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NRCRI

Delivering the Roots of Prosperity



IN THIS ISSUE



NRCRI
RELEASES
NEW YAM
VARIETY



PROF
SHARUBUTU
VISITS NRCRI



NRCRI 2023
MONITORING
EXERCISE

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NRCRI MISSION

To provide necessary improved technologies that would enhance total value chain development of root and tuber crops towards national food security, income generation, gainful employment and industrial development.

EDITORIAL

Beloved readers and lovers of National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI), Umudike, we have come again with the most recent News and innovative research breakthrough of this great Institute, on the following mandate crops; Cassava, Yam, Sweetpotato, Potato, Cocoyam, Ginger, Turmeric and others. The Institute has developed over 50 different cassava varieties alongside other root and tuber crops. In her effort to achieve food security in Nigeria, NRCRI, recently released 3 new varieties of yam that mature exactly at six months namely; Delight, Blessing and Sunshine. These names have something to tell about the quality of the products.

In addition to this achievement, the Institute has also released 4 new potato varieties in collaboration with International Potato Center (CIP) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The Institute is doing more to eradicate hunger and poverty in Nigeria using Climate Smart Agriculture on root and tuber crops research and product development. Nigeria being the most populous country in Africa with an estimated 210 million people needs high yielding, early maturing and disease resistant crop varieties of root and tubers to be able to feed the population.

The Executive Director/CEO of the National Root Crops Research Institute, Prof. Chiedozi Egesi has gone into collaboration with governmental organizations and institutions to achieve high quality research outcome on root and tuber crops for food security and empowerment in Nigeria, using cutting edge technological innovation.

The Institute celebrated her centennial Anniversary (100 years) of excellence recently, with hundreds of achievements in research and development on root and tuber crops.

The daily news of National Root Crops Research Institute, Umudike is accessible through social media network platforms, including Facebook(Nrcri_umudike), twitter handle (@ Nrcri_umudike), Youtube, Linkedin (NRCRI, Umudike) and Instagram. You can also access NRCRI website www.nrcri.gov.ng for more information.

Great readers, kindly go through this publication to see the unique and innovative contributions of NRCRI Umudike towards food security in the recent times. Our research activities are going more digital with good attention given to gender mainstreaming and climate smart Agriculture. Always bear this in mind; Research Today is Tomorrow's Wealth.

Dr (Mrs) Ngozi Nwakor

Head , Media and Publicity unit

NRCRI UMUDIKE CELEBRATES CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

By Nkechinyere Ogwo and Chinwe Odor

The National Root Crops Research Institute Umudike had a gathering of over 800 participants involving some erudite scholars of international repute, Former Executive Directors, Royal highnesses of host communities, staff from sister Institutions, farmers and staff of the Institute to celebrate a century of



Cross section of participants during the ceremony

dedicated service, resounding research, empowerment and ground-breaking achievements on the Institute's one hundred (100) years of establishment.

This epoch-making event ushered in a dawn of an era and the gathering of experts to discuss on the topic-NRCRI: A Century of Empowerment through Root and Tuber Crops Research.

Speaking during the occasion, the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food

Security, Senator Dr Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi applauded NRCRI's pivotal role in shaping Nigeria's agricultural landscape. He stated that the Institute's relentless efforts align with the nation's commitment to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's "Renewed Hope" agenda, fostering food security, poverty reduction, economic growth, and inclusivity.

In his welcome address, the Executive Director of NRCRI Umudike, Prof. Chiedozie Egesi,

on behalf of the Internal Management Committee (IMC) and staff expressed his excitement to welcome all guests to the auspicious occasion and to also witness the 100 years of existence of the institute. He delved into the rich history, mandate, mission, and vision of NRCRI and highlighted the Institute's monumental achievements in research, innovation, and partnerships, making Nigeria a global leader in the production of cassava, yam, and cocoyam. Prof Egesi however called on government, stakeholders and partners for more support and resources to

enable the Institute facilitate her technological innovations.

The Keynote Speaker from the International Potato Centre (CIP) and Nobel Food Prize Laureate, Dr. Jan Low emphasized the critical role of root and tuber crops in ensuring food





Keynote speaker and Nobel food prize laureate, Dr Jan Low delivering her Keynote address

and nutrition security for Nigeria's growing population. She urged a commitment to educate, inform, and transform the image and contribution of root and tuber crops in the nation.

The Akwa Ibom state commissioner of Agriculture and Mineral resources, Dr. Offiong Samuel Ofor highlighted the need for an action plan derived from the Agricultural Policy, targeting the economic development and growth of root and tuber crops. She emphasized their potential for uplifting rural communities.

Dr. Dominique Dufour from CIRAD, Montpellier, France stressed the importance of

quality traits in varietal adoption and nutrition, emphasizing the need for integrated, end-user-focused breeding.

Prof. Ken Ife explored Bio-Economy as a catalyst for root and tuber crops farming systems transformation. He addressed key priorities such as food security, poverty reduction, youth employment, and environmental protection.

Dr. Joy Adiele focused on root crops and climate resilience, showcasing NRCRI's resilient climate-smart varieties that mitigate the effects of climate change.

