

POS 06

Success Factors, Constraints and Sustenance of a Researcher / Farmer Multi-Stakeholder Platform in Relation to the Outcomes of a Training Workshop

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Abstract

The Nigerian Poultry Feeds Research and Development (NIPOFERD) consortium was created in 2011 under the Platform for African-European Partnership in Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD) call 2 of the African-European Multi-stakeholder Partnership in Agricultural Research for Development (ARD). A training workshop with the general objective of building capacity of small-scale poultry operators on the development of value-added cassava products for use in the Nigerian poultry industry was organized by NIPOFERD researcher members for its farmer organization members in mid-2016. This paper outlines the success factors, constraints and evidences of sustenance of the consortium activities in relation to the organization of the training workshop.

Keywords: Researchers, farmers, cassava, multi-stakeholder platform, Nipoferd

Introduction

The Nigerian Poultry Feeds Research and Development (NIPOFERD) consortium was created in 2011 under the Platform for African-European Partnership in Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD) call 2 of the African-European Multi-stakeholder Partnership in Agricultural Research for Development (ARD). The core partners researchers in the School of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology, Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria, University of Ghent, Belgium (Research Partners 1 and 2, respectively), Poultry Association of Nigeria, Imo State Branch, Nigeria (Partner 3) and Feed Millers Association of Nigeria, Imo State Branch (Partner 4). The partnership activity has the overall objective of improving poultry production and income of small-scale poultry farmers through cost-effective and quality poultry feed production knowledge transfer and thereby contributing to the enhancement of nutritional status of the populace.

Specifically, the partnership activity promotes the development and adoption of enhanced knowledge in innovative feed production and poultry feeding technologies as well as establish viable industry-researcher networks that targets small-scale farmers, feedmillers and research organizations at the partnership location. In order to achieve these objectives, a training workshop with the general objective of building capacity of small-scale poultry operators on the development of value-added cassava products for use in the Nigerian poultry industry was organized for the farmer organization members in mid-2016.

This paper outlines the success factors, constraints and evidences of sustenance of the consortium activities in relation to the outcomes of the training workshop.

The workshop Process

The workshop with the theme "Knowledge Transfer towards Cost-Effective Poultry Feeds Production from Processed Cassava Products to Improve the Productivity of Small-Scale Farmers in Nigeria" was organized for the members of Poultry Association of Nigeria (PAN) and Feedmillers Association of Nigeria (FAN) from 27th June to 1st July 2016. Participants included a PAEPARD representative, an innovation facilitator, an European partner, 13 farmers, one student, one early-career lecturer, seven resource persons including one from Burkina Faso and two NIPOFERD Staff, totaling 27 participants. The workshop was conducted in sessions, each comprising an introduction to the objectives of the session, with each resource person presenting two papers during the period of the workshop. The approach during each day was plenary presentations and group work. Each session was intended to contribute an output related to specific objectives of the workshop.

At the end of each day, the participants broke into three groups and a content reflection was carried out by each group, documented on cardboard sheets and presented to the general house. As a way of monitoring whether the workshop objectives were being achieved, a process monitoring (Potentials identified from the presentation? Challenges to effective adoption and recommendations to the presenter) was done, with a representative from each group reporting to the facilitator.

Success factors

The workshop addressed the end-user partners identified industry constraint, which is costly commercial poultry feeds of unregulated quality as major constraints to poultry production outside the control of the farmer, especially at small-scale production level. PAN viewed the workshop as a major empowerment event for its members to overcome these major constraints. FAN identified use of obsolete methods and machines as well as high cost of major feed raw materials for commercial poultry feeds production as major constraints to both productivity and profitability in the industry. These industry production constraints and intervention expectations of the end-user partners identified during the consortium Partnership Inception Workshop (PIW) in April 2012 were addressed by the workshop theme.

The incentive fund (IF) grant graciously extended to the consortium by PAEPARD made it possible to organize the workshop without financial hitch. Furthermore, the workshop was organized outside the home state of the end user farmer organization partners, thereby eliminating the issue of divided attention between participation and farming activities. The participation of the consortium European partner, a West African participant from Burkina Faso and a PAEPARD representative gave the workshop an unexpected international image and was appreciated by the farmers and other resource persons. Similarly, the selection of resource persons from a crop of seasoned experts on the subject matter of the workshop helped to raise the academic content of the event helped to sustain the interest of participants throughout the event. Again, the trust build over the years, starting from the partnership inception workshop in 2012 to the routine involvement of the research partners in many of the farmer organization partner's activities was exploited for the success of the workshop. Specifically, the brokerage activities of the consortium Nipoferd coordinator within and outside the Federal University of Technology Owerri helped to sensitize and attract the crop of expert resource persons to the workshop.

The field learning trip to Phenomar Farms Ltd, Enugu was an eye opener to most participants, especially the farmers and the participants from outside Nigeria. The farms' magnificent 350, 000 layer, broiler and fishery facilities, with ancillary soya processing plant, feed milling and equipment fabrication units that has been in existence for forty years was a wakeup call to the participants! The internet visibility of the event also enhanced its international image. The podcasts made by the participants during the event are still available for viewing at PAEPARD blog (<http://paepard.blogspot.be/2016/07/knowledge-transfer-towards.html>).

Constraints to Hosting of the Workshop

Possible distractions/divided attention on the part of the farmer organization participants: This was overcome by moving the event to a location (Delta State) other than the business location of farmers.

Tendency of the workshop to become a sit down, listen, talk and lecture show: This was overcome with the introduction of the world café (content reflection), interactive discussions and a one-day field learning event.

The nature of presentations: Few of the workshop presentations were products of on-station research, not designed for development. This short coming was hopefully addressed by the question and answer sessions as well as the content reflection exercises. However, to reverse this unwholesome trend, the capacity of research partners to design appropriate studies that will lead to development activities needs to be developed.

Inactivity of the PAEPARD proposed Agricultural Innovation Facilitator (AIF): The PAEPARD proposed AIF invited for the event failed to show up. This was overcome by using the services of the consortium in-house AIF.

Sustainability of Consortium Activities

As a direct impact of the workshop, three new farmer organizations have joined the consortium. These include Farmers Unit Six Multipurpose Cooperative (a women organization), Imo State Cassava Growers Association and Poultry Association of Nigeria Abia State. This brings to five the number of farmer organization partners in the consortium. As a mark of its increasing confidence in the consortium, PAN Imo invited the research partners to co organize its 2016 Annual Conference and Celebration of World Egg Day on 7th December 2016, with the research organization partners contributing the academic content (key note address and lectures) and internet visibility content of the event. Furthermore, the proceedings of the workshop has been published and being distributed across Nigeria and Beyond. The Whatsapp group created during the workshop has kept the participants together and has remained a veritable platform for sharing information on the activities and progress of the participants.

Conclusion

The workshop mainobjective of knowledge transfer towards cost-effective poultry feeds production from processed cassava products to improve the productivity of small-scale farmers in Nigeriawas key and specifically addressedthe cassava initiative of the Federal Government of Nigeria that engenders the effective exploitation of cassava across its value chain in order to mitigate post-harvest losses.