

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

THE 13TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE MYCOTOXICOLOGY SOCIETY OF NIGERIA (MSN), 3RD – 5TH SEPTEMBER 2019

His Excellency; Mr. Dapo Abiodun
The Executive governor of Ogun State,
The Chancellor, Covenant University, Bishop David Oyedepo,
Professor A. A. A. Atayero, Vice Chancellor CU,
Our Guest Lecturer: Prof Patrick B. Njobeh,
Board of Trustees of MSN,
Captains of Regulatory Agencies,
Representatives of Various Industries,
Distinguished Academics and Professionals,
Farmers and Market Women,
Gentlemen of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I welcome you all to the 13th Annual Conference and Workshop of the Mycotoxicology Society of Nigeria tagged “MSN/CU”, 2019; with the theme “Recent trends in Mycotoxin Research and Management in the face of a Changing Climate.”

The importance of mycotoxin contamination in agricultural products and their attendant implications on the safety of foods and feeds, trade and health cannot be over emphasized. Report of total diet study carried out in Nigeria, Cameroun and Mali indicated that aflatoxin is one of the major contaminants of food products in Nigeria. As we all know, it has been a challenge to export of agricultural produce from Nigeria to other countries especially the EU. There is therefore an urgent need to fund mycotoxin and other contaminants research in Nigeria. There are several challenges facing scientific research in developing countries particularly in Nigeria. To enumerate the challenges of mycotoxin research in Nigeria we need to look into what it will entail.

What is research?

Research has been defined as the search for knowledge, truth, similarities and relationships. It is also the process of finding solutions to problems through the systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data (Chikwe *et al.*, 2015). As we all know research and manpower development are critical to the development of any nation. Mycotoxin research in Nigeria is not new, TLC has been used for decades to test for aflatoxins contamination in Nigeria however; recent trends in mycotoxin analysis has moved from TLC through ELISA, HPLC to more sophisticated equipment such as LC-MS and LCMS/MS . The challenges facing research in Nigeria include inadequate funding, lack of modern equipment, facilities, consumables and chemicals.

Equipment needed for such research are very expensive, needs extensive trainings for operators, regular power supply (24 hours) servicing and maintenance by trained and capable hands which are often not available within the country. Several manufacturers of these equipment do not have local representatives and where they do; do not divulge enough knowledge hence the need to keep on inviting experts at high cost for equipment servicing and maintenance.

There are no manufacturers of certified reference standards and materials in Nigeria, waiting for the supply of chemicals and the great care taking to effect supply in this age of biological

warfare affects planning and implementation of projects. Furthermore, climate change is not waiting for us to catch up on scientific knowledge on how to deal with earlier listed problems, hence the need to face these challenges headlong cannot be over emphasized.

THE ROLE OF MSN

The Mycotoxicology Society of Nigeria (MSN), founded in 2006 had been creating awareness conducting, workshops, seminars and symposia, on mycotoxins to ensure that every actor along the value chain play active roles in ensuring the safety of food available to consumers.

What we need

The need for ministries, agencies, regulators and farmers to work together to achieve a Society where food and feed are safe, are of good quality and can be sold locally and internationally cannot be over emphasized. I therefore appeal to all stakeholders including our political leaders worldwide to be committed to funding research and manpower development especially in relation to mycotoxins and food safety in general. I also wish to retriage our earlier call for the declaration of a World Mycotoxin Day in order to focus attention on this menace. This will lead to availability of safe and good quality food hence reduction in disease burden and food security, thereby reducing the number of deaths associated with the disease related to mycotoxin consumption. I employ our researchers to regularly patronize our Journal-MYCOTOXICOLOGY. All editions of the journal are available as free access on the Society's website.

We appreciate the efforts of our Chief Host, Professor A. A. Atayero, the Vice Chancellor Covenant University, the local organising committee members headed by Professor Oranusi, the University link persons; Professor O. O. Obembe and Dr. Mrs. G. I. Olasehinde, it has been a wonderful time working with you all. We are extremely grateful to Chromogene Nigeria Ltd, CHARM Sciences Incorporated and **other advertisers/ sponsor**) for their continual patronage. Our thanks also go to the Guest Lecturer, Prof Patrick B. Njobeh, who will deliver the keynote address and our other foreign guests: Professor Mwanza Mulunda and Dr. Palesa Sekhejane .

I congratulate all of us once again for this year's outing and wish you all a happy deliberation.
Folasade Bosede Oluwabamiwo (Ph.D.)

President, MSN

3rd September, 2019.