Dr. Joseph Onyeka delved into recent research and technological innovations in root and tuber crops transformation as done at NRCRI Umudike, including genomic selection, pest and disease mitigation, nutrient profiling, and seed systems.

Engr Kolawole Adeniji, CEO, Niji Group stressed the importance

of innovation and technological advances in cassava production, advocating for mechanization to enhance scale and productivity.

Oluyemisi Iranloye, Founder and CEO Psaltry International Company LTD explored the industrialization of root and tuber crops processing, offering insights into strategies that incorporate research and development into economic implications.

Other activities that made the event memorable were the-

- Launching of two books: "NRCRI @100" and "Centennial Book of Readings: Building a Resilient Root and Tuber Crops Farming System for Prosperity.
- Investiture of the Executive Director Prof C.N. Egesi as a Fellow of the Agricultural Society of Nigeria.
- Exhibition of research innovations by different Research Programmes of the Institute.
- Road walk by the institute staff.





Participants pose for a group photograph during the centennial celebration

BASICS II TRAINING

By Nkechinyere Ogwo

The Executive Director of the National Root Crops Research Institute Umudike, Prof. Chiedozie Egesi has urged all participants to adopt a mindset of continuous improvement in their daily activities as hard work pays off eventually. He stated this recently during the capacity building workshop for Finance team Project organized for the Administration and BASICS-II staff at the Biotechnology Conference hall, NRCRI Umudike.

Prof. Egesi described the training as a “demand driven activity” as it is most needed at the moment. He encouraged all participants to grab as much knowledge as they could as such opportunities



The ED, Prof Chiedozie Egesi in a warm handshake with Prof Sanni during the courtesy visit

come once in a while, and was all they needed to fly. He noted that the workshop will give them opportunity to understand



Prof Lateef Sanni addressing the participants during the workshop

financial planning and management, and also understand their fiduciary functions in the institute.

The Executive Director urged them to take heed and give real attention to all that will be taught during the workshop. He noted that eventually it will be

good for everybody if the right thing is done and that the ultimate achievement after the training will be for the institute's accounting to be made easier via online automation for payments with systems and laptops. He hoped the workshop will enhance the participants reporting techniques and timely

financial reports.

The Executive Director of Nigerian Stored Products Research Institute and BASICS II Project Manager, Prof. Lateef Sanni congratulated the Executive Director and all staff, stating that NRCRI has come to be a foremost institute in the whole world on root and tuber crops research. He pledged that the readiness of his project to strengthen NRCRI on financial management, notably on maintenance of finances in the national system and proactiveness in finance management. Prof. Sanni noted that the future of the institute lies in the hands of the younger scientists, thus enjoined them to take the training seriously.

At the end of the training, the participants thanked the facilitators for the opportunity and assured improvement in their duties.

ABIA STATE OFFICIALS VISIT THE ED

By Nkechinyere Ogwo



The Commissioner for Agriculture, Abia state, Prof Monica Ironkwe and Mr Cliff Agbaeze



Prof Egesi having a discussion with the Abia state government officials

Officials of the Abia State Government namely the Honourable Commissioner for Agriculture, Prof Monica Ironkwe; Senior Special Adviser on Agriculture to the Governor, Dr. Cliff Agbaeze, and the Principal Secretary to the Governor, Mr Chinenye Mba-Uzoukwu paid a working visit to the Executive Director, Prof. Chiedozie Egesi.

The purpose of their visit was to consolidate the already established partnership between the Institute and the Abia State Government.

There were discussions on both ways to maximize agricultural productivity in Abia and strategic steps to actualizing the Abia Special Agro-processing Zone (SAPZ) including the

development of new Agricultural Transformation Centers in the state. The team also discussed the role of Abia in the Nigerian Agricultural Growth Scheme - Agro Pocket(NAGS-AP) and how the Institute will support the state in the program.

IMPACTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF RESEARCH SCIENTISTS IN NRCRI UMUDIKE.

By Nkechinyere Ogwo and Chidinma Chukwuka

Young Scientists and Agricultural Superintendents in the institute were recently engaged in a valuable workshop titled "Citation and Referencing in Agricultural Research".

The Executive Director, who was ably represented by the Director

of Research Support Services in the institute, Dr. Moses Okwusi urged the scientists to adopt whatever they would be taught as tools



Cross section of participants during the workshop

to enhance their research work. Speaking during the workshop, the Director of Root Crops Department, Dr. Adeyemi O. Olajede described the young scientists as lucky, as special attention is being paid to their growth and development, unlike their predecessors who learnt on their own. He encouraged the scientists and agricultural superintendents to pay adequate attention to all that will be taught.

Dr. Olajede gave detailed steps on how to properly reference in journal article writing which included Understanding the citation style, collection of necessary information, in-text citations, creating a reference list/bibliography, organization of

references, formatting, verification of citation accuracy, use of citation management software, checking of journals for guidelines and proofreading. He also talked about citation styles with their various examples which included American Psychological Association (APA), Modern Language Association (MLA), Chicago Manual of Style (CMS), Harvard Referencing Style(HRS), Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers(IEEE) and Vancouver Style.

