived agriculture as laborious with low self-esteem thereby studying it as a stepping stone to other professions. Also, Evidence suggests that many young people in Africa, including Nigeria, are choosing not to pursue livelihoods in agriculture, particularly as farmers (Ayanda, Olooto, Motunrayo, Abolaji, Yusuf, & Subair., 2012; Tijani, 2014). These attitudes by youths obviously have serious implications for farm succession and sustainable farming systems.

This apathy of youths towards agriculture has a far reaching effect on the realization of the agricultural policies of government. One of the major factor discouraging youths in agriculture is the drudgery and dirty nature of the job. This

issue could be tackled by mechanizing agriculture. Although mechanization of farming is one of the focus area of the Agricultural Promotion Policy but the realization of this depends on the availability of finance for youths to acquire the needed machineries and inputs. However, youths find it difficult to access financial support services from banks and agricultural lending organizations. Chukwuone and Agwu (2005) noted that the contribution of youth farmers to the agricultural sector is very paramount but their productivity are hampered by lack of access to credit facilities. Youths face a lot of constraints in accessing loans for agricultural production due to lack of collaterals which commercial banks often request.

Commercial banks according to Business Encyclopedia (2019) are profit oriented financial institutions and companies that offer varied investment and financial services to individuals, corporate organizations and general public by accepting deposit into savings and current account at low interest rate to depositors as well as granting loans and advances with higher interest rates to borrowers. Singh (2005) explained that commercial banks generally finance trade and commerce by giving out short-term loans. The two most distinctive features of a commercial bank are borrowing and lending. Among the categories of people who are expected to benefit from commercial banks' lending services are farmers who borrow fund to finance their farming business. In the course of carrying out this function the commercial banks are said to be rendering financial support to the farmers. Development Bank of South Africa (2005) defined Agricultural supportive services as the ability to command the present use of goods and services, commonly through the medium of money, in return for a promise to pay at some point in the future. Agricultural credit (financial) support services as depicted by the Agricultural Policy for Nigeria are services to make adequate investment funds available to the agricultural sector at the right time and at such rates as will make returns from agriculture more attractive than before. It covers all loans and advances granted to borrowers to finance and service production activities relating to agriculture, fisheries, forestry and also for processing, marketing, storage and

distribution of products resulting from these activities. It is a means of ameliorating the financial constraint to farming in the form of insufficient access to credit and insurance products, inadequate mechanism and channels for agricultural financing and prohibitive interest rates for the agricultural lending. The Agricultural Promotion Policy provides for policy to enhance availability of credit for all farmers and agribusiness through: stimulating cooperative banking and affordable loans through commercial banks. Thus, including commercial banks as a potent source through which farmers could finance their agricultural activities

However, commercial banks are afraid to give loan to youths who are just coming from school whom they felt has little or no experience in agriculture or business. Therefore, this lack of financial support for willing youths (who have the energy to engage in active farming to boost agricultural productivity) has constituted a serious stumbling block in the realization of different agricultural policy of the government.

Another issue hindering the realization of the agricultural policy in the area of youth's farmers' access to loan is the lack of synergy between agricultural policy makers and agricultural training institutions or faculties on the modality of transiting agricultural graduates from training institutions into agricultural production. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development formulates many agricultural policies with the focus of bringing youths into agriculture without synergizing with the universities, colleges of educations and polytechnics with agricultural programmes as well as college of agricultures, on the best method to adopt in ensuring that their products transit from school into agricultural production (FAO, ILO, & UNESCO, 2009). The Federal ministry could synergize with the agricultural training institutions to keep the youth informed of the programmes and aids that graduates who wish to embark on farming could get from government as well as how to access them. This issue of how youths who studied agriculture could transit from school to farming was never factored into the agricultural policies while those who are even interested in farming find it difficult to access

loan from commercial banks in spite of the fact that the agricultural policy had made provision for it.

It is expected that the new APP would tackle the issue of youth access to agricultural loan as it forms one of the core focus of the policy. The Agricultural Promotion Policy Document stated that "the private sector will remain in the lead while government facilitates, as well as provides supporting infrastructure, systems, control processes, and oversights. The document realized that agricultural finance is critical for producers of all sizes (from smallholder farmers, medium size farmer and larger commercial farms) as well as to properly-functioning input supply markets, processors and traders. Therefore, based on prior discussions between Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Bankers Committee, FMARD and NIRSAL Plc, it was agreed that a 10% of all formal credit provided is expected to go to agriculture by 2017 – 2018. Hence, the Policy Thrust of the APP on financing agriculture is to enhance availability of credit for all farmers and agribusiness through commercial banks, among other means.

