



FUTA NEWS

DON ADVOCATES IMPROVED INDIGENOUS FOOD STORAGE TECHNOLOGIES

A renowned scholar and pioneer Vice-Chancellor of Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti [ABUAD], Professor (Mrs.) Sidi Osho has called on government at all levels and higher institutions to improve indigenous food storage technologies at the local farming levels so as to reduce hunger in the country. She made the call at the annual food week programme organized by the National Association of Food Science and Technology Students [NAFSTS]. The event recently held at the T.I Francis hall of the Federal University of Technology, Akure. She spoke on the topic "A Community-Based Food System: Improving Health and Creating Wealth".

Lamenting global increase in food wastage, Osho said "Globally over half of the food produced today is lost, wasted or discarded as a result of inefficiency on the post-harvest management of the food system. One of the best ways to address food security is through a community food system that will ensure good health, create wealth, employability and improvement of indigenous processing and storage technologies."

Osho said Nigeria with over 150 million people is considered an agrarian nation because 80% of her population engages in agricultural activities but because of poor infrastructural facilities like good roads, processing and storage equipment, she loses a high percentage of her products. "An excess of 10 million tonnes of grain equivalent of food per annum conservatively estimated at over N825 billion was reported to be lost to spoilage and wastage occasioned by lack of post-harvest management. The same goes for other food items. This does not guarantee food security. It is only when appropriate processing and storage facilities are in place that food security can be guaranteed and hunger and poverty will be banished in the land."

Commending the effort of the Federal Government's Agricultural Transformation Agenda, she called on those concerned in the Agricultural Sector [higher institutions and governments] to consider more

comprehensively and holistically the relationship of food system to community health and wealth. “When the food system is considered more comprehensively and holistically, its relationship to community health, wealth, connections, capacity and other elements of overall community wellbeing becomes more apparent” she concluded.

In his remark, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Adebisi Daramola encouraged food scientists, especially students to strive to become entrepreneurs in their chosen fields. He said “Most of our fruit products waste away annually. Some of you can devise ways to convert such fruits products into dry ones before they get rotten. This will help you and help our dying economy”.

Dean, School of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology, [SAAT] Professor Shadrack Olufemi Akindele also emphasized the importance of food to human survival and the nation's economy. He said “Across the globe the food industry is a multi-million dollar industry. People will always spend money on food. If all students of Food Science and Technology go into food production, it is certain that they will become self-reliant because University products are not meant to be job seekers but job makers. If they do this, over the years Nigerian and the world economy will improve. If our products acquire the needed skills to process food and the knowledge of the impact of food on our health, malnutrition and hunger will be adequately addressed”.

In a welcome address, Head, Department of Food Science and Technology, Professor (Mrs.) Oluwatooyin Osundahunsi said the vision of the Department is to be a Centre of Excellence in food studies by producing self-reliant graduates that will be globally competitive. According to her, this vision has been achieved to some extent with a good number of graduates working in food industries, government parastatals with some self-employed. She also commended the support of FUTA management in making the Department globally relevant.