Dr. Benjamin Okoye took them through “what editors expect from authors while writing a journal” such as good content, clear structure and formatting.



One of the facilitators, Dr Olojede while making his presentation



Dr Benjamin Okoye making his presentation during the workshop

2024 INTERNAL IN-HOUSE REVIEW WORKSHOP

By Nkechinyere Ogwo and Chidinma Chukwuka

The Executive Director of NRCRI Umudike, Prof. Chiedozie Egesi has enjoined all scientists in the institute to add more quality to their work and presentations and be mindful of the image being projected to the world as it either makes or mars the efforts of the institute. This took place during the just concluded 2024 internal review workshop held in February, 2024.

Prof. Egesi urged the programme Coordinator for cassava and her scientists to double their attention to cassava research as it is both a cash crop and a flagship crop for the institute and very important to Nigerians at large.

For Ginger research, the Executive Director opined that the whole world is looking up to NRCRI especially Nigerias. “The task is very important as it is coming from the presidency. NRCRI is chairing the technical committee/session for ginger. “We are no longer that programme that used to be small. This year, we would like to see hectares of ginger farms in Umudike and in the outstations”. He enjoined the ginger Coordinator and his programme to profer a holistic approach to a sustainable ginger production and combat the ginger epidemic in Nigeria.

Conclusively, he appreciated everyone for a successful internal



Prof Egesi in a pose with Dr Okwusi during the workshop



Dr Amadi addressing the staff

in-house review workshop. He reiterated the need to strive towards learning something new daily as it helps in raising the bar of achievements and ensures continuous improvement in their careers.

RETIREES VISIT TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Nkechinyere Ogwo



The ED, Prof Chiedozie Egesi with the Executives of FECOBERAN



Prof Egesi in a warm handshake with Sir Vincent Anyaegbunam

The Executive Director of NRCRI Umudike, Prof. Chiedozie Egesi recently received the Executives of Abia State chapter of the Federal Contributory Retirees Association of Nigeria (FECOBERAN). In his opening remarks, the Chairman of the team, Sir Nicholas Nwachuku appreciated the Prof Egesi for the warm reception given to them. He also prayed for a successful leadership and God's blessings and wisdom upon him as he pilots the affairs of the institute. To buttress the

discussion, the Secretary of the Chapter, Sir Vincent Anyaegbunam praised the Executive Director for the great transformation his leadership has brought to the institute saying it is a divine appointment. He thanked him for the release and disbursement of their conference stipends. He used the opportunity to highlight some of the challenges faced by the retirees which included non-increment in their pensions, non-provision of retirement Identity Cards. He also requested for the sponsorship of their executives to their annual conferences.

Other Delegates included-

1. Chief Gabriel Chijioko. (Treasurer)
2. Mr Patrick Nwadinobi (Financial Secretary)
- 3 Mr Victor Edede (PRO)
4. Mrs Helen Ogbonye. (Member)

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN AWARDS PROF EGESI

By Nkechinyere Ogwo

The Executive Director of the National Root Crops Research Institute, Umudike, Professor Chiedozie Egesi was recently honoured with an Outstanding Alumni Award of the Department of Crop Protection and Environmental Biology, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. This award was given at the 60th Anniversary of the department that took place in Ibadan with the theme "Revamping

Environmental Management for a Food Secure Nigeria."

The Chairman of the Award Committee, Prof. Rasheed Awodoyin, noted that Professor Egesi was recognized for his significant contributions to environmental biology and alleviating food security in Africa and beyond.

He added that the university was impressed with the leadership



The Executive Director of NRCRI Umudike, Prof Chiedozie Egesi

positions Prof Egesi has attained in research for development.

We join all to congratulate the Executive Director and to wish him more strength for greater exploits in food security for our nation.

CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP AT NRCRI UMUDIKE

By Nkechinyere Ogwo and Felicia Amadi

Young scientists in the institute have been sensitized on how to effectively write award winning research proposals to enable them attract grants.

Speaking during the occasion, the Director, Root Crops Department, Dr. Adeyemi Olojede said that it was a great opportunity for the scientists to master the art of writing and be able to compete for grants early in their career.

The workshop was anchored by the Director of Research Liaison Services, Dr. Mark Tokula and chaired by the Director, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in the institute, Dr. Tessy Madu.



Cross section of participants during the training



Dr Mark Tokula addressing the scientists

PAG31 CONFERENCE

By Nkechinyere Ogwo

On 17th January, 2024 at the International Plant and Animal Genomics Conferences 31 San Diego California. The Executive Director of National Root Crops Research Institute Umudike, Prof. Chiedozi Egesi, organized the Cassava Genomics workshop on the application of innovations in plant genomics towards improving a climate smart food security crop.

The 6-day long event was packed with exciting and insightful scientific sessions, presentations



Prof Chiedozi Egesi addressing scientists during PAGS 31

and exhibitions.

Scientists and experts were able to share recent developments and future potentials in plant and animal genome projects.

Other participants from NRCRI Umudike were the Director of Biotechnology Department, Dr. Joseph Onyeka and the Coordinator of Biotechnology Programme, Dr. Ihuoma Okwuonu.