The policy noted that the commercial banks and other agencies will provide support through quasi-equity financing for growth of agribusiness companies and access to multi-year finance as well as seasonal shorter-term capital. Thus, commercial banks are seen as a major stakeholder in financing agricultural production in the APP. Going by this policy provision, it is expected that youths farmers would have access to financial support for farming or agribusiness services. However this need to be ascertained, hence the concern of this study to examine the extent to which youths are able to access financial support services from commercial banks in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study were to determine:

1. The financial support services available in commercial banks and benefited by youth farmers.
2. the amount of youth farmers that are aware of the financial support services available to them in commercial banks.

3. the regularity of financial support services made available by commercial banks to youth farmers.
4. the extent to which youth farmers patronize financial support services available in commercial banks.

### Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the course of the study:

1. What are the financial support services available in commercial banks and benefited by youth farmers?
2. What percentage of youth farmers are aware of the financial support services available to them in commercial banks?
3. How regular are the financial support services being made available to youth farmers in commercial banks?
4. To what extent do youth farmers patronize financial support services available in commercial banks?

### Methodology

The design of this study was a descriptive survey research design. The total population for the study was 97 youth farmers registered with the State Ministry of Agriculture and agricultural desk officers in 10 commercial banks in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Purposive sampling was used to select 80 accessible youth farmers out of

the registered youth farmers with the Ministry of Agriculture and those who have account with commercial banks and 10 Commercial banks Agricultural desk officers in Ilorin, Kwara State Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was a researcher designed questionnaire tailored after the specific objectives of the study. The four response option of the Likert type was adopted for the instrument. The research instrument was validated by experts in Agricultural Education and Agricultural Economics, Faculties of Education and Agriculture, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The instrument was administered to the youth farmers through the assistance of the extension agents who worked with the ministry while research assistants administered that of the desk officers at the commercial banks. The data obtained from the study was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency, percentages and mean. The scaling of the instrument were 3.50 – 4.00 (for High Acceptance), 2.50-3.49 (for moderate acceptance), 1.50 - 2.49 (for Unacceptance) and 1.49 – 1.00 (Strong Unacceptance). However the actual response to the items are provided as key at base of each table. In making decision, any mean response that is more than or equal to 2.50 is regarded as positive response while any mean response less than 2.50 is taken as a negative response.

### Results

**Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Financial Support Services Available at Commercial Banks and Benefited by Youth Farmers**

S/ N	Financial Support Services Available for / accessible to Youth Farmers:	Available (Bank Official)		Benefited (Youth Farmers)	
		$\bar{X}$	Remark	$\bar{X}$	Remark
1	Seasonal production loans from commercial banks	3.10	A	1.93	NB
2	Credits for purchase of farming equipment/machineries such as tractors, sprayers etc. with deferred payment	2.40	UA	1.76	NB
3	Credits for purchasing inputs such as: fertilizers, seeds, livestock feeds, chemicals etc.	3.00	A	2.05	NB
4	Information on how to assess finances from banks and other agencies such as sensitization programmes	3.10	A	2.17	NB
5	Finances for acquiring storage facilities for their product from commercial banks	2.80	A	1.95	NB

6	Finance for purchasing livestock such as pigs, cattle, sheep or goats from commercial banks	2.60	A	2.18	NB
	Average Mean Score	2.87	A	2.01	NB

Key: A=Available, UA= Unavailable, B= Benefited, NB= Not Benefited

Table 1 presents the responses of the agricultural desk officers on the supportive services available at commercial banks and benefited youth farmers. The table indicates that the agricultural financial support services that are available in commercial banks are Seasonal production loans (3.10), Credits for purchasing inputs such as: fertilizers, seeds, livestock feeds, chemicals among others(3.00); Information on how to assess finances from banks and other agencies such as sensitization programmes (3.10); Finances for acquiring storage facilities for their product from commercial banks(2.80); and Finance for purchasing livestock such as pigs, cattle, sheep or goats (2.60).The average mean score of agricultural desk officers which is 2.87 is

above benchmark of 2.50. Thus, signifying that some agricultural financial assistance were available in commercial banks for farmers to access. However, credit for purchasing farming equipment/machineries such as tractors, sprayers among others(2.40) seems to be unavailable since the mean value is less than the benchmark.

With regards to whether youth farmers benefited from the available services, results from Table 1 in which the mean value for all the various forms of financial support is less than the benchmark value of 2.50 with aggregate mean of 2.01 revealed that most of the youth farmers did not benefit from the financial support services available in commercial banks in the study area.

