

## **MOVING THE ANIMAL INDUSTRY FORWARD: THE ROLE OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION - AN OVERVIEW OF NIGERIA'S EXPERIENCE**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

**What is Animal industry?**

Animal industry could mean the management and production of farm animals and their products which render nutritional and economic benefits to man. This idea encompasses all aspects of animal production and primary and by-products utilization.

**What is agricultural extension?**

This is an agricultural practice that has an increasing positive influence on the agricultural production system like application of new technology through extension into animal production method or system that can bring an increasing yield e.g. meat, milk, egg etc.

Traditional extension approaches like Result/Method demonstration, commodity approach and the Training and Demonstration approach are based on the "transfer of technology" (ToT) model. The ToT model has been the common practice for developing and spreading innovations in many developing countries. It is based on the assumption that a transfer of technology and knowledge from the scientists to farmers will trigger development. The model assumes that farmers' problems can be solved by people and institutions that have 'modern' knowledge. When there is failure, farmers have often been

considered as the problem. They are viewed by scientists as bad managers of resources and in some cases retrogressive. The role of the extension agent is to assist farmers by putting the ready-made technology into practice, despite the fact that such technology may not be appropriate.

The overall result of this over the years in developing countries has been the failure of the extension service. Efforts have been made to introduce improved versions of some of the approaches under the ToT model. The introduction of the Training and Visits (T&V) system (with its unique features such as field-farmer orientation, regular and continuous training, single line of command among others), the introduction of extension farming systems perspective and the incorporation of On-Farm-Adaptive-Research into extension practice are just a few of the efforts to improve the impact of research and extension in small holder farms. These efforts notwithstanding, extension services in developing countries particularly Nigeria has had very minimal impact.

**Nigeria livestock Distribution and Importance**

Nigeria's livestock population as at 1990