Integration of Agricultural Initiatives for Improved Youth Involvement in Sustainable Production in River's -East Senatorial District, in Rivers State.

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Abstract

The study examined youth agricultural initiatives as strategies for enhanced youth participation in agricultural activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State, the study was guided by three objectives and three formulated research questions. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of all youth in rural areas of Rivers East Senatorial District. The Sample size for the study was 308 respondents (199 male and 109 female youth) in the study area. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire designed in a 4-point rating scale of very high extent, high extent, low extent and very low extent with a numeric value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 correspondingly. The instrument was scrutinized by two experts from Rivers State University, Faculty of Education, and Department of Agricultural Education. The reliability of instrument was

established using Cronbach Alpha reliability which yielded an index of 0.78. Data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation with a benchmark mean value of > 2.50. Findings from the study revealed that agricultural initiatives such as Youth Farm Settlement Initiative geared towards training youth on heliculture has the potential of inculcating agropreneurial spirit among youth and motivating youth's interest in taking up agribusiness in production agriculture. It was also revealed that initiative for sustainable crop production would enhance skills in genetic engineering for high quality crops production, processing and packaging of crop product among others. Finally, it as revealed that the implementation of farm-lab initiative would serve as opportunity for inculcating youth with skills in selection of quality stock for breeding. The study concludes that youth-led agricultural initiatives would make a significant contribution to youth involvement in production agriculture. Hence, the study recommends among others adequate implementation of agricultural initiatives that will be geared towards training youth in agribusinesses for sustainability in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Keywords: Integration, Agricultural initiatives, Youth involvement, Sustainable, Production activities.

Introduction; ***Agriculture has been the major source of survival and economic growth since the inception of human race, it contributes to the National Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Mazulie, 2010). As an occupation in Nigeria, it has gone through various phases of development this development is an effect of initiatives which heightens the impact of the Sector in the nation. This development prompted government to initiate several agricultural programmes to enhance agricultural productivity through the participation of young minds. However, the discovery of oil marked a decline in the participation of youths and the government of Nigeria in agricultureAcross the world, 1.2 billion people belong to the age group of 15-24 years. Out of these, 754 million (85%) live in developing countries and approximately 60 per cent live in Asia alone (Amita, 2016). Their number has tripled since 1990s. By the year 2025, the number of youth living in developing countries is likely to reach 89.5 per cent (Global Employment Trends for Youth, 2012). Definition of youths varies across countries and regions, with***

many definitions encompassing people aged up to 35. According to Youth Development Policy (2019), youths are individuals aged 15-29, the United Nations Youth Agenda (2004) submitted that youths are individuals between ages of 15-35 years. Similarly, Agbulu, Asogwa and Ekele (2013) referred to youths as young adults between the ages of 15 and 25. Participation entails the ability of individuals to have an input in the decision making process and to play a role in measures aimed at improving their quality of life (Ataneh, 2012). Defining the term 'youth participation' is essential to understand the link between youth and agricultural development. According to Checkoway (2011), youth participation is the active engagement and influence of young individuals in food production. Therefore, youth participation in agriculture entails the engagement of young minds in agribusiness, food value-chain, agricultural policy formulation and systems linked to the food system. Strategies in this context are deliberate plan of actions designed to achieve adequate participation of youth in production agricultural products. **According to Sri (2014), the decline of young** ***workforce in agriculture is not without*** *consequences, particularly for the future sustainability of the increasing number of population in Nigeria. This drastic decline in youth involvement in agricultural activities results to food insecurity, unemployment and high rate of poverty being experienced among Nigerians (Hasan & Abubakar, 2017). Many research proved that youth's participation in agriculture would go a long way to eradicate unemployment and food insecurity among other things. Although these expectations are right and attainable, but depend on good initiative that will inculcate the required skills to drive these noble objectives towards youth participation in agriculture. It is unfortunate that the training needs of youth in particular, those needed to develop their capacities to engage in productive, profitable and sustainable* ***agriculture have rarely been systdressed in training programmes*****. Nonetheless, what is encouraging is that in recent years many initiatives targeted at youths** have emerged and these initiatives have highlighted new approaches and methodologies to developing the capacity of youth to engage in agriculture. Thus, agricultural initiative is a powerful approach for mobilizing younger generation in agricultural activities. Investing in the training of young individuals is a major concern as the challenges associated with adopting improved production methods and linking up with marketing opportunities in modem value chains are growing. The increasing engagement of multinational and national companies in food value chains along with increased