**Table 2: Percentage of Youth Farmers that are aware of the Agricultural Financial Support Services Available in Commercial Banks**

Level of Awareness of Youth Farmers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	74	92.5
Average	-	-
Low	6	7.5
Total	80	100.0

Table 2 presents the responses of youth farmers on the number of them that are aware of the financial support services available to them in commercial banks. The result on the table shows that 74 representing 92.5% of the youth farmers are highly aware of the financial support services available to them in Commercial Banks, while 6

representing 7.5% of youth farmers claimed that the level of their awareness about financial support services available to them in commercial banks was low. This implies that majority of youth farmers' are quite aware that financial support services are available for them in commercial banks.

**Table 3: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Regularity of Financial Support Services Provided to Youth Farmers by Commercial Banks**

S/N	Regularity of the supportive services made available to youth farmers by commercial banks	Mean responses			Remark
		Desk Officers $\bar{X}_2$	Youth farmers $\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_G$	
1.	Commercial banks provides agricultural financial support to youth farmers on yearly basis	2.80	2.21	2.51	A
2.	Commercial banks gives financial support to youth farmers bi-annually	2.50	1.91	2.21	D
3.	Commercial banks provide financial support to youth farmers quarterly	2.50	1.76	2.13	D

4.	Commercial banks give financial support to youth farmers occasionally	2.90	2.50	2.70	A
5.	Commercial banks give financial support to youth farmers anytime based on availability of collateral	2.80	2.81	2.81	A

A= agree D= Disagree

Table 3 shows the responses of the respondents on the regularity at which financial support services made available by commercial banks to youth farmers. From Table 3, it is indicated that financial support services were made available to youth farmers by commercial banks on yearly basis (2.51), occasionally (2.70) and only when they have collateral (2.81) because all other items have mean less than 2.50. Although on an individual basis, desk officers responded that the commercial banks give some financial support to on yearly basis (2.80); bi-annually (2.50); quarterly (2.50); occasionally

(2.90); and based on availability of collateral (2.80). While for the youth farmers it is given occasionally (2.50) and when they have collaterals (2.81). By implication, it is obvious by the findings of this study that there is a disagreement in the opinions of both parties on the regularity of provision of supportive services from commercial banks for farmers. This implies that financial support services were made available to youth farmers by commercial banks occasionally for those that have collaterals, although the commercial banks hold a contrary opinion.

**Table 4: Mean Responses on the Extent to which the Youth Farmers Patronize Agricultural financial Support Services Available in Commercial Banks**

S/N	Extent to which the youth farmers patronize agricultural services available by commercial banks	Mean	Remark
1	Production loans from commercial banks.	1.54	LE
2	Acquisition of farming equipment/machineries such as tractors, sprayers' etc. credits from commercial banks with deferred payment.	1.48	VLE
3	Obtaining credits for purchasing inputs such as: fertilizers, seeds, livestock feeds, chemicals etc. from commercial banks.	1.55	LE
4	Receiving information on how to assess finances from banks and other agencies such as sensitization programmes.	1.66	LE
5	Accessing finances for acquiring storage facilities for their product from commercial banks.	1.51	LE
6	Obtaining credits for purchasing livestock such as pigs, cattle, sheep or goats from commercial banks.	1.41	VLE
	Average Mean Score	1.53	LE

Key: LE= Low Extent, VLE= Very Low Extent

Table 4 shows the responses of the youth farmers on the extent to which they patronize Agricultural financial support services that are available in commercial banks. Table 4 reveals that youth farmers' patronage of Agricultural financial support services made available by commercial banks was low. This is shown by the mean responses to the financial services provided by the commercial banks which was less than the mean value of 2.50 with the aggregate mean value of 1.53. Thus, few among the youth farmers avail themselves of the agricultural financial services made available by commercial banks.

### Discussions

Findings from the study showed that different agricultural financial supportive services are available in commercial banks for the benefit of youth farmers. These include seasonal production loans for youth farmers during farming seasons, credits for purchase of farming equipment/machineries such as tractors, sprayers among others. with deferred payment, finance for purchasing inputs such as: fertilizers, seeds, livestock feeds, chemicals etc., information or sensitization programmes on how to assess finances from banks and other agencies, credit for

acquiring storage facilities for their product, and finance for purchasing livestock such as pigs, cattle, sheep or goats. It could be possible that these services are recommended by the federal government for commercial banks to render to farmers. However, responses from the youth farmers showed that they did not enjoy these benefits from the commercial banks. The acceptance that these financial support services are available buttress assertion of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMRD) (2016) that the Central bank of Nigeria and the bankers committee had agreed that a 10% of all formal credit provided should go to agriculture by 2017 – 2018. Therefore, this 10% could be the fund that is being used to provide these supportive services. Never the less, availability may not translate to accessibility because it is possible that the banks have provisions for those financial services to farmers but the farmers did not benefit or access them due to one reason or the other. Thus, affirming the report by FAO (2014) that youth often lack access to credit, and many other productive resources necessary for agriculture. Similarly, FMARD (2016) noted that poor access to financial services which could help farmers and other agricultural producers to adopt new technologies, improve market linkages, and increase their resistance to economic shocks have been the bane of Nigeria's agriculture.