L-R: Director of Biotechnology, Dr Joseph Onyeka, Coordinator of Biotechnology programme Dr Ihuoma Okwuonu and ED, Prof Chiedozi Egesi

NRCRI AND PARTNERS RELEASE NEW YAM VARIETY

By Nkechinyere Ogwo and Chinwe Ubalua

SHARP-SHARP: An early maturing yam variety was officially registered and released at the National Variety Release Committee (NVRC) by the National Root Crops Research Institute Umudike in collaboration with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) Ibadan and Ebonyi State University, Abakiliki. The team lead for the release, Dr. Jude Obidiegwu highlighted the unique characteristics of Sharp-Sharp (UMUDr36) stating that it was released on the merits of early maturity (180 to 210 days growth cycle) with remarkable yield potential, high flour yield (39.3% flour yield, high

adaptation across to derived savanna) and high yield potential of 33.8t/ha. Sharp-sharp (UMUDr36) is resistant to yam. Mosaic virus



Dr. Jude Obidiegwu and team during the variety release



UMUDr36(SHARP-SHARP)

and anthracnose diseases. It has an appealing creamy white flesh color and has no tuber cut oxidation. Sharp-sharp, according to Dr. Obidiegwu showed low peel loss during processing and exhibited good boiling and pounding attributes.

Hearty Congratulations to NRCRI team

PROSSIVA MEETING: EARLY GENERATION SEED (EGS) PANEL

By Nkechinyere Ogwo

The National Root Crops Research Institute Umudike, was part of the Annual Review and Planning Meeting for Program for Seed System Innovation for Vegetatively-Propagated crops in Africa (PROSSIVA) Project at Dares Salaam, Tanzania. The Director of Biotechnology Department in the institute, Dr. Joseph Onyeka who attended the meeting participated in a

panel discussion alongside Kwabena Darkwa, Hadija Musa and Chris Omongo were panel members during a discussion on early generation seed production for vegetatively propagated crops.

Dr. Onyeka used the opportunity to highlight the Model of Umudike Seeds, a private company established by NRCRI Umudike to drive the Early Generation Seeds (EGS)



production of Vegetatively Propagated Crops (VPC) in Nigeria.

All panelists agreed that it is best to produce all of these crops for profitability.

2023 ANNUAL MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF EXPERIMENTAL FARMS AND LABORATORY

By Nkechinyere Ogwo, Ngozi Iheadigwu and Felix Okorie



Prof Egesi as addressing staff during the 2023 monitoring exercise

praising both the outlay, the layout, the uniformity and establishment of the field. He encouraged all staff to work hard to ensure they are noticed both in the institute and beyond to avoid being relegated to the background. He also encouraged all unit heads and coordinators to leverage on their new positions to launch out. Prof. Egesi noted that work activities in 2024 will hopefully be different and declared 2024 a year of "Carefulness".



Dr Marcel Ogbonna and the well-established ginger field

The Executive Director of National Root Crops Research Institute Umudike, Prof. Chiedozie Egesi has urged all Research Scientists to show more dedication to their work to enable them achieve greater results. He made this admonition during the 2023 monitoring and evaluation of institute's laboratories and fields work approved by the Institute for the year 2023.

Prof. Egesi encouraged them to

desist from incessant excuses as it will not attract any growth and development to the institute.

He, however, used the opportunity to congratulate every staff who participated during the promotion interview and encouraged them to work harder in the coming years.

The Executive Director commended the Ginger field managed by Dr. Marcel Ogbonna. He noted that the field was the best programme field:

The Director of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Department in the institute, Dr. Tessa Madu led the monitoring team.

NRCRI SCIENTISTS PARTICIPATE AT THE ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION WORKSHOP

By Nkechinyere Ogwo

The Islamic Organization for Food Security in collaboration with the

Federal Government of Nigeria held a 2-day meeting on "Sustainable Cassava Value Chain Initiative"

Dr. Mbe Joseph Okpans (Cassava Breeder) and Abah Simon Peter (Geneticist/ Breeder) were both participants from the National Root Crops Research Institute,



Dr Joseph Mbe making his presentation during the workshop

Umudike.

Abah Simon Peter's insightful presentations were on --

- Genomic Prediction and Implementation of Genomic Selection in Cassava Breeding.
- Identifying Methods to Improve Flowering and Seed Set in Cassava.



Abah Simon Peter as he makes his presentation

□ Successful cases of Implemented Projects in Cassava Breeding.

While Dr. Mbe's presentations were on--

- Building Variety Ideotypes.
- Root Quality Phenotyping.
- Leading areas of cassava sector



The Honorable Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Dr. Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi, CON was in attendance

for potential investment.