consumer sensitivity to global issues of sustainability and poverty reduction means that opportunities for young people to engage in agriculture today and in the future are arguably greater than was the case for their parents. At the same time, greater competition and more demanding quality standards at the market side and more competition over scarce natural resources, including land, from the production side imply the need for these young people to develop a range of skills and knowledge that have not always been readily accessible in agriculture. The objective of youth agricultural initiatives is to create employment for the youth through active participation in modem agricultural practices by raising the production efficiency and productivity of the participants thereby taking up farming as a life time vocation (Thomas & Eforuoku, 2020).

Youths play an important role in agriculture and other allied activities as their participation in agricultural activities has been recognized as one of the essential keys for reviving the economy of Nigeria. According to Anshu and Pinaki (2017), rural youths (either male or female) can be active participants in various agricultural activities because of their family background in farming. Since youth are recognized as effective "agents of change" they can help in the process of dissemination and adoption of modern techniques and methods of agriculture and can take active part in ensuring food security among rural people. Thus, to ensure Nigeria becomes one of the world leaders in agricultural production, youth involvement in agriculture must be given a paramount attention through adequate initiative and research programmes. To build a stronger agricultural economy for future generations, agricultural activities need to be improved both in domestic and international markets for income creation. And this as stated by Igbolekwu, Arisukwu, Rasak, Ake and Onireti (2020) can be achieved through effective training. In consonance with this opinion, Anshu and Pinaki (2017) asserted that if youths are given proper training in modern agricultural technologies they would not only come forward to accept changes but can also influence and educate other members of the farming community about modern agricultural technologies. Hence, youth agricultural initiatives is a platform through which young people could gain access to important agricultural literacy, resources and information that can help them learn how to make a sustainable living in agriculture.

Youth require extension training to stay aware of fast-moving developments in farming technology, agribusinesses, and an array of other skills and fields that affect agricultural operations. Thus, the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA, 2018) asserts that the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) initiatives is a platform to increase youths knowledge in these areas and help them adopt practices that are profitable, environmentally sound, and contribute to quality of life through involvement in agricultural activities. Thomas and Eforuoku (2020) opined that properly organized youth in agriculture programmes help improve the income of youths, the more empowered the youth, the more developed the nation becomes (Anshu & Pinaki, 2017). The main function of agricultural initiatives is to encourage youths' participation in agricultural activities through training on crop production, livestock production, market research and food consumption trends to maximize agricultural productivity and profit. However, agricultural training programmes have surpassed the face-to-face methods. This prompted the assertion of Singh, Alisha, Matthew and Christian (2016) that the user friendly interface initiative that will connect more youth to technology. According to the authors, this platform will act as a thought-pool. This method will enable youth acquire more knowledge on food production. The opportunities that user friendly provides harness ICT mediation in agriculture and skilled youth in digital technologies. According to Singh et al (2016), this plays a crucial role as change agents in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders in the agricultural sector thus improving youth participation in agriculture.

Heliculture, otherwise known as snail rearing is one of the components of agricultural initiative programmes taking to rural youths to effectively motivate youths' engagement in agricultural activities. Chinaka and Wilson (2015) posited that snail contains high protein of about 12-16%; iron 45-50mg/kg; valuable amino acids, and low in fat -.08%. This assertion is in consonance with Akintomide (2004) who opined that snail farming provides a cheap source of high quality animal protein for human consumption. Snail farmers have numerous advantages as the amount of capital required for the establishment of a snail farm is appreciably small and the practice

Requires little inputs with no strenuous physical energy. Heliculture can be seen as a veritable means of generating income and to achieve self-sufficiency in hard times as presently experienced in Nigeria today (Agbogidi & Okonta, 2011). Thus, through the establishment of Youth Farm Settlement Initiative (YFSI) that was initiated by the Nigeria government, individual youth could be empowered to be successful in commercial snail production upon graduation *from training.*

In strategizing youth involvement in agriculture, Ogba and Ndem '(2016) posited that Farm Settlement Initiative enables young school leavers to make farming their career thereby preventing them from moving to the urban areas in search of white collar jobs. This assertion is in line with the statement made by International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI, 2014) that the Youth Farm Settlement programme carried out in Ebony State developed youth skills in the procurement of quality pen materials for either cage or tank, putting humus soil pen floor, identification and selection of healthy stock for mating thus, motivating youths' participation in agricultural production. Thus, Farm Settlement Initiative is a platform that inculcates youth with skills on the basic processes involve in snail farming through hands-on experience.

