Farmers Voice NG

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Anchor Borrowers' Programme Was Bound to Fail – AFAN

The National President of the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Kabir Kebram, says the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP) was doomed from the beginning due to structural flaws and poor planning.

Kebram said AFAN refused to participate in the scheme from the start after it became clear that the programme lacked the basic structure needed to succeed.

"As AFAN, we did not participate in the programme because our initial analysis showed us that the scheme was going to fail. It was not going to work," he said.

The ABP was introduced in 2015 by the CBN during Godwin Emefiele's tenure as Governor. It was meant to provide smallholder farmers with access to loans and inputs to boost local production of crops like rice, maize, and cotton.

While official figures from the CBN claim that over four million farmers across 21 commodities benefited, Kebram said the reality on the ground was different, noting that many genuine farmers were left out while politically connected individuals took advantage.

"The programme lacked proper oversight. It was mismanaged from the top, and that's why it didn't achieve its goals," Kebram said.

He further linked the legal troubles of former CBN Governor Emefiele to the mismanagement of the ABP funds.

"Emefiele ended up in jail because of this and still has issues to answer over the funds used in the programme," he added.

Despite reported increases in local rice production and a drop in importation, Kebram maintained that the programme was not sustainable. He said whatever short-term gains were made were overshadowed by massive loan defaults and widespread corruption.

By 2023, the CBN had reportedly disbursed around N1 trillion through the ABP. However, only about 40 per cent of the loans had been recovered, leaving a 60 per cent default rate.

Kebram criticised the CBN's attempt to play the role of a development bank, saying it had neither the experience nor the institutional capacity to manage such an intervention.

The ABP was designed to link smallholder farmers to larger buyers, with the farmers expected to repay their loans in produce, which would be converted into cash by the anchor and sent back to the bank. But in many cases, the process broke down due to poor coordination, input diversion, and weak monitoring.

Under the current CBN Governor Yemi Cardoso, the apex bank has suspended all intervention programmes, including the ABP, following growing concerns about their impact and transparency.

85% of Jigawa Residents Rely on Farming – Governor

Governor Umar Namadi has said that over 85 percent of Jigawa State residents depend on agriculture for their livelihood, making the sector the backbone of the state's economy.

Namadi made this known on Tuesday while receiving a delegation from Al-Yaseen Agricultural Company of Saudi Arabia at the Government House in Dutse. He restated his administration's resolve to transform agriculture through mechanisation and irrigation-based farming.

"We have the land; we have all the resources needed for farming in Jigawa State. And with your expertise in irrigation, I am sure if we work together, we can achieve our goals," Namadi said.

He noted that agriculture currently accounts for 46 percent of the state's GDP, and that the state is working to increase productivity by adopting modern methods.

According to the governor, Jigawa has moved from an average yield of 2.5 tons per hectare to 4.5 tons in recent years, and is now targeting yields of 8 to 10 tons per hectare.

Women Trained in Regenerative Farming to Tackle Climate Change in Kaduna

Women Initiative for Sustainable Environment (WISE), an NGO, has trained 30 women farmers in Kaduna on regenerative agriculture to promote sustainable food production and strengthen community resilience against climate change and pandemics.

Regenerative agriculture is a farming method that focuses on soil health, biodiversity, and ecosystem services. It enhances farm resilience to climate change and encourages sustainable food systems.

The three-day workshop, titled "Regenerative Agriculture Accelerator," was organised under the Integrated COVID and Climate Resilience Nigeria Programme, with support from Women Earth Alliance (WEA).



Farm

Participants were drawn from various communities across Kaduna and were taught practical skills in organic farming, composting, natural pest control, and other regenerative techniques.

At the closing ceremony on Friday in Kaduna, the founder and Executive Director of WISE, Mrs. Olanike Olugboji-Daramola, said the training was aimed at helping women adapt to climate challenges and improve food security in their communities.

"We are teaching women how to farm in a way that is healthy for the soil, the environment, and their families. Organic farming not only protects their health but also reduces the cost of production and increases resilience against both climate shocks and public health crises like COVID-19," she said.

Olugboji-Daramola added that the goal was not just to train the women, but to empower them as climate leaders in their local areas.

Dr. Dorcas Ezekiel, a soil scientist from the Federal University of Technology, Minna, said the participants learned the benefits of using organic matter to maintain soil health and food quality.

She noted that adopting such practices could support food sustainability for future generations and help mitigate climate impacts.