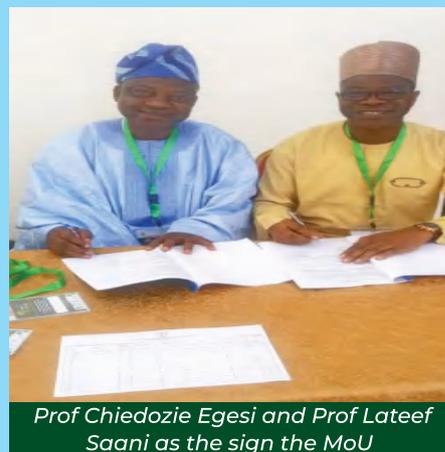
The Honorable Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Dr. Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi, CON was in attendance

NRCRI AND NSPRI SIGN MoU

By Nkechinyere Ogwo

The Executive Director, Nigerian Stored Products Research Institute (NSPRI) Prof. Lateef Sanni and the Executive Director of NRCRI Umudike, Prof Chiedozi Egesi recently signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two institutes during the 2023 Seed Connect Africa Expo which took place in Abuja, Nigeria.

The MOU was signed to enable both research institutes work together in developing solid value chains of root and tuber crops from the seed via production to processing and value addition using the power of innovative technologies.



Prof Chiedozi Egesi and Prof Lateef Saani as they sign the MoU

NRCRI SCIENTISTS TACKLE GINGER DISEASE EPIDEMIC

By Nkechinyere Ogwo and Joy Ijebonwu

A 4-man team specialists from the institute consisting of Dr. Charles Amadi (breeder), Dr. Joseph Onyeka (pathologist), Dr. Justin

Ewuziem (socio economist) and Dr. Ali Saleh (microbiologist) were recently in Kaduna state on a fact-finding visit to have a firsthand information on the

recent Ginger disease epidemic ravaging farmers' fields in about 8 Local Government Areas.

In an interview with Dr. Charles



The 4-man team on fact finding visit to the farms

Amadi, he stated the team visited the affected farms in Kaduna to do real life assessment of the symptoms and the impact on the farms. They found out that the effect of the pandemic on the farms was massive as they were taken round the farms by representatives of the Kaduna state government.

The farmers were however advised to regiment their farming practices in the next planting season to avoid another epidemic. They were also advised to avoid the infected ginger seeds and plant only clean and certified seeds, to rotate (crop rotation) on the farm land and to open up new areas for ginger farming.

The team suggested that government should support the massive multiplication of ginger seeds grown in the south east and south south so that they will be sent back to farmers in Kaduna.

In a bid to find a lasting solution

to the epidemic, the institute sent some samples to a laboratory in Germany besides the analysis done in the institute. The ongoing laboratory tests is to narrow down the real cause of the pandemic as the devastating effect caused up to 90% yield loss.



A diseased ginger seed

RTB BREEDING QUALITY PREFERENCE MEETING ON YAM AND CASSAVA

By Nkechinyere Ogwo and Rosemary Ekechukwu



The RTB Breeding team during the meeting

RTB partners to the meeting and enjoyed everyone to lend their voices during the discussion.

In his words, "today is business, especially cassava market segment business so let's be dispassionate and let every voice count as every sector is

represented. Let everyone contribute from his or her experiences in the market places and in the fields".

He encouraged the team to put other root crops like yam, sweet potato, potato and so on into

consideration.

The discussion during the In-country strategy meeting revolved around work plan for assessment of cassava and yam quality activities for the new phase and on what products to be focused on with the limited resources in terms of variety.



The National Root Crops Research Institute Umudike played host to the RTB Breeding Quality Preference partners in Nigeria. The Executive Director, Prof. Chiedozi Egesi welcomed all

MAYOR OF OHAFIA VISITS NRCRI

By Nkechinyere Ogwo

The Mayor of Ohafia Local Government Area in Abia state, Chief (Dr) David Ogba Onuoha Bourdex; his deputy, Hon. Mkpa Oju Uka; his Director General, and Senior Staff Association SA on political matters, Hon. Peter Ogbuji; his SSA on Agriculture and Agro-business, Engr. Kalu Iche Kalu, an Ex-World Bank staff recently paid a business visit to the Executive Director of National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI), Umudike, Prof. Chiedozie Egesi.

Speaking during his visit, the Mayor said their visit was to seek assistance in the ways and means of putting his Local Government, Ohafia, on the fast track to agricultural development.

Their discussions were centered on how to leverage on the huge potentials in Agriculture and Agro-business and how the State and Ohafia LGA can attract the substantial funding available for the development of the Agro sector of their economy.

The Mayor was received by the Executive Director in the company of Barrister Richard Mark Mbaram – Focal Person, National Agricultural Growth Scheme – Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Abuja and Omoba Adewale Fosudo – Principal Consultant – West Africa Community

Investment Company Limited. In his response, Prof. Egesi emphasized on the need for a change of disposition towards agribusiness on the part of political leaders in the South East of Nigeria. He revealed the Institute's plan to undertake a strategic Agricultural Entrepreneurship Development Program – focusing on the South East. In his words, “the development of agricultural production in the entire South East is particularly captured within our statutory mandate and we intend to robustly take it up. We will be doing this in direct response to the dwindling level of agro-entrepreneurship in the



Prof Egesi flanked by the Mayor, Chief (Dr) David Ogba Onuoha Bourdex and other guests

South East, which is very unfortunate, to say the least.

