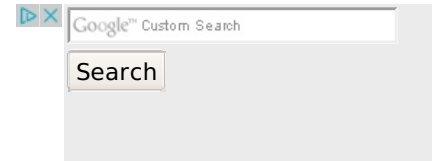


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Boosting Agriculture In Edo State

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IN every society, the agricultural sector, takes a prominent position in the scheme of things. From providing food for the teeming populace to creating employment for a vast majority of people, agriculture has played and is still playing critical roles to the sustenance of economic and social growth in any society.

Since the creation of Edo State by the then regime of General Ibrahim Babangida out of the former Bendel State in August 27, 1991 and with an estimate 3, 218,332 people, agriculture has been a major source of sustenance.

In Edo State, the climate is mixed with wet and dry seasons, thereby making it conducive for agricultural production. Crops produced in the state include cassava, rice, palm products, cocoa, fruits, groundnuts, plantain, pineapple, yam, vegetables, tomatoes, cashew, rubber, among others. According to Edo nation. Net, all the local government in Etsako, Esan and Owan, are centres of rice production while cocoa and rubber are cultivated in all areas of Esan Owan, Orhionmwon, Akoko-Edo, Ovia and Ughunmwode.

According to Edo State government website, "with 1.6.m hectares of arable land and a very favourable ecological condition, Edo State is the potential haven or private investors in agribusinesses. The Northern part of Edo State shares the same savannah conditions with Northern Nigeria. The South, Central and part of the North also share the rain forest conditions with the rest of southern Nigeria and the Atlantic Ocean water substantial areas of Edo State all the year round. A good number of small and big rivers criss-cross Edo State and many of them flow all the year round. The implication of all of the above is that large commercial farms can profitably thrive in Edo State.

The state government has said that its vision is to make Edo State the food basket of the nation for enhanced social and economic well-being of its people."

Since it's creation, governments have made concerted efforts at getting "an enhanced access to agricultural production resources for all in order to achieve food security, reduce poverty and ensure a thriving Agro-business in the state."

As stated by the Ministry of Agriculture, they dialogued with an organization called Transformation Agritech Nigeria Limited (T4M). according to the Ministry, the T4M Intervention is a public private Partnership (PPP) that involves Edo State government and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) "while T4M is bringing most



Hon. Abdul Oroh,
Commissioner for
Agriculture

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of the funds, equipment and technical experts, NDD is also putting in some funds and equipment.

On the part of state, they provided 10,000 hectares of land where rice (high bread) with a gestation period of ninety days to be brought in by T4M. the location of the farm is Ekpori to Anegbette in Etsako Central Edo State, covering fourteen communities.

No doubt about it, the partnership will bring about a “guaranteed Price regime” making it better to purchase the rice after harvest from the farmers.

It will also boost mass employment while the immediate communities would benefit from the corporate social responsibility the investors are mandated to administer. The which was signed on February 25, 2010, with the Vietnamese was a first of its kind in Edo State.

When Comrade Adams Oshiomhole came on board after the legal battles, he restated his commitment to the revamping of the agricultural sector when the state signed in Mouc with the Federal Government to boost cassava production in the state.

According to the Mouc, the state is to provide the land for the siting of two large-scale cassava plants capable of producing 1.3 metric tones per day.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Adams Oshiomhole, not “Government must be prevented from granting waivers. We must begin to ask, who granted food import licenses? The starting point in reformation agenda is to encourage people through agriculture. Edo us ready to provide land free of charge for agricultural investment.

During a one-day summit organized by the Edo State government, where stakeholders brainstormed on ways of turning the state into an agro- industrial hub aimed at boosting food production and employment generation.

At the seminar, the Edo State Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, then Abduk Oroh, “the Edo government had invited experts and other service providers to defect areas to where the farmers are to make necessary improvement. Edo government is putting all machineries to ensure agriculture has come to stay as real business.

On his part, Oshiomhole said that “we have opened up a number of rural communities so that our farmers can get their produce to the city centers”.

According to the Managing Director, Notore Chemical Industries, Mr. Onojite Okoloko, if the Nigerian government does not take advantage of the opportunity in Edo state, it will not be so good.

“There are six million hectares of arable land, three vegetation belts and 1,500 to 3,000 milimetres of rainfall. Edo Seats on a strategic location of the country where it is a gateway to the East, West and the North. Abundant natural gas for making fertilizers exists here,” he said.

Continuing, he said, “There is access to waterways for exportation of finish product. If we can’t create an agricultural hub in Edo State to begin to contribute to feeding the nation and exporting food products then we are actually at the beginning of major catastrophe.

As the commissioner for agriculture and natural resources Mr. Abdul Oroh has said, our cardinal objective is to enhance the capacity of our farmers to produce enough food to guarantee food security in the state. We are poised to increase the development of the agricultural value chain, create jobs and increase the state tax”. It is therefore important for all Edolite to key into this vision and make Edo State the agricultural hub of the nation.

Long live Edo State, Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Happy celebration, Edo State!

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