Ezekiel explained that the women were taught soil testing and care, which would support biodiversity and reduce environmental damage, with potential benefits for organic exports.

Another facilitator, Elizabeth Yakubu, said the training was about more than farming techniques—it was about building confidence.

"We want women to know that they can take control of their food production using safe and affordable methods. This training empowers them to make organic compost, prepare natural pesticides, and input," she said. Cont—page 3

Farmer's Voice NG Editor

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Jigawa Emerges as Nigeria's Watermelon Powerhouse

Jigawa State is fast becoming Nigeria's watermelon hub, with a surge in production boosting the local economy and supporting national food distribution.

The state now produces over 3,000 truckloads of watermelon per season, with traders sourcing the fruit in bulk for delivery to Lagos, Abuja, Enugu, and other major cities.

This agricultural boom is driven by increased market demand, government investment, and greater access to farming inputs.

Farmers across Kirikasamma Local Government and other parts of the Hadejia Emirate are harvesting large volumes, with major markets like Kirikasamma, Kargidi, Madaci, and Marma witnessing daily activity.

Chairman of the Watermelon Sellers' Association, Shu'aibu Maikankana, confirmed that trucks depart daily for southern destinations. He urged the state and local governments to allocate a permanent market space to support the growing trade.

In response, the Jigawa State Government has reduced fertiliser prices by 50% and procured over 300 tractors, combine harvesters, and modern farming tools to promote mechanised agriculture.



Malam Umar Namadi Jigawa State Governor

Traders from across Nigeria are flocking to the region. Halliru Ibrahim from Kebbi supplies watermelons to Abuja and Lagos daily, while Mr. Moses from Enugu praised the state's peaceful environment and called for better market facilities and shelters for visiting buyers.

Farming remains the backbone of Jigawa's economy, with watermelon, rice, onions, and other crops cultivated year-round. Many see the watermelon boom as a direct result of sustained agricultural support, helping improve rural livelihoods and contributing to Nigeria's food security agenda.

Nigerian Scientists Advocate Certified Seeds to Boost Food Security

Agency Report

As Nigeria works to strengthen its food security through innovation, experts are highlighting the importance of one of agriculture's most overlooked tools: the seed.

According to scientists, achieving food security depends not on reusing grains from previous harvests, but on the regular use of genetically pure, high-yielding, certified seeds.

The Director General of the National Biotechnology Research and Development Agency (NABRDA), Prof. Abdullahi Mustapha, emphasized the role of biotechnology and seed quality in shifting agriculture from subsistence to productivity.

In an interview with Radio Nigeria, Prof. Mustapha addressed widespread misunderstanding about Genetically Modified (GM) seeds, clarifying that many GM seeds can be replanted and are more effective than traditional grains saved from earlier seasons.

"If you keep it, you can plant it the following year and even the year after. But with each reuse, the quality drops until it becomes what we call grain, and grain is not profitable," he said.

He stressed that certified GM seeds are developed to ensure better germination, pest resistance, and improved yields.

"Yes, the seeds can be replanted," he said. "But to get the best results, farmers should use certified seed, not just any leftover grain."

He warned that without proper quality control, seeds lose strength over time, a major reason for poor harvests among farmers.

On the issue of seed control, Prof. Mustapha dismissed fears that GM crops are part of a foreign corporate agenda.

"We are not ceding control to anybody. These seeds are produced by local companies, not foreign multinationals. When you buy, you're buying from indigenous producers," he said.

He added that NABRDA has seen growing interest from Nigerian seed producers seeking to partner on large-scale production using the agency's facilities across all 36 states.

On whether farmers are being pressured to adopt GM seeds, Prof. Mustapha said farmers have full freedom of choice.

"You go to the market and decide what to use. Nobody is forcing you. If you want to plant your local variety, so be it. But the difference in yield is clear," he said.

Dr. Rose Gidado, Director of the Agricultural Biotechnology Department at NABRDA, underscored the importance of seed purity and storage.

"Seed purity is very essential. When people get the seed and plant, they expect good germination. Once you have your 90 to 80 per cent germination rate, you're set."

She noted that many farmers still save seeds without proper storage, which reduces viability due to heat and humidity.

"There's research showing that even a two-degree temperature rise can damage seeds. If they don't germinate, you're gone. And farming is about having a harvestable yield. It's that yield that gives you empowerment. The yield gives you profit," she said.

