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“Global food security and food safety:
The role of universities”

Food System Thinking “an Approach for Higher Education to Deliver a Resilient and Sustainable Food Secure Future”. A Case of Nigeria

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Abstract

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood of Nigerians and provide food for its populace. The sector faces many challenges, notably an outdated land tenure system, poor access to credit, markets, high post-harvest losses, gender gaps in resource allocation, climate change and limited adoption of research findings and technologies resulting low productivity and threat food security.

According to Food and Agriculture Organisation, world population would top nine billion by 2050. Therefore, demand for food would increase. The need to intensify food production by 60 % to ensure food security. Approximately 815 million people in the world were estimated to be hungry in 2017. About 30 % were in Sub-Saharan Africa. These calls for a system thinking approach towards achieving a resilient and sustainable food secure future. The need to reconnect broken chains of network among institutions/sectors. Among include the financial sector, the transport sector, the health sector and the educational sector.

Higher education system as a tool for food security requires a system thinking approach that provides an interdisciplinary view in addressing spin-off of further problems and integrate collective understanding and coordinated response from related stakeholders for a sustainable food system.

Realizing the importance for the approach, quality workforce trained in concepts and tools, and able to implements interventions leading to better outcomes for food security, environment and enterprise is needed. Achieving a resilient and sustainable food secure future requires innovative and practical solutions informed by a context-specific understanding of how to initiate and sustain the food system in a changing environment.

The paper concludes that there is a need to intensify on agricultural production through a system thinking approach, in other to meet the food need of increasing population. Policy makers may need to be more eclectic in dealing with the Nigerian educational system, to create favourable environment in maximising and utilising the system thinking approach in a bid for a food secure future.

Keywords: Food system, higher education, Nigeria, sustainable, system thinking ,resilient