



FUTA NEWS

FUTA Don Advocates Development of Indigenous Machinery for Agriculture

For Nigeria to achieve food security and take full advantage of its huge potentials in agriculture, government at all levels must formulate and drive policies that will enhance indigenous development of agricultural machinery and equipment for mechanized agriculture. That was the submission of Professor Leo Agbetoye while delivering the 74th inaugural lecture of the Federal University of Akure at the Main Auditorium of the university. Agbetoye who spoke on 'Mechanized Agriculture: A Route to Enhanced Food Security' believes that such policies will discourage indiscriminate importation of machine and equipment and also create enabling environment and logistics for local fabrication of machinery.

The professor of agricultural engineering said that most of the limitations of agricultural mechanization in Nigeria are caused by the near total dependence on imported machinery and equipment which are generally unsuitable to the local soil climate and farming systems due to their complexity, sophistication and high cost which results in frequent damage, high cost of maintenance and general underutilization of their capacities. To fast track the process of reversing the trend Professor Agbetoye called on the government to set up technology acquisition Centres or agricultural machinery production centres, increase funding of the research institutes and development centres to enhance dissemination and adoption of research findings and their subsequent commercialization. He also called for the restructuring of the curricula of the various

institutions of higher learning where engineers are produced for result oriented programmes. Professor Agbetoye while highlighting the advantages of the introduction of efficient, sustainable and cost effective mechanization technology said it will lead to improvement of timeliness and efficiency of various operations, preservation of the quality of agricultural products and increase in the supply of raw materials for agro based industries thus providing better rural living conditions for Nigeria's teeming population of over 160 million people.

The lecturer advocated the revival of the iron and steel industry to produce at full capacity, such that relevant grades of steel required by the fabricators can be made readily available at the local markets and at available prices and the development of infrastructures and utilities such as electricity supply and water required for commercial production of machines and equipment. Concluding, Agbetoye said that the development of indigenous machines and equipment as well as their commercial manufacture are desirable to attain technological development and it therefore requires the combined efforts of all stakeholders in agriculture ranging from farmers, academicians, government and private individuals for a mutually satisfying solution to food security.

In his remarks at the occasion the Vice Chancellor, Professor Adebisi Daramola described the lecturer as an erudite scholar and an astute administrator who has served the university in various capacities and has contributed immensely to research and academic development in his field of specialization. He also said Professor Agbetoye is the first alumnus in the service of FUTA to attain the grade of professor.

The lecture was attended by the immediate past President of Nigerian Society of Engineers, Engineer Ademola Olorunfemi, representatives of the Ooni of Ife, Oba Enitan Adeyeye Ogunwusi, traditional rulers, leaders of academic communities, students and friends of the inaugural lecturer.