Sharing her own experience, Mrs. Patience Koku, Regional Lead of the Global Farmers Network, described how biotechnology has improved her farming outcomes.

"On my farm, I grew a conventional cowpea one year, and I harvested nothing on five hectares. Pod-sucking insects took everything," she said. "But when we had the Bt-cowpea and planted it in our field, it was different. We sprayed twice. The pods were excellent. We harvested so much; even the residues we harvested and took to the Nigerian Army farms and ranches were used to feed their cattle for a couple of months."

Her experience reflects a growing shift among farmers who see genetically modified seeds as a practical tool to increase yield, income, and sustainability.



Nigerian Scientists Advocate Certified Seeds to Boost Food Security

Shettima: FG Committed to Transforming Agriculture for Economic Growth



Vice President Kashim Shettima

Vice-President Kashim Shettima says the Federal Government is committed to transforming Nigeria's agriculture sector to stimulate economic growth and make the country a national pride.

Shettima made the remarks on Saturday at Ijaiye in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State during the groundbreaking ceremony of the Oyo State Agribusiness Industrial Hub.

The Vice President was represented at the event by the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Abubakar Kyari.

He said the groundbreaking of the agro-industrial hub, under the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone (SAPZ) programme, marked a significant step toward building a resilient, self-sufficient, and prosperous Nigeria.

Shettima noted that the SAPZ initiative is a key part of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

"A vision rooted in restoring Nigeria's dignity, unlocking our vast potentials, and creating opportunities for every citizen.

"This initiative is not just an infrastructural project; it is a bold declaration that Nigeria's future lies in transforming our abundant agricultural resources into value-added products that fuel industries, generate employment, and uplift our farmers.

"It is a product of strategic partnership between the Federal Government, state governments, and international development partners, especially the African Development Bank (AfDB), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB).

"This collaborative effort underscores our shared belief that sustainable development in agriculture is achievable only through unity, innovation, and shared responsibility.

"It is a clear indication that Nigeria is committed to leveraging global expertise, capital, and best practices to achieve sustainable growth and social inclusion," he said.

The Vice President added that with the groundbreaking of the initiative, the country is laying the foundation for agro-industrial development that will empower agro-processors and farmers, stimulate local economies, and position Nigeria as a competitive player in global markets.

"Today, as we break ground, we are planting the seeds of a new Nigeria where agriculture is the driver of industrialisation, innovation, and inclusive prosperity.

"Accordingly, we are expanding the development benefit of the SAPZ across the 36 states, in collaboration with the African Development Bank, to onboard 27 more states in tranches starting with 10 states by the first quarter of 2026.

"This follows financing procedures between the Federal Government and its partners," he said.

Shettima acknowledged the leadership of Governor Seyi Makinde, commending his dedication to the development of Oyo State.

He also praised AfDB President, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, for his support of the SAPZ initiative.

According to him, "Dr. Adesina's unwavering advocacy, visionary leadership, and dedication to transforming Africa's agricultural landscape have been instrumental in positioning Nigeria's SAPZ as a flagship project with the potential to redefine Africa's economic future."

He reaffirmed President Tinubu's commitment to the SAPZ programme under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security.

In his remarks, Governor Makinde said his administration is building a future where agriculture not only boosts the local economy but also remains a major source of revenue for the state.

He said the Ijaiye Agro-Industrial Hub is the third of its kind in the state, following those at Fashola and Eruwa.

Makinde added that plans are underway to design three more hubs to be located at Ipapo, Iresa-Adu, and Ilora. The designs, he said, will be handed over to the next administration.

AfDB President, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, said the bank has committed \$934 million to the development of SAPZs and has mobilised an additional \$938 million to support similar projects across Africa.

He said SAPZs are being developed at 28 sites in 11 countries.

According to Adesina, the goal of the initiative is to reduce post-harvest losses, improve logistics, and strengthen linkages between farm production, agro-processing, and value addition to transform rural economies and create jobs.

He commended the Tinubu administration for its support of the SAPZ programme in Nigeria.

Interview: How Poultry Farmers Can Navigate Rainy Season Challenges — Expert

By Muhammad Shamsuddeen Abubakar

As the rainy season spreads across Nigeria, poultry farmers are confronted with a number of challenges affecting the health and productivity of their birds. Dampness, cold drafts, and high humidity levels create conditions that support the spread of diseases and other negative impacts on poultry operations.