Prof. Egesi indicated that the Program will extend to the other geo-political zones of the country, but that it will commence in the South East which, according to recent survey feedback, has suffered immeasurably from entrepreneurial apathy – particularly among the youths.



KWAME NKUMAH GROW AFRICA INITIATIVE AWARDS PROF. EGESI

Nkechi Uchechi Ogwo

The Executive Director of NRCRI Umudike, Prof. Chiedozie Egesi was honoured with the Kwame Nkrumah Grow Africa Prize for Excellence award.

According to the President, Grow Africa Youth Initiative Organization, Honorable Notchiso Toure, the award was in recognition of Prof. Egesi's remarkable achievements and



Honorable Notchiso Toure as he presents the plaque award to Prof Chiedozie Egesi

exemplary leadership. The spokesperson for the initiative, Comrade Temple Ozim described the initiative as an NGO championing the agenda of “pan-Africanism. The initiative seeks for ways to motivate youths staying back in the continent to explore all their skills, knowledge and potentials

for the development of Africa and eradication of drug abuse. Prof. Egesi appreciated the delegates of the Grow Africa Initiative for the work they are doing and for honour bestowed on him. He promised to be of assistance to the organization when called upon.



PROF. SHARUBUTU VISITS NRCRI

By Nkechinyere Ogwo

The work visit by the Executive Secretary, Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria, Prof. Garba H. Sharubutu to the National Root Crops Research Institute, Umudike.

Prof. Sharubutu used the opportunity of his visit to-

* Commission the newly built office complex



Prof Garba Sharubutu on a guided tour around the institute

* Tour round the institute’s Biosciences facility.

* Visit Umudike Seeds office, farm, Screen house



* Supervised the 2023 promotion interview held in the institute.

NRCRI TRAINS HER YOUNG SCIENTISTS ON PROPOSAL WRITING

By Ifeyinwa David

A capacity training workshop on Grant and Proposal writing was organized for NRCRI Umudike Young Scientists on 25th January, 2024 at Manihot building of NRCRI, Umudike. The Executive Director of NRCRI, Umudike



Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Dr. Mrs. Tessy Madu, in her opening remarks sensitized the scientists on the need to effectively utilize the opportunity of the training to acquire skills in writing and attracting grants. On

ably represented by Director of the same note, the Director, Root

crops Department, Dr. A. O. Olojede added that it was a great opportunity for young scientists to master and compete for grants early in their career. He advised them to add value to themselves, look out for skills like statistics and others that will make them stand out.

A number of resource persons drawn from NRCRI, Umudike conducted the training on different topics of interest ranging from "Overview of proposal writing to Win Grants handled by Dr. Mark Tokula; Developing Research questions, Justification and Expected

Outcome taken by Dr. Mrs. Ivy Nwokocha; Research methodology, Data Collection and Analytical techniques handled by Dr. Benjamin Okoye and Work plan, Budgeting and Timeline taken by Dr. Mrs. Mary Ann Mazza.

The Director, Research Liaison Services, Dr. Mark Tokula who anchored

the workshop thanked the management of NRCRI for granting these young scientists this unique opportunity.



Group photograph of the participants during the workshop

NOAN HELD COMMUNITY RESTITUTION WORKSHOP

By Uju Nwoke

Organic agriculture is bringing our traditional knowledge together with scientific knowledge for farmers to practice. This statement was made during a workshop of Association of Organic Agricultural practitioners of Nigeria (NOAN) held at the Conference hall of National Root Crops research Institute (NRCRI) on 25th January, 2024.

The president of the Association, Dr. Jude C. Obi in his opening speech said the essence of the workshop was to let people know about organic agriculture. He added that organic agriculture is the only way we can retrieve our

environment and make it safe and healthy for us.

Furthermore in his speech, he said that organic food is tasty and has higher quality and nutritive value and don't spoil easily and the strength is in the knowledge because it is what we have been practicing over the years, and most importantly



confirm that they are doing what they claim and make available for use.

The Executive Director of NRCRI Umudike, ably represented by the coordinator farming system programme, Dr. Innocent Onyekwere thanked the president of the Association for choosing the Institute for the workshop. He also said that sometimes we ignore the indigenous knowledge and whatever things we are doing without putting into consideration the knowledge we don't know the type of result we are going to get.

He noted that the farming



Organic Agricultural products displayed

system research programme of the Institute works closely with the farmers through the ADP system and promised to partner with the Association.

The Director Research Outreach Department ably represented by Dr. Emeka Okoye, Coordinator

Extension Service Programme, in his speech said that in 2011, Ethiopia had "Green Economy for structural Transformation," that the developed world is running away from inorganic agriculture because it causes more harm than good.

He pointed out that one of the ways to go is to utilize our resources that are lying waste. Also in his speech, the special Adviser to the Governor of Abia State, Honourable Uchenna Onweka said that the essence of the workshop was to take a

message home to the man in the village to take us back to where we started from the ancient root of normal farming than fertilizer. He further emphasized that he was delighted to be in the workshop and was sure that they will meet and succeed at the cause of the training.

In conclusion the president of the Association Dr. Jude Obi appreciated the Executive Director for making the whole components of the Institute functionable for them, and urged the coordinator to communicate their feelings to him.