Youth Initiative for Sustainable Crop Production (ISCP) is aimed at stimulating and motivating rural youths towards achieving better income in crop production through training youth trainers. It involves training youth that will train other youth in crop production and adoption of improved agricultural inputs in crop production. Thomas and Eforuoku (2020) in a study stated that training youth that will in turn train other youths encourages youth participation in various areas of crop production such as processing, storing and packaging of food crop. This, according to Daryanto (2009) is a creative economy that is usually preferred by the younger generation. FAO (2016) observed that training youths to become facilitators for the adoption of improved crop varieties such as early mature crop encouraged youths' involvement in crop production. In further terms, Himaja (2020) posited that to facilitate youth involvement in food production; young farmers should be train to sensitize their peers regarding the economic opportunities in crop production using the peer-to-peer techniques. On average, FAO (2016) estimated that this initiative enables each youth trainer re-trained to

train an average of 20 other rural youth with an important spillover effect. Trained youth could organize farm-school training for peers in their youth groups or associations.

In motivating the involvement of young minds in food production, Lan, Onu and Akaa (2019) stated that Initiative for Sustainable Crop Production (ISCP) engages youth on adequate training on the operations involve in agricultural technologies such as genetic engineering for production of high quality yielding crops; thus making the sector interesting and professional. In similar vein, Thomas and Eforuoku (2020) noted that Initiative for Sustainable Crop Production instills youth with skills required for quality processing of food crops, thus enhancing their participation in agriculture. Thomas and Eforuoku (2020) were of the opinion that Initiative in Sustainable Crop Production serves as a means of introducing innovations and modem practices in crop production hence encouraging youth involvement in food security and other crop-related enterprise.

Livestock farming being one of the fastest growing sub-sectors of agriculture with huge potential. Based on the increase in human population and high demand in protein consumption which has led to over importation of animal and its resources, youth involvement in livestock farming becomes a necessity. For livestock farming to reach its full potential, Adelodun (2015) posits the need for considerable and active participation of a good percentage of youth in the sub-sector. In this regard, many studies have identified a number of areas that require attention in order to achieve the full participation of youth in agricultural sector. These include addressing issues such as unavailability of quality feed for livestock production. Hence, livestock production is not left out as a means for youth empowerment.

To improve youth's participation in food production, Adelodun (2015) suggested the establishment of youth initiative that is capable of training youth to take up agro allied activities such as poultry farming, dairying, fisheries, goat rearing and other similar agricultural entrepreneurial activities that will keep the youth attached to agriculture, either directly or indirectly. This prompted the establishment of Youth Farm Lab Initiative (YFLI) by the Federal Government,

through the Ministry of Agriculture, to train Nigerian youths on livestock production and sustainable urban agriculture. The youth farm lab is an agricultural initiative that gives youth the opportunity to acquire skills for livestock production through various phases of training. Adequate training through Youth Farm Lab Initiative in rural communities will bring a significant improvement in youth participation in agricultural entrepreneurship. Through such initiative youth would be imparted with the requisite skills in taking up farming as a source of livelihood.

Inculcating youth with the skills to enhance participation in agriculture will not yield the expected outcome even when the interest is there until provisions are made to enable them have access to funds to incorporate the learned skills into agribusinesses. Thus, access to financial services such as loans is of vital importance to starting any agribusiness or production activity. Anshu, Rani and Pinaki (2017) posited that Youth Farm Lab Initiative do not only engage youth in livestock production but also give them access to agricultural funds that will boost their productive capacities in food production and security.