To understand how farmers can manage these difficulties, Farmers Voice NG spoke with Dr. Muhammad Yahaya Alkali, a veterinary doctor based in Abuja. In this interview, he shares simple and cost-effective steps to help farmers protect their poultry during the rainy season.

Farmers Voice NG: What are the main risks poultry farmers face during the rainy season?

Dr. Alkali: The rainy season brings dampness, fluctuating temperatures, and high humidity. These conditions make it easier for poultry diseases like coccidiosis and fowlpox to spread. Birds are sensitive to environmental stress and poor hygiene. Without proper care during this period, farmers risk high bird losses and financial setbacks.

Farmers Voice NG: What steps can farmers take to protect their birds?

Dr. Alkali: Keeping litter dry is essential. Wet litter encourages bacteria and fungi, leading to infections. Damp litter should be replaced immediately, and ventilation should be maintained to allow fresh air in.

Covering poultry cages with tarpaulin or tempolin helps prevent rainwater from entering and shields the birds from cold air. This helps create a more stable environment for the birds.

Farmers Voice NG: How can farmers manage temperature effectively?

Dr. Alkali: Farmers should use thermometers to monitor the temperature inside poultry houses. If it drops too low, they can use heaters or heat lamps—especially for chicks and young birds, which can't regulate their own body temperature. Keeping them warm is essential.

Farmers Voice NG: What role does biosecurity play during the rainy season?

Dr. Alkali: It's very important. Wet conditions can increase the spread of diseases. Farmers should limit access to their farms, disinfect tools and footwear, and isolate any sick birds. Cleanliness must be a routine part of daily farm work.

Farmers Voice NG: Feed tends to spoil quickly in wet weather. Any suggestions?

Dr. Alkali: Feed should be kept in a dry, well-ventilated place to avoid mold. Moldy feed can harm the birds. Store bags off the floor and choose cool, dry spaces for storage. Also, ensure that birds have clean drinking water, and adding multivitamins can help boost their immunity.

Farmers Voice NG: Any final advice for farmers during this season?

Dr. Alkali: Farmers should not wait until there's a problem. It's better to prevent disease than to treat it. Monitoring, early action, and good hygiene go a long way. Where possible, seek professional help. Poultry farming can still do well during the rainy season with proper care and planning.

Dr. Alkali's input highlights that routine hygiene, early precautions, and simple management practices can help farmers reduce losses and keep their poultry healthy during the rains.

Nigerian Scientists Advocate Certified Seeds to Boost Food Security



Stakeholders Push for Sustainable Farming as Nigeria's Ecological Crisis Deepens

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News

VCDP Calls For Women Inclusion In Farming

Agency Report

Some stakeholders in the agriculture sector have urged traditional rulers to end harmful traditional practices that limit women's access to farmlands in rural communities.

They made the call during the Value Chain Development Programme (VCDP) Stakeholders' Policy Dialogue meeting, supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), held in Enugu on Thursday.

The programme was titled "Gender Action Learning System (GALS) Policy Dialogue with Relevant Stakeholders for the Institutionalization and Scaling Up of the GALS Programme in Enugu State."

The GALS methodology is a tool developed by IFAD to promote women's empowerment through gender transformation.

Mr. Patrick Ubru, the State Commissioner for Agriculture and Agro-Industrialization, emphasized the need for traditional rulers to make land available to women and youths to encourage their participation in agriculture.

Ubru, who was represented by the ministry's Permanent Secretary, Mr. Victor Ngwu, also called on traditional leaders to address harmful cultural practices that adversely affect women and introduce necessary reforms.

He explained that the state government had introduced a Land Bank, through which it acquires land from communities and allocates it to interested women, youths, and investors.

"We have also created a Farm Estate Initiative, where each ward is expected to donate 200 hectares of land to the government for development, and one hectare each will be given to 200 farmers within the community.

"The state is aware of the challenges women face in accessing farmland. That is why we are taking these bold steps to ensure our women become successful farmers," he said.

Commending the impact GALS has had on families and communities, Ubru pledged continued support for the programme.

A farmer, Mrs. Nnenna Ejim, also urged communities and the state government to allocate 50 percent of farmlands to women and 30 percent to youths.

Also speaking, the Traditional Ruler of Mbu-Akpoti in the Isi-Uzo Council Area, Igwe Sunday Agbo, expressed excitement about the programme, stating that it would help to correct gender disparity in the country.

