

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

THE 8^H ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP OF THE MYCOTOXICOLOGY SOCIETY OF NIGERIA (MYCOTOXSON). 24TH – 26TH, JUNE 2013.

Mr Babatunde Arowosafe,
Honourable Commissioner for Agriculture, Ekiti State,
Mrs Taiwo Teresa Akande,
Rector, Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti,
Pof. Raymond Douglas Coker,
Chief Executive, ToxiMet Ltd. Kent, UK
Prof S.A.Bankole,
Dean, Faculty of Science Olabisi Onabanjo University
and Distinguished Guest Lecturer,
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 the 8^h Annual Conference and Workshop of the Mycotoxicology Society of Nigeria tagged “Ado-Ekiti”, 2013; whose theme is Mycotoxin Hazards, Management and Its Regulation in Nigeria.

The Mycotoxicology Society, founded in 2006, is a body of scientists in the academia, industries, regulatory agencies and other stakeholders in the food and feed sectors united by the need to create awareness on mycotoxins. Mycotoxins are secondary metabolites of fungi produced on agricultural produce often from farm, during processing and storage up to the dinning table. The Society currently has its secretariat at the Central Laboratory Complex of the National Agency for Food and Drug administration and Control (NAFDAC), Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria.

The Society carries out research, collaborates with colleagues outside Nigeria, publishes information there from and coordinates extension activities related to mycotoxins in Nigeria so that such findings can be applied for the resolution of mycotoxin problems and the preservation of food resources.

The dangers inherent in the consumption of mycotoxin-contaminated meals which may include kidney/liver disorders and immuno-suppressions are made available to the general populace in local languages

The collaborative Country-Wide assesment of research and Country-led solutions to prevent and mitigate aflatoxins effect on Nigeria's human and animal health as well as food security and trade was concluded with a Stakeholders Workshop in Abuja between 5th- 6th Nov, 2012 at the Agric Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN), Abuja.

This was followed by the PACA Strategy Development - Stakeholder Consultation Workshop in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania between 10th- 12th April, 2013. It is gratifying to note that eight members of the Society; constituting the largest single group were invited for the Workshop.

Im happy to inform you that the book – Mycotoxins and Food Safety in Developing Countries edited by Dr Hussaini Makun (Vice-President- North) and published by INTEC publishers, Croatia is finally out with about three chapters therein written by members of the Society. Of particular interest is the first chapter of the book written by Atanda et al titled Fungal and Mycotoxin Contamination of Nigerian Foods and Feeds which is continually achieving impressive readership results and was accessed by more than 500 viewers within the first four weeks of publication. The top downloads of the paper were from Nigeria, United States of America, Vietnam, United Kingdom and India (<http://www.intechopen.com/account/login>).

I recently granted an Interview with the Pan African News Agency (PANA) urging the United Nations to set aside a day to be known as 'Mycotoxins Day' due to the danger posed by mycotoxins to food safety and public health. This is necessary in order to create more awareness on aflatoxins. I quote from an extract of the interview “ If theUN can declare one for HIV/AIDS, if they can declare one for malaria, If they can have one for all sorts of things there must be a world mycotoxins date, where people will get to know the implications and learn new things about mycotoxins. If the same global attention given to HIV/AIDS in terms of massive education, political support and wide spread sensitisation are replicated on the toxins, there will be safer food and reduction from deaths associated with the disease”. An Advocate For Integrity in Health Marketing, Sharon Kramer from California, USA blogged about my request and asked for support of the US Ambassador to the UN. She further requested many people to send emails

to the US Ambassador Susan Rice on the issue and a lot of people have complied. I followed up the momentum by petitioning His Excellency, Mr Ban Ki Moon the United Nations Secretary-General through Dr Margaret Chan, the Director General of the World Health Organisation and His Excellency, Dr. Umunna H. Orjiako, Nigeria's Permanent Representative at the UN Office in Geneva.. It is also gratifying to note the massive support the Society has received Worldwide from this request which is conspicuously featured on the website of the African Mycotoxin Network.

I employ our researchers to continue to take advantage of the numerous Short Term Visits, Grants and Trainings to various laboratories in Europe. On a last count, at least eight members of the Society enjoyed this benefit in the preceeding year.

Im happy to inform you that work has reached advanced stage on our proposed Journal-MYCOTOXICOLOGY. The National library of Nigeria has autenticated the name and we will be publishing full journal articles of edited papers submitted at this Conference in this coming year.

I once again urge our members to update their personal details with the Assistant Secretary of the Society and to particularly note that we will be carrying out our last AGM resolution by deleting the names of members that have either not paid their dues for upward of three years nor attend our Conferences in the last three years without any genuine excuse.

We want to thank God for the increased patronage and visibility of the Society in both National and World affairs and pray for increase frequency in the coming years. However while thanking God, I will like to bring to remembrance of members that some "agents of darkness" have been hawking the e mail ID of members of the Society and even our website. While the issue has been brought to the attention of appropriate security agents, I urge our members to be more careful and be security conscious of their mails.

We appreciate the efforts of our Chief Host, Mrs Taiwo Teresa Akande, the Rector of this beautiful Polytechnic, who in spite of the lean resources at her disposal accepted to host this Conference and also the Executive Committee of ASUP, Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti who in spite of their strike action allowed us to host Conference.

We are also extremely grateful to ToxiMet Ltd. Kent, UK for Co-Sponsoring this years' Conference and look forward to a long lasting relation with you. We also thank "Solution Providers"- Chromogene and Steve Nicholas (Nig) Ltd. for their continual patronage.

Our thanks also go to the Guest Lecturer, Prof S.A. Bankole, Dean Faculty of Science, OOU and a renowned Mycotoxicologist for accepting to honour us.

I congratulate all of us once again for this years outing and wish you all a happy deliberation.

Olusegun Atanda (Ph.D.)

President, Mycotoxson

24th July, 2013.