However, the findings contradict the submission of Olokoyo (2011) who noted that financial supportive services given to farmers in Nigeria at average level. It also contradicted the findings of Asogwa, Abu and Ochoche (2014) who reported that majority of the farmers in their study area had moderately high access to agricultural credit. The findings of this study showed that, there is incongruence in the responses of farmers and desk officer on available supportive services provided by commercial banks for youth farmers. Thus, supportive services may actually be available to youth farmers in commercial banks but remain not accessible to the youth farmers in Ilorin, Nigeria.

The study reveals that large percentages of the farmers are aware of the availability of financial support services in commercial banks for the agricultural production though they did not benefit from them. This implies that youth farmers have adequate information about the financial support they could obtain from these commercial banks. Thus, confirming the statement on the Table 1 that commercial banks offer information or sensitization programmes on how to assess finances from banks and other agencies. Therefore, their inability to get these facilities does not result from lack of information about its existence. This result is in accordance with the observation of Nott (2003) that commercial banks provide adequate and timely information to farmers (lenders) to set loan terms accordingly. However, Okwoche, Asogwa and Obinne (2012) found that there was inadequate awareness of the existence of formal agricultural credit institutions among their respondents. The high level of awareness found in this study might be possible because of publicity on the various loans schemes for self-employment made by the federal government. Also, in this era of Information and Communication Technologies youths are informed of many programmes and activities of government and other institutions through different internet and social media platforms.

Analysis of the regularity at which financial support services are made available to youths farmers showed that these services are only accessible occasionally and when an individual has collaterals to secure the loan or financial services. The commercial banks claimed that they made some financial services available yearly, quarterly, bi-annually and when collaterals is available. Although, details of what type of financial support services that are available in each period was not delve into. However, the feelings from the response of the youth farmers indicate that commercial banks only provide these financial support services to any youth farmers who have the collaterals when the fund is available. This finding is close to the submission of FMARD (2016) which expressed that there is a challenge of poor access to financial services that

could enable input suppliers, processors, traders and others in agribusiness to address liquidity.

Results from the study indicate low patronage of financial support services available in commercial banks on the part of youth farmers. This could be as a result of discouragement from those who have tried to access such services but are not successful. Moreover, most youths are aware of the need to have collaterals before they could obtain any loan facilities from commercial banks, and since most youth farmers have no collaterals they seldom approach the banks for any financial support services, even if they are aware that such provision exists with the bank. This conforms to Asogwa, Abu and Ochoche, (2014) that there is low patronage of formal agricultural credit institutions among their respondents but attributed it to inadequate awareness of its existence. This study also discovered low patronage but not as a result of unawareness.

### Conclusion

Availability of and accessibility to credit facilities through the agency of the commercial banks for youth farmers could be step in the right direction to boost agricultural productivity in Nigeria. Thus, the study assessed the financial support services provided for youth farmers by commercial banks through a survey research design using questionnaire. The study discovered that youth farmers did not benefit from the financial support services that are available in commercial banks in Ilorin, Nigeria in spite of the fact that the bankers claimed they have different financial support for the farmers. It was also found that the inability of the farmers to access these support services is not as a result of lack of awareness but could be due to other factors like lack of collaterals or fear that they might not be given because the study showed that the youth farmers themselves did not patronize the banks for the services. This findings have a lot of policy

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implications for agricultural development in Nigeria.

### Recommendations for Policy Initiatives

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made to guide policy formulations in agricultural sector:

1. An enabling environment that will facilitate easy access of youths to available financial or other beneficial agricultural support services should be created by the granting body or government agencies like ministry of agriculture.
2. Comprehensive publicity or seminars that will encourage youths to patronize available financial supportive services in commercial banks should be put in place by the government or other service institutions so that the beneficiary can be well informed about the existence of such services and how to access it.
3. Commercial banks or government agencies saddled with the responsibility of making credit facilities available to farmers should always do so as at when needed. It should not be a one shot programme or political tenureship programme. But it should be a standby or continuous programme.
4. As much as possible commercial banks and other agricultural credit granting organization should always give waivers for youth farmers including fresh graduates who are willing to practice farming to encourage them.
5. Agricultural students and youths interested in agriculture should always be educated about the benefits of accessing agricultural financial supportive services from banks and governments.

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