According to the Sustainable Development Goals
(SDGs 2015), Youth Farm Lab Initiative also gears towards encouraging and supporting youth through the release of credit facilities for the production of livestock and its products such as meat, milk and egg to meet up with the demand while maintaining good quality. Access to insurance schemes is crucial for young farmers. In tandem, Dalla (2012) posited that Youth Farm Lab Initiative support young farmers in developin agricultural risk management strategies for their farms.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the immense contributions of agriculture to the society and the favourable conditions for agricultural production enterprises to thrive well in Rivers State, individuals involved in agricultural productions are mainly aged farmers (Aphunu & Atoma, 2010). Thus, it becomes difficult for this aged generation involved in agricultural activities to achieve the expected productivity to meet food security in the ever growing population. Also, the high rate of youth migration (from rural areas to urban cities) in search of employment in other sectors of the economy that

is already limited pose difficulty in meeting food demand. These declining factors are at speed of making agricultural sector dead.-In this regard, Ovwigho and Ifie (20^9) posited that Nigeria youths who have the potentials to boost agriculture are not interested in agricultural activities. This has made agriculture unattractive and non-lucrative thus resulting in food insecurity. However, in an attempt to alter the negative perception, the Federal government of Nigeria came up with different policies and programmes to enhance youth participation in agriculture. It is therefore necessary to ascertain if some of the initiatives such as youth farm lab, youth farm settlement and livestock, environment and development initiative, youth-farmers initiative, farm-school initiative and young farm leaders initiative would if implemented enhance youth participation in agriculture, in Rivers East Senatorial District, hence this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to establish the extent integration of agricultural initiatives will improve youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State. Specifically the study sought to;

1. Assess the extent Youth Farm Settlement Initiative (YFSI) will improve youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial Distinct of Rivers State.
2. Determine the extent for Sustaining Crop Production (SCP) will improve youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.
3. Examine the extent Youth Farm Lab Initiative (YFLI) will improve youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Research Questions;

The following research questions guided the study:

1 .To what extent will Youth Farm Settlement Initiative (YFSI) improve youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State?

2. To what extent will Initiative for Sustainable Crop Production (ISCP) improve youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State?
3. To what extent will Youth Farm Lab Initiative (YFLI) improve youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State?

Methodology

The study was conducted in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State, Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State is located in the southern geographical zone of the state. The zone comprised of 8 Local Government Areas which include Obio-Akpor, Ikwerre, Etche, Emeoha, Okirika, Ogu-Bolo, Omuma. Agricultural activities constitute the main occupation of the people, especially in the rural areas. The study was a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was made up of all youths in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State. The sample size of 308 youths was selected using multi-stage sampling technique. Firstly, the study was clustered into 3 agricultural zones in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State. Secondly, the study purposively sampled zone I and III from the agricultural zoning system due to the predominant crop and livestock farming activities in the area. Thirdly, the study randomly selected 2 local government areas from each sampled zones (Ikwerre & Emouha from zone I and Etche & Omuma from zone III). Fourthly, 77 respondents were randomly selected from each local government areas selected from the zones, giving a total of 308 youths used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire tiled Integration of Agriculture Initiatives for Improved Youth Involvement in Sustainable Agricultural Production Activities. Questionnaire (IAIIYISAPAQ) designed in a 4-point rating scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent, and Very Low Extent with a numeric value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively with a criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that any mean less than 2.50 were regarded as low extent.

The instrument was to elicit information on each research question. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient method which yielded

a reliability index of 0.78. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the data.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent will Youth Farm Settlement Initiative (YFSI) improve v youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Table 1: Mean Responses on Extent Youth Farm Settlement Initiative will Improve Youth Involvement in Sustainable Agricultural Production Activities.

S/N (n=199)		Female Youth (n=109)			Male Youth		
		X_1	SD	Remark	X_1	SD	Remark
1	Youth farm settlement initiative improves youth with skills in procurement of quality inputs for agricultural production thus motivating youths to start up agribusiness	3.32	0.56	High Ext	2.76	0.63	High Ext
2	Task assigned to participants in farm settlement training improves Skills required for poultry egg production among youth	3.56	0.76	High Ext	3.42	0.61	High Ext
3	projects to enhance youth skills in snail farming thus enhancing youth involvement in food production	3.45	0.43	High Ext	3.21	0.55	High Ext
4	Through farm-based demonstrational training, youth farm settlement initiative enhance youth acquisition of skills in good application of production inputs in agriculture	3.47	0.89	High Ext	3.13	0.87	High Ext

