Report on the National Agricultural Performance Survey in Yobe, August 2018

1.1. Introduction

National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS) conducted the 2018 National Agricultural Performance Survey (APS) between the 6th and 9th of August, 2018 in Yobe State. The survey was conducted in collaboration with the Federal Department of Agricultural Extension (FDAE), Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) and other relevant stakeholders in agricultural data generation and use. The objectives of the survey were to assess the crops performance during the wet season; make production forecasts; identify constraints to increased agricultural productivity and effective extension delivery service; and provide feedbacks on field situation and farmers' problem for improved research and policy performance. WFP supported this year survey in both Yobe and Borno State.

1.2. Methodology

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodology was adopted. This involved the use of questionnaire/ checklists, farm visits/observations, interviews with farmers and Ministry/Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) officials /reports review meetings. A team of three scientists (1 from NAERLS, 1 from FMARD, 1 from Yobe ADP) and a staff from WFP carried out the assessment for Yobe state.
In Yobe state, two communities were selected from two LGAs in two selected agricultural zones for the field evaluation. From each community, five farmers were interviewed in addition to focused group discussions held at every site and rapid rural appraisal. In all, interactions were held with 20 individual farmers and 4 different farmers groups/associations. Data capture from the farmers was done electronically using Android Tablets on ODK, focus group discussion with farmers groups at community level, while key informant interview was also held with the ADP staff, ministry officials and staff of other relevant agencies.

Agricultural Zone	LGA	Communities
Zone 1	Jakusko	Buduwa
Zone 2	Damaturu	Kaisaisa, Murfa

To forecast the 2018 crops yield, adjusted land area/output estimates of 2017 were used as base figures in computing percentage changes in the areas devoted to various crops. This was applied in conjunction with response of Yobe ADPs to generate outputs forecast for 2018 for the state.

This report is an overview and based on observation and discussion at community and state level. It should also be noted that the final report for the state is yet to be validated and finalized.

2.0. Findings

The state experienced more rainfall this year compared to 2017. The rainfall started in April in some LGAs which is relatively early for the North East region, although some LGAs like Fika, Nangere and Fune experienced a bit of dry spell until July. In Yunusari, Tarmuwa and Damaturu, there were mild incidents of flood, which affected some farms and might impact harvest output. Early onset of rainfall.

Improved seeds were procured and distributed by the government and some INGOs/UN agencies, but the distributed quantities were not adequate as most farmers affirmed to planting with local varieties of seedlings.

Fertilizers were procured and distributed by various government agencies throughout the state. The fertilizers procured and distributed directly were mainly NPK and urea. Generally, there was a remarkable improvement in the availability and affordability of these fertilizers by farmers when compared to 2017.

Many farmers experienced attacks of pests and diseases on crops. The infestations of stem Borer, army worm, head bora (mostly millet), and attack of birds were reported. Use of recommended agrochemicals was lowly reported among farmers especially due to high cost. These attacks although were considered of low to mild severity were farmers were interviewed.

The general outlook of production costs per hectare of major crops in 2018 showed increase compared 2017. Cost for farm operations for major crops based on 5 hours labour was relatively same or with minimal increase compared to 2017. Farm operations covers land preparation (clearing, ploughing, harrowing and ridging), planting, fertilizer application, weeding, spraying, harvesting, planting and harvesting.

More than 90% of households in Jakusko and Damaturu communities assessed have access to land. The IDPs within the communities' report being given land by the village head to cultivate. More than 70% of households involved in farming is reported owning more a hectare of land.

Major crops cultivated across the state remains cash crops millet, sorghum, sesame, cowpea, wheat, rice, maize and groundnut. Harvest output projected for 2018 remains positive as farmers anticipate that output yield for the year will be higher as compared to last year. Some projected more than a 100% increase especially for cash crops. This projected increase is mostly attributed to the higher distribution of rainfall in the year compared to last year. Inputs from INGOs and government also was a major contributing factor to the positive projection as most farmers association reported capacity strengthening, provision of key message through media especially radio during the farming season was immensely beneficially. Farmers within an association reported that being in a group was also helpful especially against financial constraints as they can easily access soft loans from their cooperative at low or no interest margin. Small farmers also formed informal association and combined their produce to sell in bulk to wholesalers and thus making more return compared to selling at low scale.

The sustainable production of food is the first pillar of food security. Many women work as farmers and farm workers. In doing so, they contribute to national agricultural output and family food security. Women in Agriculture supports the strengthening of subsistence agricultural production, but as observed during the assessment, women are mostly limited to menial jobs in the agricultural production process. Most farmers' cooperatives are made up of men and thus key agricultural decision are made by them.

Major constraints of the agricultural value chain as observed including mechanization of farming as most farmers still make use of local technology and thus maximization of production is limited, Lack of storage facilities, security related challenges, inadequate agricultural information, poor extension support due to inadequate personnel at government agencies, challenges of weather, low farm input availability and affordability.