NRCRI PIONEERING CAPACITY BUILDING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCIENCE

By Ifeyinwa David, Chidinma Chukwuka and Uju Egwu

The International day for Women and Girls in science 2024 was celebrated with glamour and special training by National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI), Umudike on the 12th of February, 2024.

Women in Science from NRCRI, Umudike, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture (MOUAAU), Umudike and girls carefully selected from different Secondary schools were present. In his opening remarks, the Executive Director of National Root Crops Research Institute, Umudike, Professor Chiedozi Egesi who was represented by the Director, Root Crops

Department/Externally Funded project in the Institute Dr. A. O. Olojede said that when a girl child is trained, the whole nation is trained. He urged the female students to put more efforts in their academics, asking them to have a firm grip on the words of Pastor Mrs. Chioma Egesi. He noted that women's roles no longer end in the kitchen and encouraged the participating students to pay attention to every teaching lined up to educate them for now and the future.

Pastor Mrs. Chioma Egesi who presented the keynote address said that the International Day for Women and Girls in science is



Pastor Mrs Chioma Egesi presenting gifts to the students

celebrated to recognize and promote the achievements of women in Science technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) which aims at raising awareness about the under representation of women in different fields of study. She encouraged women and girls to pursue careers in science saying that some women are making impacts in all areas of STEM which has given rise to women

as computer programmers, engineers, scientists and Biotechnologist.

In her words, Pastor Mrs. Chioma Egesi noted the contributions of some women making vibes in science, the likes of Fela Durotoye, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Tara International, a company that produces make-up and perfume, Moyinoluwa Adeyemi a renowned female software engineer in the United Kingdom (UK) who serves as a senior software engineer at Twitter and Dr. Stella Adedevoh who put her life on the line to protect the widespread of Ebola as a medical doctor paying the ultimate price. On the same note, she emphasized the need to continue to support and empower women and girls in science, ensuring that their voices are heard and talents valued in the quest for knowledge and innovation.

In her presentation, the Director Peri Urban Agricultural System in the Institute, Dr. Mrs. Helen Anyaegbunam who spoke on "Ethics and Morals" noted the menace of moral decadence and

its effects on the youths and as such advised the girls to put moral values ahead, decide to do the right, choose the word of God and put the fear of God first in their lives and shun the ills in the society. She urged parents and teachers to double their efforts in child training.

Mrs. Obiageri Nkemdirim, an Assistant Director in NRCRI Clinic spoke on "Personal Hygiene". She talked on the need of the feminine gender to take good care of their bodies, maintaining cleanliness and eating healthy food.

A selected female scientists in NRCRI presented very insightful and inspiring discussions on how they were able to meet up with challenges as women and how they sailed through by determination over the years. They opined that the training will help the students in future



A group photograph during the occasion.

as female scientists.

The Director Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Dr. Mrs. Tessa Madu who anchored the training thanked the Management and those in attendance.

Highlights of the celebration was an inter school quiz competition where Methodist High School Oboro came first, Ndume otuka Secondary School came second and Olororo girls Secondary School came third respectively. Cash gifts and beautiful bags were presented to winners and students who participated.

NRCRI SEMINAR PRESENTATION

By Rosemary Ekechukwu and Stella Anyeche

Dr. Jerry Nwogha and Dr. Ivy Nwokocha recently presented their Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) works. Dr. Nwokocha presented on "The Effects of use of sweet potato production

technologies sweet potato yield as perceived by farmers in south East, Nigeria". She



Dr Ivy Nwokocha



Dr Jerry Nwogha

in tuber Dormancy Regulation". He proposed to get a short term maturity for yam consumption.

Speaking during the seminar,

the Executive Director, Professor Chiedozi Egesi Commended the presenters for insightful work. He described each of their works as a breath of fresh air and

challenged the younger scientists to go back to publication which will stand the list of International Standards.

FARMING SYSTEMS RESEARCH PROGRAMME (FSRP) HOLDS A WORKSHOP

Nwakaego Akponye, Bright Ogbonye and Uju Nwoke

Staff of the Farming Systems Research Programme were recently engaged in a capacity building workshop which will enhance their productivity. This took place during a two-day orientation workshop for the staff of the programme held at the conference hall of National Root Crops Research Institute Umudike on 5th February, 2024.

In his opening remarks, the Executive Director, ably represented by the Director of Production Department of the Institute, Dr. Nnamdi Eke-Okoro welcomed the participants to the Federal Character Cropping Programme and described FRSP as a smart programme where mixed farming is practiced.

He emphasized that the



programme is not a dummy programme. "It is a practical programme where one see things happen and the essence is to equip you for productivity. He urged them to be attentive to all that would be taught.

Earlier in his speech, the coordinator of the Farming Systems programme, Dr. Innocent Onyekwere said the purpose of the workshop was to make the field workers know the rudiments of fieldwork. He added that they will also be exposed to other things that will move the programme forward and increase productivity.