5	Youth farm initiative instill youth with skills in production of livestock feed thus making youth in involve in agribusiness	2.73	0.78	High Ext	3.30	0.78	High Ext
6	Utilization of youth-farm settlement initiative has potential of inculcating agripreneurial spirit among youth	3.15	0.47	High Ext	2.71	0.54	High Ext
	Grand Mean	**3.30**		**High Ext**	**3.24**		**High Ext**

Source: Field work **2025**'

Table 1 reveals the extent Youth Farm Settlement Initiative (YFSI) will improve youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State. The responses from the respondents to each variable showed that Youth Farm Settlement Initiatives (YFSI) improves youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State, as all the items tested hard mean score value above the criterion mean value of 2.50. Such as item (1) hard mean score of (3.52 & 2.76) for male and female youths, item (2) hard (3.56 & 3.42), item (3) hard (3.45 & 3.13), item (4) hard (3.47 73.130, item (5) hard (4.16 & 3.30), and item (6) hard (3.15 & 2.71), respectively their responses is of High-Extent. Also the range of the standard deviation of male youths is from (0.45-0.89) and that of female youths range from (0.53-0.87). The closeness of the standard deviation showed that the respondents are not widely dispersed.

Research Question 2: To what extent will Initiative for Sustainable Crop Production (ISCP) improve youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean Responses on Extent Initiative for Sustainable Crop Production will Improve Youth Involvement in Agricultural Production Activities

S/N (n=199)		Female Youth (n=109)			Male Youth		
		X_1	SD	Remark	X_1	SD	Remark
1	Initiative sustainable crop production instill youths with skills in genetic engineering for production of high quality yielding crops through the use of youth trainers	3.34	0.56	High Ext.	3.35	0.56	High Ext.
2	The use of youth-farmers as trainers enhance youths skills in value addition in crop production	3.15	0.89	High Ext.	3.41	0.96	High Ext
3	Initiative for sustainable crop production encourages peer-to-peer training that enhances youth skills in crop production	3.15	0.90	High Ext	3.52	0.56	High Ext
4	Youths trainers utilizes off-farm training techniques to inculcate other youths with skills in packaging of crop for business	2.89	0.63	High Ext	3.67	0.76	High Ext
5	Training of youths to become facilitators for the adoption of improved crop varieties such as early mature crop encourages youths involvement in crop production	3.10	0.67	High Ext	3.42	0.96	High Ext
6	Utilization of farm-school techniques would inculcate youth with skills in agricultural technologies	3.31	0.78	High Ext	3.65	0.56	High Ext

7	Utilization of young farm leaders by ISCP develops farm managerial skills among youth	3.22	0.89	High Ext	3.04	0.57	High Ext
	Grand mean	**3.50**		**High Ext**		**0.83**	**High Ext**

Source: Field work 2025

Result from Table 2 reveals the extent Initiative for Sustainable Crop Production (ISCP) will improve youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State. . The responses from the respondents to each variable showed that Initiatives for Sustainable Crop Production improves youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State, as all the items tested hard mean score value above the criterion mean value of 2.50. Such as item (1) hard mean score of (3.34 & 3.33) item (2) hard (3.15 & 3.41) item (3) hard (3.13 & 3.52) item (4) hard 2.89 & 3.67), item (5) had (3.10 & 3.42), item (6) hard (3.31 & 3.66) and item (7) hard 3.22 & 3.04) respectively. The standard deviation (SD) of the female youth ranges from (0.56 to 1.21), while that of male range from (0.56 to 1.33) .Again the near similar value of the (SD) showed that the respondents were not widely dispersed.

Research Question 3: To what extent will Youth Farm Lab Initiative (YFLI) improve youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean Responses on Extent Youth Farm Lab Initiative will Improve Youth Involvement Sustainable Agricultural Production Activities.