The royal father, however, encouraged women to channel their advocacy through political reforms that enable them to participate in law-making processes capable of overriding harmful traditional practices.

He added that, over time, all the harmful traditional practices affecting women in communities would be addressed, noting that wealthy women could purchase their own land instead of depending on family land.

Earlier, Mr. Humphrey Ubanyi, the Rural Institution, Gender, and Youth Mainstreaming Officer for VCDP in Enugu, said the GALS policy dialogue was convened due to the significant successes recorded in GALS-related activities.

He explained that the programme, designed by IFAD and implemented by VCDP, aims to teach individuals, households, and communities how to live better and address unequal power relations among men, women, youths, and people with disabilities.

According to him, the programme was introduced in the state in 2021 and has since yielded tremendous results, as confirmed by testimonies from beneficiaries.

"In 2023, we were able to extend the GALS methodology to all the participating Local Government Areas involved in our intervention.

"Through this programme, women now participate in household decision-making, own assets, and have control over their income, while men assist their wives with household chores to reduce their workload.

"It has also helped reconcile couples and restore harmony in broken families.

"Today's meeting is for stakeholders to understand the benefits of GALS and institutionalize it to sustain its achievements beyond the lifespan of the VCDP in Enugu State," he said.

He also commended the State Programme Coordinator of VCDP, Enugu, Dr. Edward Isiwu, for supporting the Rural Institution, Gender, and Youth



Women in rice farm

Shettima Says Nigeria's Independence Incomplete Without Food Sovereignty

Shettima Says Nigeria's Independence Incomplete Without Food Sovereignty

Vice President Kashim Shettima has said Nigeria cannot claim full independence without securing control over its food production, adding that the current government plans to overhaul the agricultural sector to address food insecurity.

Speaking at the United Nations Food Systems Summit+4 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Shettima urged international partners to work more closely with African countries to improve how food is grown, distributed, and accessed.

He said President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's food policy—rolled out after a state of emergency was declared on food—focuses on making farming more business-oriented and attracting younger people to the sector. The policy includes plans to introduce better seeds, adopt farming practices that adapt to climate change, promote mechanised agriculture, and strengthen extension services.



Farmers on Farm

Shettima also mentioned that the government is encouraging farming activities in camps for people displaced by conflict, saying this helps restore dignity and self-reliance.

On the sidelines of the summit, the Vice President met with officials from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Programme (WFP). He asked for more support to restore Lake Chad, assist small-scale farmers, and improve Nigeria's food systems.



EDITORIAL

Soaring Fertilizer Prices Threaten Nigeria's Food Security

Fertilizer prices across Nigeria have more than doubled within the last year, placing new pressure on farmers already grappling with high production costs and unstable weather patterns.

A recent market survey shows that a 50-kilogram bag of NPK fertilizer, which sold for around ₦23,000 in mid-2024, now goes for between ₦50,000 and ₦55,000 in many states. For urea and other specialty fertilizers, prices have climbed even higher, reaching over ₦120,000 per bag in some cases.

Many smallholder farmers say the hike has forced them to cut back on the quantity of fertilizer they can afford. Some are reducing the size of their farms altogether. The situation has raised fears of lower harvests for key staples such as maize, rice and soybeans in the coming season.

Agriculture experts say multiple factors are behind the sudden spike. Global raw material costs for key inputs like ammonia, potash and phosphate have remained high. Locally, transport and logistics costs have increased due to the rising price of diesel and persistent delays at ports.

Despite government efforts to boost local blending and urea production, Nigeria still relies heavily on imported raw materials to meet its annual demand. The depreciation of the naira has made those imports even more expensive.

Industry groups such as the Fertilizer Producers and Suppliers Association of Nigeria (FEPSAN) warn that if urgent steps are not taken, farmers may continue to abandon fertilizer use, worsening an already fragile food supply.

Nigeria's food inflation has remained stubbornly high, with the National Bureau of Statistics putting the latest figure at around 22 percent. Analysts say the cost of fertilizer is a major driver, pushing up the prices of basic food items in local markets.

Some agriculture stakeholders are calling on the federal government to reintroduce targeted subsidies for smallholder farmers to make fertilizer affordable again. Others want to see stronger policies to improve local production of raw materials and reduce over-reliance on imports.

For now, many farmers are hoping that the situation stabilizes before the next planting season. If it does not, experts fear the high cost of fertilizer will continue to threaten food production, pushing more Nigerians deeper into food insecurity.

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