The Director, Host Community Integration, Dr. Chika Ezebuoro who also spoke at the occasion thanked the programme coordinator for the efforts made to resuscitate the programme. He urged the staff of the programme to open their minds to explore certain things that happened in the past and



Dr Eke-okoro addressing staff of Farming Systems Research Programme during the Workshop

be able to align themselves with current issues. He encouraged them to face reality for better productivity.

The Director for Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Dr. Tessa Madu said the occasion was to build capacity in a new era where people ought to work with speed, accuracy and efficiency. She challenged them to ensure they acquire the knowledge at the end of this training. She thanked the resource person for accepting to be part of the training in spite of his tight schedule.

A resource person, Elder Kingsley Njoku, a retired staff of the programme in his speech said being in farming system will make them fit in all programme because Farming System combines everything that is happening in the Institute and



beyond. He referenced King Jone's Model of implementation and anybody that wants to make success in the program had to have the following five qualities–

punctuality, proactive, precision, painstaking, and progression. Highlight of the workshop was a practical aspect of the training where the Trainee

demonstrated their field works. Conclusively, a vote of thanks was given by the coordinator Farming Systems Research.

NRCRI KICKS OFF FITNESS EXERCISE

by Joy Ijebuonwu

The National Root Crops Research Institute Umudike (NRCRI) Umudike, kicked off her Maiden fitness exercise on the 23rd of February 2024 within the institute.

In her remarks the Chairman of the Committee and Assistant Director of Administration Mrs Obiageli Agbakaoba Samuel, Who represented the Executive Director of NRCRI Umudike, Prof. Chidozie Egesi, encouraged Staff to always engage in exercise as it is good for healthy living. Mrs Agbakaoba –Samuel Stressed on the healthy benefits of physical exercise and activities to include: Strengthening of bones and Muscles, Improving staff ability to do their activities, Weight Management, reduction of health risk and sedentary lifestyle practices as well as foster camaraderie among Staff.

Mrs Agbakaoba Samuel, Informed the Staff that The ED has intimated with the Committee on the up-coming



2024 Research Institute Games Association (RIGAN) Scheduled to hold later in the year and encouraged Staff who are interested in sport to commence training so as to win Laurels for the Institute. In view of this, it is heart warming to note that the fitness exercise went on simultaneously at NRCRI Sub-Station Nyanya.

Meanwhile, the fitness walk has been Scheduled to hold every last Friday of the month. Highlights of the events, Staff appeared in their sports attire for the fitness work which took off from the old Admin

block through some points of the Staff Quarter's down to the riverside road to AERLS, to the main gate and back to the New Admin block area with mild work out. Staff who Participated at the end retired to their respective offices to resume their official duties.

SSA SECTORAL CHAIRMAN AND TEAM PAY COURTESY VISIT TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR... CONDUCT ELECTION

By Uju Egwu

The Sectorial Chairman of the Senior Staff Association Comrade Baba Mohammed and his Secretary, Olajire Adeniola paid a courtesy visit to the Executive Director Prof. Egesi before proceeding to the library conference hall for their 2024 election.

The SSA official started the business of the day in electing new Executive members to pilot the affairs of the association same day on 22nd February, 2024.

In his opening remarks, the Executive Director Prof. Chidozie Egesi congratulated the union and welcomed her sectorial chairman to the institute.

He thanked the Association for the 350 percent support given to him so far even though he asked for 200 percent. He once more, reaffirmed his promise of an excellent administration. He promised to support and work with executive members who emerges winners. He wished the new Executives God's wisdom, and declared the Congress open. The outgoing chairman, comrade George Okogbue in his valedictory speech encouraged the incoming excos to maintain an open door policy and never discriminate among members.

The Sectoral Chairman, Comrade Baba Muhammad, reminded the contestants that



the election was not a do or die affair. He emphasized that there will always be a winner and a loser. So he advised that winners should never use their powers to oppress others. He promised the Congress will continue to protect their interest and assured all that the election will be free, fair and transparent.

The Trade Union Congress Chairman Honorable, Ogbe was not left out as he made it known that S.S.A is well placed and respected at the national level and much is expected from them in terms of service. He advised the incoming executive not to soil their reputation because of electoral positions.

The election was a success as the following comrades emerged winners.

Comrade Uzochukwu Ronald
- Chairman

Comrade Kalu Chidiebere Grace
- Vice Chairman

Comrade Egesi Obinna Emmanuel
- Secretary

Comrade Anoje Chibueze.
- Asst. Secretary

Comrade Ogueri Ugochukwu
- P.R.O

Comrade Felicia Akeh
- Fin. Secretary

Comrade Ogechukwu Uwanamodo
- Treasurer

Comrade Ifeanyichukwu Ikeri
- Trustee

On hand to receive the delegates were the Director of Biotechnology department in the Institute Dr Joseph Onyeka, Director of Administration Mrs Maryrose Mbanaso, former NRCRI SSA Chairman Comrade Okogbue George and the Secretary Dr Chukwuemeka Okezie.



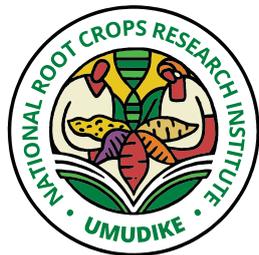
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