S/N (n=199)		Female Youth (n=109)			Male Youth		
		X_1	SD	Remark	X_1	SD	Remark
1	Youth farm initiative improves young people skills in farm risk management for increased income	3.56	0.47	High Ext.	3.34	0.56	High Ext.
2	Farm-lab initiative inculcates youth with skills in feed preparation for livestock production	3.23	0.87	High Ext.	3.56	0.76	High Ext
3	The initiative inculcates youth with basic skills in construction of livestock shelter thus encouraging their involvement in small-scale agro-enterprise	0.76	0.65	High Ext	3.56	0.45745	High Ext
4	Farm-lab initiative serve as research center for improving youth skills in animal health	2.87	0.45	High Ext	3.16	0.56	High Ext
5	Youth farm-lab initiative gives participant the opportunity to enhance skills necessary for commercial production of consumable meats	3.14	0.56	High Ext	3.61	0.67	High Ext
6	Farm-lab initiative enables youth acquire skills in selection of quality stock	3.43	0.64	High Ext	2.76	0.49	High Ext
	Grand mean	**3.88**		**High Ext**	**3.66**		**High Ext**

Source: Field work 2025

Table 3 reveals the extent youth farm lab activities will improve youth involvement in sustainable agriculture production in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State. The responses on each variables by the respondents is an indication that youth farm-lab, improve youth involvement in sustainable agricultural production activities in Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State, as the mean score values were all more than the criterion mean value of 2.50, such as item (1) hard mean score of (3.56 & 3.34), item (2) hard (3.23 & 3.56), item (3) hard (3.76 & 3.56), item (4) hard (3.87 & 3.16), item (5) (3.14 & 3.61), and item (6 3.21 & 3.65) respectively.

The standard deviation (SD) of the female youth ranges from 0.45 to 0.87, while that of male range from 0.45 to 0.76. Again the near similar value of the (SD) showed that the respondent were not widely dispersed in their opinion.

Discussion of Findings

From research question 1, the study indicated that youth farm settlement initiative improves youth with skills in procurement of quality inputs for agricultural production thus motivating youths to start up agribusiness, task assigned to participants in farm settlement training improves skills required for poultry egg production among youth, and the utilization of helicultural projects to enhance youth skills in snail production thus enhancing youth involvement in food production. The finding is in line with the statement of International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI, 2014) that youth who participated in training on snail production in Ebony State developed skills needed for procurement of quality pen materials such as cage or tank and skills needed for the application of humus soil on pen floor.

Research question 2 indicated that through youth-farmers trainers, initiative for sustainable crop production instill youth with skills in genetic engineering for production of high quality yielding cop, enhance youths skills in value addition in crop production, encourages peer to peer training that enhances youth' skills in crop production and inculcate youths with skills in packaging of crop for businesses. The finding is in line with Himaja (2020) who posited that to facilitate youth involvement in food production; young farmers should be train to sensitize their peers regarding the economic opportunities in crop production. The finding

is also in agreement with Thomas and Eforuokwu (2020) who in a study stated that training youth as trainers on various areas in crop production such as processing, storing and packaging encourages the participation of young generation in agriculture. From research question 3, the study indicated that youth farm lab initiative instills young farmers with skills for risk management strategies for their farms, inculcates youth with skills in feed preparation for livestock production, inculcates youth with basic skills in construction of livestock shelter thus encouraging their involvement in small-scale agro-enterprise and serves as research centre for inculcating youth with skills in animal health. The finding is in agreement with Dalla (2012) who posited that youth farm lab initiative inculcates trainees with skills in livestock feed production and develop agricultural risk management strategies for their farms. The finding is also in alignment with Jens, Thai, Ngan and Jens (2023) who stipulated that initiating agricultural training targeted at improving youth basic skills in feed preparation, nutrient requirements and shelter construction for livestock production will encourage youths' involvement in small-scale agro-enterprise.

Conclusion

From the results of the research, the study therefore deduced that agricultural initiatives targeted at youth would make a significant change on youth involvement in production agriculture. An effective implementation of the existing agricultural initiatives and establishment of youth-led agricultural initiatives would go a long way to achieving active involvement of youth in various areas of agribusinesses ranging from farm-base to off-farm agricultural enterprises for income generation and relevancy in the society. This, if achieved will enhance quality food chain and in turn improve food security.

Recommendations

From the conclusion, the study recommends that:

1. Adequate agricultural initiatives such as youth farm-lab that is geared towards training youth in helicultural practices should be implemented by the state government through the state ministry of agriculture. This will enable youth see other aspect of production agriculture to venture with little capital.

2. Youth who are already engaged in agricultural activities should be used as facilitators in agricultural literacy programmes extended to rural areas for skill development in food crop production and value-added crop products. This method will motivate rural youth in taking up agricultural activities as a source of sustainable livelihood.
3. Agropreneurship financial institution should be established to facilitate youth's access to financial grants for establishment of agro enterprise

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